
On Old and New Connections between Greek and Albanian: Some Grammatical Evidence

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ABSTRACT: Connections between Greek and Albanian in the Balkans have been on-going in the Balkans starting in ancient times and continuing up to the present. The evidence of a relationship that has generally commanded the most attention in the literature has come from loan words, but it is argued here that there are numerous matchings between the two languages that are more grammatical in nature. These include details of adverb formation, verb inflection, and negation, among others, though in some instances the boundary line between grammar and lexicon is not clearly defined. In each case, possible explanations for the matchings are explored, including shared inheritances from Proto-Indo-European, shared innovations that suggest subgrouping within Indo-European, and contact.

1. *Introduction: A Traditional Indo-European Dialectological View of Albanian and Greek*

It is no exaggeration to say that Albanian and Greek have a considerable amount of shared history that has contributed to the two languages sharing in various linguistic features: both are Indo-European languages, and thus they have common elements that are the result of this shared Indo-European legacy; moreover, both are Balkan languages, and thus show some common elements that are the result of the mutual contact and contact with other languages of the region that gave rise to the remarkable structural convergences one sees in the Balkans.

Nonetheless, especially since any contact-induced similarities are generally taken to be historically secondary, representing an overlay on top of a genealogical relationship, the usual stance taken with regard to Indo-European dialectology is that there is no special connection between Greek and Albanian according to generally accepted features diagnostic of subgrouping the various branches of Indo-European into dialectological units based on their treatment of features found in Proto-Indo-European (PIE). For instance, one can start with some of those discussed in general terms, i.e. not with specific reference to Albanian in each case, in Meillet (1922/1967), even if not all of them would represent innovations, as opposed to retentions,¹ and even if they are not all as cogent or compelling as they seemed when first proposed (as the footnotes and discussion indicate):

- (1)
 - merger of PIE *o and *a
 - merger of PIE palatal stops (*k' g' g'h) with PIE velars (*k g gh), what can be called the “centum merger”²
 - the use of a prefix *e- in past tenses (the “augment”)

¹ I mention this distinction because shared innovations away from some feature present in the proto-language, if they are not cross-linguistically common or linguistically trivial (i.e. “natural”, by some reasonable measure of “naturalness”), are generally taken to be diagnostic for grouping two languages together into a dialectological unit whereas shared retentions of a feature present in the proto-language are not. See also the discussion in section 4.

² This label is not meant to indicate an acceptance of the famous so-called *centum/satəm* split within Indo-European because, for one thing, the merger that is said to characterize the *centum* languages is not as unusual as it might seem. In particular, it happened independently in Anatolian, between Proto-Anatolian and Hittite, and in Indo-European branches in Europe (Germanic, Greek, and Italo-Celtic).

- the outcome of PIE *ə with a single reflex or a three-fold one.

With regard to the merger of PIE *o and *a, a trait linking Balto-Slavic and Germanic,³ Albanian shows the merger while Greek does not. Thus, from PIE *nok^wt-s 'night', Greek preserves a round vowel in νύξ, with the -v- being a development out of original *o in this sonorant-plus-labial/velar environment, while Albanian shows *a*, in *natë*.

Regarding the “centum merger”, whatever the status of the *centum/satəm* split (see footnote 2), Greek shows the merger and thus fails to distinguish original palatals from original velars, whereas Albanian does not show the merger and thus maintains the original distinction. Thus, Greek shows forms like κλέος ‘fame’, cognate with Sanskrit *śravas*, from PIE *k^lewos, as well as κρέας ‘raw meat’, cognate with Sanskrit *kraviṣ*, from PIE *krewəs. Albanian, by contrast, shows forms such as *thom* ‘I say’, from *k^lē-mi (cf. Old Persian *θātiy* ‘he says’), contrasting with *kohë* ‘time’, from *kēsk^lā.

