

## **Studies in Ancient Greek Dialects**

# Trends in Classics – Supplementary Volumes

---

Edited by

Franco Montanari and Antonios Rengakos

Associate Editors

Evangelos Karakasis · Fausto Montana · Lara Pagani ·  
Serena Perrone · Evina Sistakou · Christos Tsagalis

Scientific Committee

Alberto Bernabé · Margarethe Billerbeck  
Claude Calame · Jonas Grethlein · Philip R. Hardie  
Stephen J. Harrison · Richard Hunter · Christina Kraus  
Giuseppe Mastromarco · Gregory Nagy  
Theodore D. Papanghelis · Giusto Picone  
Tim Whitmarsh · Bernhard Zimmermann

## Volume 49

# Studies in Ancient Greek Dialects

---

From Central Greece to the Black Sea

Edited by  
Georgios K. Giannakis, Emilio Crespo  
and Panagiotis Filos

**DE GRUYTER**

ISBN 978-3-11-053081-0

e-ISBN (PDF) 978-3-11-053213-5

e-ISBN (E-PUB) 978-3-11-053125-1

ISSN 1868-4785

**Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data**

A CIP catalog record for this book has been applied for at the Library of Congress.

**Bibliographic information published by the Deutsche Nationalbibliothek**

The Deutsche Nationalbibliothek lists this publication in the Deutsche Nationalbibliografie; detailed bibliographic data are available on the Internet at <http://dnb.dnb.de>.

© 2018 Walter de Gruyter GmbH, Berlin/Boston

Editorial Office: Alessia Ferreccio and Katerina Zianna

Logo: Christopher Schneider, Laufen

Satz: Dörlemann Satz GmbH & Co. KG, Lemförde

Printing and binding: CPI books GmbH, Leck

☺ Printed on acid-free paper

Printed in Germany

[www.degruyter.com](http://www.degruyter.com)

Brian D. Joseph

# Linguistic Contact in the Ancient Balkans: A Sprachbund, or Something Else?

## 1 Introduction

Contact between speakers of different languages has always been recognized as a powerful force in shaping the historical development of individual languages, and when it is intense and on-going for a long period of time, interesting developments can occur. One such outcome is what is generally referred to as a Sprachbund,<sup>1</sup> using the German form even in English, although English alternatives, such as *linguistic area*, *linguistic league*, or *convergence area*, can be found in the literature. The term ‘Sprachbund’ refers to a region, a linguistic area where languages, through intense and sustained contact in a mutually multilingual society, have come to converge with one another structurally and lexically and to diverge from the form that they held previously. Despite the denial of the sprachbund<sup>2</sup> as a legitimate construct in some quarters, e. g. Campbell (2006), Friedman & Joseph (2018, ch. 8.4) offer a defense of the notion and affirm the existence of the sprachbund, saying:

they [sprachbunds] do exist; there are zones of contact that reflect the effects of intense multi-lateral multi-directional mutual multilingualism. Recognizing such a construct seems to be an inevitable consequence of taking linguistic geography seriously and of studying what is found in key geographic zones linguistically. The sprachbund is a well-instantiated and distinctly observable entity shaped by space and time and by social and political milieu, but at base by speaker-to-speaker contact.

One of the most celebrated and well-studied sprachbunds, and in fact the first to be identified, by Trubetzkoy (1928), is that found in the modern Balkans, taking in Albanian, Aromanian, Bulgarian, Greek, [modern] Macedonian, Megleno-Romanian, Romani, Daco-Romanian, and Balkan Turkish.<sup>3</sup> Fairly compelling cases

---

1 This term was coined by Trubetzkoy (1928), but occurred first in its Russian form, *jazykovoj sojuz*, in Trubetzkoy (1923).

2 I use the term now as if it has been integrated into English, hence the non-German lower-case spelling and the plural that follows the default English pattern (so also in Friedman & Joseph 2018).