Regarding the augment, Greek has shown it very robustly throughout all of its history, from Mycenaean Greek of the 14th century BC, in the form <a-pe-do-ke> ‘he gave over’, representing ἀπέδωκε, as in Classical Greek, right up to the present day, e.g. ἀπέδωσε ‘he attributed’. It is true that nonaugmented past tense forms are found in Homeric epic, but they are remnants of a different PIE formation and do not really compete with the augmented forms.⁴ Albanian, by contrast, shows no overt prefix in past tense forms, e.g. *pa* ‘s/he saw’, *dha* ‘s/he gave’, *mori* ‘s/he took’. Meillet (pp. 125-129) saw this feature as dialectal within Indo-European, and specifically as an innovation linking Indo-Iranian, Armenian, and Greek, thus to the exclusion of Albanian. It is more usual now to see the augment as reflecting a feature present in the morphology of the proto-language itself, but rather than seeing Albanian as having innovatively lost the augment (along with several other branches), Hamp has argued that there are traces of the augment in Albanian; in *dha*, for instance, the unexpected *dh* outcome of PIE *d (root *deH₃- ‘give’) — apparently occurring in initial position rather than intervocalic position where that outcome is regular — can be explained by positing as the pre-form an augmented root aorist *e-də-t (or a thematic aorist *e-dH₃-e-t). Nonetheless, it is certainly true that Albanian does not have a direct reflex of the past tense *e- in the way that Greek does (along with Indo-Iranian and Armenian).

Regarding the developments with PIE *ə, as discussed by Meillet (pp. 84-93), Greek has a three-way outcome, ε α ο, depending on which laryngeal consonant the *ə is associated with, the *e*-coloring *H₁, the *a*-coloring H₂, or the *o*-coloring H₃, respectively. By contrast, Albanian, like Italo-Celtic, Germanic, and Balto-Slavic, has only *a*.

In addition to the above features that, by Meillet’s reckoning, would separate Greek and Albanian, there are other ones that can be mentioned that overtly link the one language to other branches, to the exclusion of the other. Greek and Armenian, for instance, show a prothetic vowel in word-initial position from an initial laryngeal (*H₁, H₂, or H₃), whereas Albanian does not, as shown by Greek ἀνὴρ ‘man’ and Armenian *ayr*, as opposed to Albanian *njeri*. Similarly, like Balto-Slavic, Albanian shows lengthening of a short vowel before original voiced plain

³ I exclude from consideration here Indo-Iranian, since it shows merger of *e, *a, and *o, and thus may involve a different set of circumstances from the *o/*a merger; I note though that Meillet does include Indo-Iranian in his discussion of the *o/*a merger.

⁴ Such forms, e.g. βῆ ‘he went’, represent traces of the PIE injunctive, a verbal mood distinct from the indicative and the subjunctive and characterized by past tense endings but lacking the past tense prefix. It had a distinct use in PIE, especially in prohibitives, but may be simply a metrical variant in Homeric usage.

stops, what is known in the literature as “Winter’s Law”, as in *erë* ‘scent, smell’ from pre-Albanian *ōd-r-, from a PIE root *H₃ed- (cf. Latin *odor* ‘smell’); as Greek ὀσμή ‘smell’, from *H₃ed-smā, shows, Greek did not lengthen a vowel in this context.

The following table sums up how Albanian and Greek match up with regard to these diagnostic features:

	Albanian	Greek
*o/a merger:	YES	NO
centum merger:	NO	YES
augment:	(NO)	YES
3-fold *ə outcome	NO	YES
Prothetic vowel	NO	YES
Winter’s Law	YES	NO

As the complete lack of agreement between Albanian and Greek on these features indicates, there is little reason, working with these criteria, to think of Albanian and Greek as showing any sort of special relationship dialectologically or otherwise within Indo-European.

2. *Some Dialectologically Irrelevant Shared Features between Albanian and Greek*

Running counter to the features in section 1 on which Albanian and Greek disagree and which thus separate the two languages, there are also numerous ways in which the languages match. None, however, are dialectologically significant, for various reasons.

For instance, there are several shared lexical items, of which some appear to be quite old; a few of these are given in (2):

- | | | | |
|-----|--------------------|---|------------------------|
| (2) | lakër ‘cabbage’ | ~ | λαχανόν ‘garden herbs’ |
| | mokërë ‘millstone’ | ~ | μαχανά ‘instrument’ |
| | tarogzë ‘helmet’ | ~ | θωράκιον ‘breastplate’ |

However, these are widely recognized as borrowings from Ancient Greek into Albanian at a period that, as far as Albanian is concerned, is prehistoric; as such, they are interesting from the point of view of ancient interactions among peoples in the Balkans, but they reflect nothing more than contact between the two speech communities and are dialectologically uninformative. In fact, contact between Albanian and Greek has continued, as there are loans that date from more recent times, from Greek into Albanian, such as those in (3):

- | | |
|-----|-----------------------------|
| (3) | agjapis ‘love’ (<= ἀγαπησ-) |
| | stolis ‘adorn’ (<= στολίσ-) |

In some instances, it is hard to assess whether the matching between the languages is simply a retention from the proto-language or instead a meaningful isogloss reflecting a shared innovation. For example, Albanian *as* ‘(and) not’ has been suggested by Pedersen 1900 to be cognate with Greek οὐ(κ) ‘not’, a word which Cowgill 1960 has derived, especially in its variant

form οὐκί, from an earlier *(ne) H₂oyu k^wid ‘not ever; not on your life’ (literally, “(not)⁵ long-life anything”), connecting it also with Armenian *oč’*, but leaving any linkage with *as* unexplored. Joseph 2002a, however, demonstrates how to make the *as*/οὐκί connection work, and includes the prefix *as-* ‘no-’ (as in *askush* ‘no one’, cf. *kush* ‘who?’) in the cognate set. What is tricky here, however, is judging the status of *(ne) H₂oyu k^wid in Proto-Indo-European. The distribution of its reflexes, covering Greek, Armenian, and Albanian, a trio of branches that do not generally figure together in other Indo-European dialect isoglosses,⁶ might be taken to suggest that this phrase was a PIE mode of negation, at which point it would be a shared retention, and not diagnostic of a special relationship; alternatively, its limited distribution could point to it being innovative, at which point it could be dialectologically significant. In this way, the ambiguity of how to interpret the *as(-)/οὐκί* matching is somewhat like the situation with the augment, in that its dialectological value depends on how its proto-language status is assessed.

Finally, there are some matchings that all linguists who have concerned themselves with them seem to agree must be considered retentions of features safely projected back into the proto-language; these are listed in (4), with some discussion included after them:

- (4) a. modal vs. nonmodal negation distinction (*mos* vs. *s’/nuk* ~ μή vs. οὐ)
 b. the form of modal negator, specifically, containing *meH₁ (*mos* (< PIE *meH₁-k^wid) ~ μή < PIE *meH₁))
 c. present/aorist suppletion (e.g. ‘bring’ *bie* / *prur-* (Geg: *prun-*) ~ φέρω / ἐνεγκ- < PIE *bher- / *pro-Hnek-)
 d. special endings for mediopassive voice forms in present system, e.g. ‘seem’ (endings in bold):

1SG	dukem	~	φαίνομαι
2	dukesh	~	φαίνῃ (< *φαινεσαι)
3	duket	~	φαίνεται etc.

As for (4a), the distinction seen in Albanian and Greek is also found in Indo-Iranian (e.g. Sanskrit and Avestan *mā* vs. *na*), Armenian (*mi* vs. *oč’*), Anatolian (e.g. Hittite *lā* vs. *natta*), and Italo-Celtic (e.g. Latin *nē* vs. *non*) so that it is reasonable to reconstruct it for PIE. Moreover, regarding (4b), the evidence of Albanian modal *mos*, Greek modal μή, Indo-Iranian *mā*, and Armenian *mi* points to *meH₁ for the form of the modal negation marker in the proto-language; it can be noted too that even the languages that do not have an initial *m-* in this form do have a reflex of a long vowel.⁷ With regard to (4c), the PIE character of suppletion in general but specifically of the roots of ‘bring’ in Albanian and Greek is guaranteed by the fact that suppletion involving the same roots is found in Old Irish, in which the present *do’beir* ‘brings’ has a suppletive perfect (a category corresponding to the aorist of Albanian and Greek) *roucc*,

⁵ The *ne in this multi-part negation was presumably lost via the same sort of process, perhaps elimination of redundancy, that has led to its omission in the French bipartite negation *ne ... pas*, which is simply *pas* in contemporary colloquial usage.

⁶ Though see below in section 3 concerning *sot*.