3 See Sandfeld (1930) for the best account of the Balkan sprachbund; Friedman & Joseph (2018) is a new compendium of information and analysis of the languages and features that make up the Balkan sprachbund.

have been made for other sprachbunds around the world, such as South Asia (Emeneau 1956, Masica 1976) and Meso-America (Campbell *et al.* 1986), and there are no doubt others, some of which are somewhat controversial.<sup>4</sup>

## 2 Sprachbunds in ancient times: the Balkans?

The characterization of certain zones of language contact as sprachbunds is not restricted to modern groupings. A sprachbund(-like) language cluster has been proposed by Watkins (2001) for the ancient Eastern Mediterranean, specifically with regard to ancient Anatolia. He argues that certain languages of the region, specifically Hattic, Hurrian, and various Indo-European languages of Anatolian, especially Hittite and Luvian, both part of the Anatolian branch of the family, show convergence on some structural features that are the result of contact among speakers of these languages. It is fair, therefore, to ask if there are any other ancient sprachbunds to be found.

One possibility, once again, is the Balkans, not in their modern linguistic form, but in their ancient form. The region certainly meets one key precondition for a sprachbund, namely language diversity. In (1) below, a list is given of the known ancient languages of the Balkans, based largely on Katičić (1976);<sup>5</sup> these languages are not all of equal antiquity,<sup>6</sup> and in some instances, there is considerable uncertainty as to a given language's affinities and descendants (if any), as indicated in the remarks in the footnotes:

- (1) Dacian<sup>7</sup>  
     Moesian<sup>8</sup>  
     Greek

---

<sup>4</sup> For instance, the languages of the Caucasus region have often been cited as an example of a sprachbund, but Tuite (1999) raises serious concerns.

<sup>5</sup> Bammesberger & Vennemann (2004) has some material as well pertaining to the ancient Balkans.

<sup>6</sup> For chronological reasons, I have left off Old Church Slavonic, as it is attested too recently (via c. 9<sup>th</sup> c. AD texts) to be considered here, even with its importance for understanding the emergence of Balkan Slavic.

<sup>7</sup> This could possibly be termed 'Pre-Romanian', if this is the indigenous language that Latin was 'filtered' through in the Balkans.

<sup>8</sup> This may be separate from Dacian, or instead part of what might be called 'Daco-Moesian'.

Illyrian<sup>9</sup>  
 Lemnian  
 Liburnian  
 Macedonian<sup>10</sup>  
 Messapic  
 Mysian  
 Paeonian  
 Phrygian  
 Pre-Greek<sup>11</sup>  
 Thracian<sup>12</sup>

In addition, there are as well some traces of Continental Celtic in inscriptions and some Germanic (Gothic and/or Norse) that shows up in loanwords; possibly also there was an Armenian presence prehistorically in the Balkans, and conceivably even Anatolian Indo-European speakers made their way into Anatolia through the Balkans.

But there are some major problems with considering the ancient Balkans to be a sprachbund. For one thing, in a typical case, as with the modern Balkans, a sprachbund is defined by reference to a number of shared features that are not a matter of inheritance or universality or chance, that is, they are convergences caused by language contact. And typically, again thinking of the modern Balkans, there is demonstrable convergence among the languages involved, with clear divergence from earlier states. However, unfortunately, our knowledge of most prehistoric Balkan languages from a detailed linguistic structural point of view is minimal; there simply is not enough evidence to go on. Moreover, just about the only convergent feature found in many of these languages is the merger

---

**9** There is considerable controversy as to whether this is the ancestor to modern Albanian. There simply is not enough linguistic evidence to make the case compellingly, as there are no Illyrian inscriptions; a handful of words can be found in glosses and ancient testimony, but they all present some difficulties in analysis.