⁷ And the nonmatching initial consonants have a ready explanation: the Latin #*n-* is likely due to analogical pressure from the *n-* of the nonmodal negator, and the same can be said of Hittite, with the #*l-* being the result of the generalization of a variant occurring before a nasal, affected by a regular disimilatory sound change of *n ...* [+Nasal] => ... [+Nasal].

where, significantly, *-ucc* derives from *Hnek-. Further, while admittedly with a different aorist, suppletion with ‘bring’ is found in Latin, where the present *ferō* has an associated perfect form *tulī* that is based on an entirely different root. Finally, special endings for the present tense mediopassive voice forms occur in Indo-Iranian (e.g. Sanskrit *labhe* / *labhase* / *labhate* ‘take’) etc.) and Germanic (e.g. Gothic *baírada* / *baíraza* / *baírada*), thus pointing to this being a feature of PIE. Putting all of these facts and interpretations together, it is clear that these matchings between Albanian and Greek, while certainly striking and noteworthy, are shared retentions that are not indicative of any sort of special dialectological relationship.

3. Other Notable – and Possibly More Telling – Features

The features discussed in sections 1 and 2 do not exhaust the range of material with some relevance to the question of the relationship between Albanian and Greek. There is yet more, some of it with more interesting implications than any of the preceding ones. This is a fortunate position to be in, since most of the foregoing cases have proven to be somewhat inconclusive.

A particularly interesting case is offered by the word *sot* ‘today’. Like so many words for ‘today’ in Indo-European languages, such as *today* itself or Russian *sevodnja*, Albanian *sot* surely derives from some deictic element with a form of the word for ‘day’. Getting to such a derivation for *sot* is somewhat complicated, but a compelling scenario can be developed. First, a suitable pre-form for ‘day’, *ditë*, in Albanian is *dīti-, and this can be deployed in the reconstruction for *sot*. Second, in order to get the *-o-* vocalism in *sot*, a starting point with *-ā- would do nicely. The complicated part comes with the third step of motivating an appropriate deictic element. It would work here to invoke something along the lines of the initial element *kjā- seen in Mycenaean Greek *za-we-te*, later Attic Greek *τῆτες*, and Ionic Greek *σῆτες* ‘this year’, from a pre-form *kjā-wetēs, built with a deictic element, of some sort, and a form of the word for ‘year’ (Greek *ἔτος*). The deictic element in question does not have a direct source as *kjā- but rather was due to the reanalysis of the word for ‘today’ in pre-Greek. This word is *σήμερον*, in most dialects, though in Attic Greek *τῆμερον*, and the dialect variation of initial σ- / τ- points to a pre-form with initial *kj-. This *kj is the prevocalic form of a deictic *ki- ‘this’, attached here to *āmer-, the pre-form for the Greek word for ‘day’ (*ἡμέρα*, Doric *ἄμέρα*) that occurs also in Armenian (*awr*). From *kjāmer-, *kjā- was extracted, as if the word were to be segmented *kjā-mer- rather than the etymologically justified *kj-āmer-. The *k in Greek can reflect either a PIE velar *k or a palatal *k', of which the palatal is the better choice, since Balto-Slavic offers evidence for a deictic with a palatal, in the pronoun ‘this’ (Old Church Slavonic *sb*, Lithuanian *ši*). Returning now to Albanian, *sot* can thus be derived from *k'jā-dīti-, with syncope of the *ī, the regular deletion of medial *d, and the regular outcome of *ā. The only development that requires a special assumption for Albanian is the *s-* from *k'j; *k' would be expected to give Albanian *th* ([θ]), but nothing stands in the way of assuming that in a combination with *-j-, it could give *s-*.

Thus a pre-form *k'jā-dīti- for *sot* can be justified. That being the case, a reasonable question to ask is where *k'jā- comes from in Albanian. As noted, it has a source in Greek, albeit an indirect one, but there is no obvious source in Albanian; the *k'j can be taken as a prevocalic outcome in Albanian of the aforementioned *k'i- deictic, but what is the *-ā-? I suggest that it has the same source as in Greek, that is, it comes from a reanalysis in prehistoric Albanian of *kjāmer-, with the same restricted word for ‘day’ as is found in Greek and Armenian, a word which only later was replaced by the *dīti- word, renewed, as it were, when *dīti- became the

usual word for ‘day’. Without positing *k’jāmer- for Albanian in a prehistoric period, it is hard to see where the *-o-* of *sot* (from an *ā) could come from. Borrowing *k’jā- from Greek seems rather unlikely, as the borrowing would have to have taken place at a very early stage, well before any other evidence of contact between the two speech communities, and moreover, the borrowing of an isolated prefix is hard to motivate. Thus the evidence of *sot* points to Albanian having once had the *āmer- word for ‘day’, a form found otherwise only in Greek and Armenian, and therefore presenting an interesting dialectological grouping for this feature.⁸

This account of *sot* provides a basis for contemplating a connection between Albanian and Greek that the other features considered do not permit. But there are others as well that merit attention. It is necessary, though, to make some distinctions in them. Some, for instance, are found in Albanian and in Ancient Greek, and also in Modern Greek. For example, both Albanian and Greek, from ancient times up through the modern period, show the use of ostensibly⁹ active endings in the mediopassive aorist; in Albanian, the reflexive marker *u* occurs with active aorist forms, e.g. *u lava* ‘I washed myself’ (vs. *lava* ‘I washed (someone or something)’), and Greek has active past-tense endings added to mediopassive stem with *-θη-* in Ancient Greek and *-θηκ-* in Modern Greek, e.g. *ἐ-πλύ-θη-ν* / *πλύ-θηκ-α* ‘I washed myself, I was washed’, with the ending found in, e.g., *ἔπλυνο-ν* / *ἔπλεν-α* ‘I was washing (something)’.

Several of these features of this sort involve the modal negator discussed above in section 2. The presence alone of reflexes of *meH₁ does not indicate anything particular about Greek and Albanian, but, as discussed in Joseph 2002b, there are uses for *meH₁ that are not found outside of Greek and Albanian and thus form functionally based isoglosses linking the two.

For instance, both Albanian *mos* and Greek *μή*, in Ancient Greek and in Modern Greek, are used as an introducer of tentative main-clause questions, as shown in (5):

(5) *mos* / *μή* as introducer of tentative main-clause questions

- a. AncGrk: ἦ **μή** ποῦ τινα δυσμενέων φάσθ’ ἔμμεναι ἀνδρῶν
surely **mē** some/ACC hostile/GEN.PL say/2SG be/INF men/GEN.PL
‘You do not, surely, think him to be (one) of the hostile men?’ (*Od.* 6.200)
- b. ModGrk: **μην** είδες το παιδί?
mi saw/2SG the-child
‘Did you happen to see the child?’
- c. Alb: **mos** e njihni atë?
mos him know/2PL him/ACC
‘Do you (perhaps) know him?’

Yet, this function is not found for cognate forms in other Indo-European languages, making its restriction to Greek and Albanian potentially quite noteworthy.

Importantly, too, there are other functions, such as the use of *mos*/*μή* as the only possible negator for nonfinite forms, as shown in (6), that are found only in Albanian and Modern Greek,

⁸ And of course, it would mean reassessing the dialectology of the *(ne) H₂oyu k^wid feature discussed in section 2, as it too is found in Albanian, Armenian, and Greek.

⁹ I say “ostensibly” because the endings themselves, if used with both active and nonactive forms, cannot truly be called “active” endings; etymologically, however, they continue earlier active endings.

but not in Ancient Greek:

(6) Negating nonfinite forms

- a. in Albanian: with participles (gerundives), e.g. *duke mos folur* ‘while not talking’, the infinitival formation, e.g. *për të mos bërë gabim* ‘in order to not make a mistake’, and other participially derived formations
- b. in later (Modern) Greek: with active participles, e.g. *μην ακούγοντας* ‘(while) not listening’, and middle participles, e.g. *μην ερχόμενος* ‘(while) not coming’,

The exclusive use of *μή* for the negation of nonfinite forms is not found as such in Ancient Greek; in Ancient Greek, *μή* could negate infinitives and participles, but so too could *οὐ*, depending on the modal or factual value of the infinitive or participle. Thus, the Modern Greek restriction could be an extension of the modal negation inherited from Ancient Greek, but since it is post-Ancient Greek, it could be a contact-related feature in later Greek, borrowed from Albanian, or in Albanian, borrowed from Greek.¹⁰