**10** A key issue with ancient Macedonia is whether it is an independent branch of Indo-European or instead is a sibling to (all of) ancient Greek or is simply an ancient Greek dialect; I am inclined to a position that rules out the last of these possibilities, opting instead for treating the language either as independent within Indo-European or a sibling to the entirety of the ancient Greek dialects, much as Tsakonian is a sibling to all of the modern Greek dialects, stemming from ancient Doric and not from the Hellenistic koine.

**11** This is also known as ‘Pelasgian’, and refers to the language(s) that preceded Greek in the southernmost part of the Balkans, whatever their familial affiliation was.

**12** This has sometimes been seen as a predecessor to modern Albanian, but with reasoning and evidence that does not seem to be particularly compelling.

of Proto-Indo-European (PIE) voiced aspirates (\*D<sup>h</sup>) with voiced plain stops (\*D), if it is accepted that they are Indo-European languages, which is a reasonable but not fully demonstrable proposition, and if proposed etymologies, which usually are based just on guesswork and speculation, are correct. For instance, in the ancient Macedonian proper name Βερενίκη, considered to be the equivalent of the Greek proper name Φερενίκη, it is generally accepted that there is a first part Βερε- (= *bere-*) in it and that that first part comes from PIE \*b<sup>h</sup>er-.<sup>13</sup> There are other words for which there is some testimony as to meaning, and thus etymologizability, allowing for an inference of a deaspiration of the PIE voiced aspirates; these include the forms given in (2):

- (2) a. Illyrian *Deuadaia* ‘satyr’ (Katičić 1976, 170–171; Tzitzilis 2007, 746), if it is connected with AGk. θύω ‘rage’, and thus from a PIE \*d<sup>h</sup>eu-
- b. Thracian *brutos* ‘ale’, if connected with English *broth* (etc.), and thus from a PIE \*b<sup>h</sup>reu-

Armed with facts like these showing a change of \*b<sup>h</sup>, \*d<sup>h</sup> etc. to plain voiced \*b, \*d etc., and thus a merger of \*D<sup>h</sup> and \*D, one can construct a plausible contact explanation for these developments. For instance, the merger could have occurred if a substratum language had a two-stop system and this system prevailed in language shift due to first-language interference, as substratum speakers shifted to the target languages (in different areas in the Balkans); that is, it may be that such speakers could not hear the difference between, say, \*b<sup>h</sup> and \*b, or that they could not replicate the difference when they attempted to speak the target language. Alternatively, the merger could have spread if the speakers of one language innovated and speakers of other languages interacting with the innovating language accommodated to its pronunciation, thus failing to make the distinction more for sociolinguistic reasons than structuralist ones. Yet another scenario would be one involving ‘reverse interference’, where the first language of speakers is affected by their living in a dominant second language environment so that the features of the second language they use so regularly ‘bleed’ back into their first language; thus, if there had been a dominant innovating language with no D/D<sup>h</sup>

<sup>13</sup> For the purposes of this argument, the exact phonetics of the sounds written with letters, like < β δ γ >, suggesting plain voiced stops, is irrelevant, since it is the merger with original \*b d g that is at issue. That is, it has been argued, e.g. by Hatzopoulos (2007) and others, e.g. Crespo (2012) and Méndez Dosuna (2012), that the Macedonian use of the letters < β δ γ > reflects voiced fricative pronunciations (phonetically [v ð γ]). Whatever the status of that claim (and I, for one, am not fully persuaded), all that matters here is the possible merger and what it might mean regarding language contact in ancient times.



distinction that was spoken as a second language by speakers of a first language that originally had a D/D<sup>h</sup> distinction, over time the first language speakers could have come to using second language phonology in their first language, at least as far as the D/D<sup>h</sup> distinction is concerned.