A further feature involving *mos/μή* with a distribution limited to Albanian and Greek, and within Greek to Modern Greek is the use of this form as a one-word prohibitive utterance, equivalent to English *Don't*: Alb *Mos!* / ModGrk *Μη!*. There is perhaps an exclamatory *μή* that can be identified for Ancient Greek but it was not prohibitive per se. This usage is found also in other Balkan languages, including the Indic language Romani, but not in its earlier Indic predecessor, to judge from the evidence of Sanskrit. Thus it is perhaps a borrowing from Albanian or Greek (or Romani, for that matter) into the other language, or a feature these languages borrowed from another language.¹¹

Somewhat more speculative are a few features involving the prepositional element that in Albanian is *me* ‘with’ and in Greek *με(-)*. A feature found only in Albanian and Modern Greek, thus with a distribution like some of above *mos/μή* features, is the use of *me/με* as an independent preposition with the meaning ‘with’. There is no exact parallel for such a preposition elsewhere in Indo-European, though **me-* does occur as the “nucleus” of prepositions like Ancient Greek *μετά* ‘with’ (continued as a learnedism into Modern Greek) and Germanic forms like Gothic *miþ*, German *mit*, and Danish *med*. Modern Greek *με* is generally considered to derive from earlier *μετά* via the resegmentation/reanalysis of *μετά*, when followed by a neuter accusative plural object, as *με τά* plus the noun, with *τά* taken as definite article,¹² and there are parallels to such a reanalysis, in that sporadically in earlier stages of Greek *κατά* ‘down; through’ occurs as *κα* (as if *κα # τά ...*). However, there are a few reasons to question this standard account of the origin of the Modern Greek preposition *με*. For one thing, one has to wonder whether neuter plural objects were frequent enough with *μετά* to allow for the generalization of such a reanalyzed form. Also, the parallel reanalysis with *κατά* was highly

¹⁰ Modern Greek does have a nonmodal negator, *δεν*, that indirectly continues *οὐ*, since it is derived from *οὐδέν* ‘nothing, not, not at all’, a form that is a composite of *οὐ* (*οὐ* + connective *δέ* + neuter of ‘one’ *έν*). Significantly here, the nonmodal negator cannot be used with the participles of Modern Greek, the only nonfinite forms in the language (i.e., **δεν ακούγοντας/ερχόμενος*).

¹¹ In Joseph 2002b, I suggested that Balkan Romance might have been the source, since in Romanian, *nu* is used for both ‘No!’ and ‘not’.

¹² If the object was a definite noun, there may have been haplological shortening of *μετά τά* + NOUN to *μετά* + NOUN before the reanalysis to *με τά*

sporadic and did not gain currency, while $\mu\epsilon$ was so successful, so one has to wonder why the two reanalyses differed so dramatically in that regard.

In view of such concerns, alternative hypotheses can be entertained for the origin of $\mu\epsilon$. For instance, it could be that $\mu\epsilon$ is an archaism that has been a part of Greek for a long time, just not found in the written record until Medieval Greek. If the lack of attestation is taken to be an obstacle to accepting that hypothesis,¹³ it could simply be the case that the latter Greek $\mu\epsilon$ is to be considered a borrowing from Albanian. It should be clear, however, that only the $\mu\epsilon$ -as-archaism hypothesis would be a basis for a special relationship between Greek and Albanian, though the borrowing hypothesis would be consistent with what is known about later contact between speakers of the two languages.¹⁴

What might help decide the question regarding the source of the $me \sim \mu\epsilon$ matching is one further matching related to the occurrence of the preposition, namely the so-called “comitative agreement construction”. Both Albanian and Modern Greek have a comitative construction in which a 1st person singular nominative subject occurs with a comitative prepositional phrase and a verb that is 1st person plural in form, i.e. ‘I with John WE-came’, as if the verb agreement is with both the nominative and the comitative taken together. This construction may be less usual or less preferred in Albanian than in Greek, but it does occur in both languages. A representative example from each language is given in (7):

- (7) a. $\epsilon\gamma\acute{\omega}$ $\mu\epsilon$ $\tau\omicron\nu$ $\Gamma\acute{\iota}\alpha\nu\eta$ $\acute{\eta}\rho\theta\alpha\mu\epsilon$
 I/NOM with the-John/ACC came/1PL
 ‘John and I came’/‘I came with John’
- b. $Un\grave{e}$ me $Gjonin$ $erdh\grave{e}m$
 I/NOM with John/ACC came/1PL
 ‘John and I came’