Of these scenarios, the first would be relevant for prehistoric language contact in the Balkans, but not for a sprachbund per se. The other two, however, would be relevant for a sprachbund, as it would involve continued and on-going interaction among speakers of different languages. However, two important caveats are in order: there are several non-Balkan Indo-European languages that show the merger of \*D and \*D<sup>h</sup> too, especially Balto-Slavic, Iranian, and Celtic, suggesting that the merger could have happened independently in the ancient Balkan languages; and, there are languages in the Balkans that do not show D<sup>h</sup>/D merger, especially Greek.<sup>14</sup> This in itself need not be a problem, since it cannot be expected that every language in a sprachbund shows all of the features, and perhaps Greek was outside of whatever sprachbund there might have been; geography alone is not the issue, since most of Serbian fails to show many (modern) Balkan sprachbund features. Still, it would be a curious fact.

In any case, though, the \*D<sup>h</sup>/D merger is just a lone feature, and it is hard to build much of a case for a sprachbund on a single feature. Thus, there is a problem with taking this feature to be even suggestive of a sprachbund. There is also a problem as to our fragmentary knowledge of these languages, not to mention their pre-Balkan state, except insofar as they are Indo-European languages so that reconstructions for Proto-Indo-European provide some insight into their starting state.

### 3 Social conditions and sprachbunds

Based on the foregoing, it is hard to say much about the ancient Balkans as a sprachbund based on purely linguistic evidence. However, perhaps most importantly, we need to ask whether the sort of social conditions that lead to a sprachbund were present in the ancient Balkans. Friedman & Joseph (2018, ch. 8.1–2) lay out the conditions for sprachbund formation, stating, as the quote given in § 1 indicates, that sprachbunds arise under conditions of sustained, intense, intimate contact among speakers, with multilateral (i.e. mutual) multilingualism. We know that there was contact in ancient times, but what we do not know for

---

<sup>14</sup> Armenian, if it counts as Balkan, shows the change of \*D<sup>h</sup> to \*D, but not the merger, since \*D had previously shifted to a voiceless outcome (e.g. \*deḱm̥ ‘ten’ > *tasn*).

the ancient Balkans is the extent and nature of that contact; in particular, was it sprachbund-consistent and sprachbund-conducive?

Based on modern Balkans, we expect to see in a sprachbund structural convergence but with so little information to go on about the languages of the ancient Balkans, nothing can really be said except of a very speculative nature. For instance, Thracian and Illyrian are said to have had no infinitive in order to explain the absence of an infinitive in Albanian, on the assumption that one or both of them are ancestral to Albanian; but that involves circularity on top of speculation, and really gets us nowhere closer to understanding the Balkan past.

With the modern Balkan sprachbund as a model, we might also expect a particular kind of lexical convergence involving conversationally based loans, what Friedman & Joseph (2014; 2018) call “E.R.I.C.” loans, those that are “Essentially Rooted In Conversation”.<sup>15</sup> Such loans include discourse particles and most notably, closed-class items that are often thought to be resistant to borrowing like pronouns and grammatical markers and adpositions and kinship terms and such; some examples are given in (3), where ‘OAGk’ stands for Ottoman-era Adrianople Greek, as described in Ronzevalle (1911):

- (3) Mod. Gk. μπαμπάς ‘dad’ ← Turkish *baba*  
 OAGk. *bu* ‘this’, *kim* ‘what?’ ← Turkish *bu*, *kim*  
 OAGk. *gibi* ‘like’ (postposition) ← Turkish *gibi*  
 Dialectal Mod. Gk. μπελκί(μ) ‘perhaps’ ← Turkish *belki*

Armed with such loans as a diagnostic for the sort of contact that can give rise to sprachbunds, we can ask whether any loans like those occur in the ancient Balkans. Most of the loans that are documented involve material objects or toponyms, and thus are essentially cultural loans, but there is one example in Hesychius that may be noteworthy, namely a gloss that is said to be a non-Greek one, what is called ‘Eleian’, from the north-west of (S.) Greece, and takes the form βρα with the meaning ‘brother’. It must be asked whether this word represents a loan, or whether it is an inheritance from PIE, if the language is Indo-European, or something else. If it is a loan, it would seem that it could be judged to be a kinship-term loan like *baba* in the modern Balkans, borrowed perhaps from a nursery-word clipping of a form cognate with *#b-* (or *#b<sup>h</sup>-*) cognate with Greek φράτηρ.

Unfortunately, that is all there is, and while such a form might invite speculation, it does not really allow one to build much of a case. So it must be admitted

<sup>15</sup> This acronym is a thinly veiled homage to our friend and mentor Eric P. Hamp.

that this line of investigation into a possible ancient sprachbund in the Balkans is essentially a dead end.

## 4 Taking a different approach

Thus, another approach is needed, and in particular, instead of speculating based on scraps of evidence that essentially lead nowhere, a potentially more fruitful line of attack would be to focus on two Indo-European languages in the Balkans that might permit serious discussion about possible sprachbund conditions because we know a lot about them and about their (pre-)history. These two languages are Greek and Albanian. Greek, of course, is documented in the Balkans back to the 14<sup>th</sup> c. BC via the Linear B tablets which revealed Mycenaean Greek, and Albanian, even though only directly attested as of 1462, with substantial material coming only somewhat later in 1555, gives evidence, through clear loanwords, of prehistoric contacts with speakers of other languages in the area.<sup>16</sup>

Moreover, as it happens, there are several features that Greek and Albanian share from the ancient period, centuries and possibly millennia before the modern sprachbund, which had its origins in the Ottoman period. It is known, for instance, that there was contact between Greek and Albanian in ancient times, because there are some old loanwords from Greek to be found in Albanian, as shown in (4):

- (4) *lakër* ‘cabbage’ (← *λάχανον* ‘garden herbs’)  
*mokërë* ‘millstone’ (← *μάχανά* ‘instrument’)  
*tarozë* ‘helmet’ (← *θωράκιον* ‘breastplate’)

And, more importantly for exploring a possible ancient sprachbund in the Balkans, Greek and Albanian show various matching structural features or lexical features with grammatical import; some of these features are given in (5), with some discussion, the focus here being on ancient Greek, but with modern Greek data cited as needed:

---

<sup>16</sup> What follows summarizes the key elements discussed in greater detail in Joseph (2013). The redundancy is appropriate since the original paper is neither widely known nor easily accessible, and in any case, there is some elaboration included here of various points which were not obvious in the earlier presentation. Moreover, considering the evidence within the context of the possibility of an ancient sprachbund is a novel perspective on the facts.

- (5) a. the use of the IE modal negator *\*mē* (*\*meH<sub>1</sub>*) – Albanian *mos* (< *\*mē-l<sup>w</sup>id*) / Greek μή (< *\*mē*) introducing tentative main-clause questions, a feature found in Albanian (as in (i)) and in ancient Greek (in (ii), a usage that continues into modern Greek), but nowhere else in just this way in Indo-European, e. g.:<sup>17</sup>
- i. Mos e njihni atë  
NEG.QN him know.2PL him.ACC  
‘Do you perhaps know him?’
- ii. ᾗ μή που φάσθε (Hom., *Od.* 6.200)  
surely NEG.QN how say.2SG  
‘Surely you do not think ...?’
- b. in the simple past tense (aorist) of the passive voice, the occurrence of specifically active endings (Albanian 1sg. *-a*, 2sg. *-e*, (etc.), ancient Greek 1sg. *-ν*, 2sg. *-ς*, (etc.)), e. g. Albanian *u lav-a* / ancient Greek ἐπλύθη-ν ‘I was washed’, where other languages use middle voice endings (as in Gothic, e. g. *baira-da* ‘was brought’), or innovate other endings (as in Indo-Iranian, e. g. Vedic Sanskrit *aśrāv-i* ‘was heard’) or a periphrastic construction (as in Latin *latus est* ‘has been carried’).<sup>18</sup>
- c. the occurrence of an independent adverb/adposition with the shape [me] meaning ‘with’, Albanian *me* and modern Greek με. This is potentially significant as there is no exact parallel anywhere else in the Indo-European family, though *\*me-* does occur as the ‘nucleus’ of forms like μετά ‘with’ and Gothic (and Germanic more generally) *miþ*.<sup>19</sup> με has been claimed (see Horrocks 2010, 284 and Babiniotis 2010, s. v., endorsing an idea put forth earlier, e. g. by Hatzidakis 1892, 152) to be from μετά as a reanalysis (via resegmentation) of μετά + NEUT.PL as μὲ τά + NEUT.PL (with τά taken as definite article), but that seems rather *ad hoc*, and even though such developments occurred in ancient times, as for instance with κατά, giving κα (as if κα # τά ...), they were highly sporadic and did