It is worth noting here that the Slavic pattern for expressing this content has a subject that is 1st person plural, not singular, i.e. ‘We with John WE-came’, so this cannot be a Slavicism in either Albanian or Greek. Interestingly, Ancient Greek seems not to have had this construction, but there is no reason to think of this as an archaism; in the case of $\mu\epsilon$, by contrast, the element in question was attested in Ancient Greek, but just not as an independent preposition, whereas there is nothing comparable to work with for the comitative agreement construction. If not an archaism that survived into Modern Greek, then the presence of the pattern of (7) in these languages is either a coincidental independent innovation in each language, or a matter of language contact. Taking it as due to contact would dovetail well with the borrowing hypothesis for $me/\mu\epsilon$, on the assumption that this aspect of the syntax of me could have been borrowed along with the preposition; the most likely scenario here would be Albanian as the source language and Greek as the borrowing language, given the absence of the pattern in Ancient Greek. However, these contact accounts for the $me/\mu\epsilon$ -related matchings would deprive them of any value for Indo-European dialectology.

¹³ Lack of attestation in itself need not be a hindrance, since there are well-documented cases of long unattested but assuredly old forms like $\acute{\epsilon}\theta\omicron$ ‘daughter; female cousin’, from * $swesr-$ ‘sister’ and therefore old, but unattested until Hesychius (5th c. AD); see Janda and Joseph 2003 for discussion.

¹⁴ It is of course possible that the occurrence of me in Albanian is due to borrowing from Greek, whether an archaism or an innovative reanalysis of $\mu\epsilon\tau\acute{\alpha}$.

4. Putting all these together – what can they mean?

From the foregoing, it can be concluded that there do indeed appear to be many shared features between Albanian and Greek, and that fact alone might suggest some sort of special relationship between the two languages, but at the same time, the presence of these features raises questions as to their significance. In particular: Some may be retentions, but can we be sure of their proto-language status in each case? Some may be borrowings, but if so, are they old borrowings or instead recent ones? Some may be innovations, but are they shared innovations or independent developments in each language? And if innovations, are they old ones, predating the intense contact that gave rise to the convergences of the Balkan Sprachbund, or are they more recent ones that arose during the Balkan Sprachbund contact? All of the more recent ones, that is any of them that are post-Ancient Greek, could be due to contact in the Balkans, but if so, when and under what conditions did the contact and the borrowing occur?

It must be asked too whether shared retentions can count as a basis for a “special” relationship, of a dialectological nature. Mostly, the usual answer is no, since retentions involve doing nothing; that is, there is no shared common undertaking on the part of two speech communities. But, can resisting pressure to change be considered a type of shared common undertaking, especially if there seem to be several identifiable pressures? In this case, regarding the modal-negation related matchings, it has to be noted that Balto-Slavic, Italo-Celtic, and Tocharian eliminated the **m*-negator vs. indicative negator distinction assumed for Proto-Indo-European, and Balto-Slavic and Italo-Celtic eliminated the **m*-negator itself. Presumably, therefore, there were pressures at work in the system that gave rise to all of these developments, so what kept not only the distinction but also the form itself in both Albanian and Greek? Can their shared resistance to these pressures count as a shared innovation? Perhaps so, but the jury is still out on that important methodological point in general and thus in particular as applied here.

There are of course many ways in which “special” could be defined for the purposes of talking about a “special relationship” between Greek and Albanian. In some sense, any contact-related connection is historically special. But from the point of view of a special dialectological relationship within Indo-European, perhaps the most striking feature discussed here is the occurrence of **āmer* ‘day’ hidden in the **kǵā-* reanalysis that gave rise to Albanian *sot*, as presented in section 3. It is hard to see that as a shared retention; it could have been a Proto-Indo-European word for ‘day’ but not necessary the Proto-Indo-European word. Nor does it seem to be an independent innovation in each language, as it is not clear where it would have come from in each. And, it seems unlikely to be a borrowing, since the whole word for ‘today’ would have to be borrowed and one would have to ask why that particular word was borrowed. Thus it may well be that this one matching is the significant innovation that is the key to seeing an old connection between Albanian and Greek, one that is dialectological within Indo-European, along with all the newer, possibly contact-related ones.

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