<sup>17</sup> See Joseph (2002a) for more discussion of this feature.

<sup>18</sup> There is quite a bit more to be said here, pertaining to the emergence of a non-active marker *u* in Albanian (ultimately connected to the *\*swe-* reflexive root of Indo-European) and of a specifically passive marker *-θη-* in Greek. However, for the purposes of this paper, the point about the appearance of active endings in both Albanian and Greek in this grammatical context suffices.

<sup>19</sup> Ancient Greek has *\*me* as a bound form in μέχρι ‘until, up to’, and other adverbials.

not gain currency. By contrast,  $\mu\epsilon$  was clearly successful, suggesting it was not just the outcome of a sporadic process. Thus it cannot be ruled out that  $\mu\epsilon$  is an archaism that has been a part of Greek since ancient times, just not attested until Medieval Greek,<sup>20</sup> which would mean that Albanian and Greek would be nearly unique within Indo-European in having an unextended *\*me* ‘with’ as an independent form.<sup>21</sup> Still, the late attestation of  $\mu\epsilon$  in Greek (footnote 19 notwithstanding) could be taken to mean that the presence of [me] ‘with’ in both languages is a matter of contact, though which language is the donor and which the recipient may be hard to decide.

Thus, ancient Greek and Albanian converge in a matter of syntax (the use of *\*mē*), a matter of verbal structure (the form of the passive past tense endings), and a matter of prepositional usage (*\*me*, perhaps). Could these be contact-related points of convergence, indicative of an ancient sprachbund? Or, alternatively, are these just Indo-European dialect features?

One way to address these questions is to consider whether there is any reason to think that Albanian and Greek might have a particular dialectal affinity within Indo-European. The usual view of Indo-European dialectology does not link Albanian and Greek into any special sort of subgroup, certainly not by some of the usual dialectological diagnostics that are often discussed within the Indo-European linguistics. For instance, the merger of *\*o* and *\*a* is found in Germanic and Balto-Slavic, and also Albanian, but not Greek (cf. Alb. *natë* ‘night’, Gk. *νύξ*, both from PIE *\*nokʷt-*). Similarly, Greek shows the merger of Proto-Indo-European palatal stops (*\*k̑ g̑*) with the velars (*\*k g*), as in Italic, Celtic, and Germanic, while Albanian shows distinct reflexes of these sounds.<sup>22</sup> Further, under most interpretations, Greek shows the occurrence of the past tense prefix *\*e-* in the form of the augment *ἐ-*, whereas Albanian does not, and Greek vocalizes word-in-

**20** Lack of early attestation in itself is not an impediment to taking a form to be old, as there are parallels to clearly old words going unattested for a long time; *ëop* ‘daughter; female cousin’ continues PIE *\*swesr-* ‘sister’, but is unattested throughout all of ancient Greek and only attested for the first time in Hesychius (ca. 5<sup>th</sup> c. AD).

**21** Phrygian has a word  $\mu\epsilon$  that appears to belong together with the PIE ‘with’ form *\*me-*; this may be yet another feature which connects Phrygian to Greek (see Fortson 2010, 101; the augment is another, though see the discussion below of that feature).

**22** Hamp (1999, *apud* Maynard & Joseph 2000), following Pedersen (1900), argues for this position, citing the triplet of *tho-të* ‘says’ < *\*kē-ti* (cf. Old Persian *θā-tiy*), *kohë* ‘time’ < *\*kēskā* (cf. Old Church Slavonic *časъ*), *sorrë* ‘blackbird’ < *\*k̑ērsnā* (a *v̑ddhi*-grade formation from the root of Sanskrit *kṛṣṇa-* ‘black’).

initial laryngeals, whereas Albanian does not. The distribution of these features can be summarized as in Table 1:

**Table 1:** Indo-European Dialect Features

	<u>Albanian</u>	<u>Greek</u>
* <i>o</i> ~ * <i>a</i> merger:	YES	NO
* <i>K</i> ~ <i>ǵ</i> merger:	NO	YES
past tense augment:	NO	YES
prothetic vowel from initial laryngeal	NO	YES

Rather, using other diagnostics, one finds isoglosses connecting Greek and Armenian, e. g. the occurrence of a prothetic vowel from initial laryngeal (cf. ἀνήρ / *ayr* ‘man’ < \**H<sub>2</sub>ner-*), the presence of the augment, and various shared lexemes (e. g. πρωκτός / *erastank* ‘buttocks’). And, there are features connecting Albanian and Balto-Slavic, e. g. the lengthening of vowels before the voiced unaspirated stops of Proto-Indo-European (so-called ‘Winter’s Law’). Winter’s Law is needed for Albanian in order to explain, for instance, *erë* ‘smell’ from \**ōd-r-o-* (with *e* from \**ō*; cf. Latin *odor*, Greek ὀσμή (< \**od-smā*), both with *ō*, which would otherwise give *a* in Albanian), and for Balto-Slavic in order to explain, for instance, forms like Russian *vydra* ‘otter’ from \**ūd-r-* (with *y* from \**ū*; cf. \**ūd-* in other languages, e. g. Greek ὕδωρ ‘water’, where \**ū* would give Slavic *ǔ*).

Moreover, some seeming points of difference between Albanian and Greek might actually be shared features that are ‘hidden’. For instance, traces of an augment can be discerned for Albanian, as positing an augment allows for an explanation of the otherwise intervocalic < *dh* > outcome of \**d* in the aorist *dha* ‘s/he gave’; that is, it can be taken to be the regular outcome of \**e-dH<sub>3</sub>-(e)t*, as otherwise, the outcome is anomalous.<sup>23</sup> Thus a reassessment is needed of what is said above about the augment, and the line in Table 1 that reads:

	<u>Albanian</u>	<u>Greek</u>
past tense augment:	NO	YES
is rather to be judged:		
past tense augment:	YES	YES

**23** The loss of \**e-* here is regular, as are the developments giving *-a*.

Moreover, in any case the past tense augment might not be diagnostic of a particular relationship if it is an archaism, that is, it was a feature of Proto-Indo-European so that all of the Indo-European branches would have been like Greek and Albanian originally. The Old Irish use of the prefix *no-* in the past tense is instructive here; even if a different form, it serves the same function as the augment (cf. Watkins 1963, 16–17).

The same can be said with regard to the matching of the Albanian negative element *as-* ‘no-’ (as in *askush* ‘no one’, *asgjë* ‘nothing’) with Greek οὐκί ‘not’, both from *\*(ne) H<sub>2</sub>oyu k<sup>w</sup>id* ‘not ever; not on your life’ (as suggested by Pedersen 1900 and Cowgill 1960, though without argumentation, and as argued for explicitly by Joseph 2002b). It might appear to be a dialectal isogloss within Indo-European, shared by Armenian with its negative marker *oč’* (Cowgill 1960), but there may be traces of it as well in Old Norse *eigi* ‘not’ – though the details of development are not as ‘clean’ as one would hope for – suggesting that it might rather be an archaism. That is, if the Germanic evidence can be resolved, then instead of being a dialectally restricted innovation within Indo-European, the negative phrase *\*(ne) H<sub>2</sub>oyu k<sup>w</sup>id* could be a feature of Proto-Indo-European, and thus inherited into Greek and Albanian. And, even the Winter’s Law vowel lengthening (V → V: / \_\_D) that Albanian shares with Balto-Slavic may not be a ‘significant’ shared innovation because it may just be a reflection of a phonetically natural lengthening before voiced obstruents; note the parallel in English, as in *bad* / *bat* ([bæ:d] / [bæt]).<sup>24</sup>

Moreover, there are other matchings between Greek and Albanian that are clearly retentions and thus, as shared inheritances, say nothing about any possible special connection between the two languages. These include:

- (6) a. a distinction between modal and non-modal negation (*mos* vs. *s’/nuk* ~ *μή* vs. *οὐ*), as it is found in Indo-Iranian, in Hittite, in Armenian, and in Latin
- b. the form of modal negator itself (*\*meH<sub>1</sub>*), found in Armenian (*mi*) and Indo-Iranian (*mā*), and indirectly in Latin (*nē*, if it represents *\*ne* influenced by *\*meH<sub>1</sub>*)
- c. suppletion between the present and aorist with some verbs, most notably ‘bring’ *bie* / *prur-* (Geg: *prun-*) ~ *φέρω* / *ἤνεγκ* < PIE *\*b<sup>h</sup>er-* / *\*(pro)-Hneǵ-*, found also in Celtic (Old Irish *ber-* / *ro-ucc*)
- d. special endings for medio-passive voice forms in the present system, e.g. ‘seem’:

<sup>24</sup> Alwin Kloekhorst (p.c.) tells me that he suspects that it might have occurred in Hittite also.

duk <u>e</u> m	↔	φαίν <u>ο</u> μαι
dukesh	↔	φαίν <u>η</u> (< *φαίν <u>ε</u> σαι)
duk <u>e</u> t	↔	φαίν <u>ε</u> ται

where the same endings are found in, e.g. Sanskrit (as in *labh-e* / *lab-ha-se* / *labha-te* ‘take’).

Thus from a dialectological perspective, based on these features, it is hard to make a case for an Albanian-Greek dialect affinity within Indo-European, so that the structural matchings noted in (5) could well be taken as sprachbund evidence, i.e. as telltale signs of intense contact at an early period between speakers of Albanian and speakers of Greek.

Still, there is at least one other matter of considerable detail that possibly offers a more telling feature, namely what emerges from the composition of Albanian *sot* ‘today’ and *sonte* ‘tonight’. In particular, as argued first in Joseph (2013), it is generally agreed that *sonte* represents *so-*, whatever that may be, plus a reduced form of *natë* ‘night’, and *sot* represents *so-* with a form of *ditë* ‘day’.<sup>25</sup> Determining the source of *so-* is what provides the key to this possibly more telling Albanian-Greek feature. To find the source, it is essential to start with ancient Greek σήμερον (Attic τήμερον) ‘today’, which is built on the word for ‘day’, ἡμαρ / ἡμέρᾱ, a lexeme which is restricted within Indo-European to Greek and Armenian (*awr*), together with a deictic element \**kí-* (cf. Lithuanian *šis* ‘this’); from \**kí-āmer-* ‘this day’, the phonetic form \**kj-āmer-* would have arisen regularly. Importantly, from that form, which in Greek terms, inasmuch as Greek is a classic centum language, would have been \**kj-āmer-*, it seems that a reanalysis (resegmentation) to \**kjā-mer-* occurred, since an element \**kjā-*, with no other basis as a deictic in Indo-European, figured in a temporal composite with ‘year’: σῆτες (Attic τῆτες) ‘this year’.<sup>26</sup>

Turning now to Albanian, a ready source for *so-* is \**kjā-*,<sup>27</sup> but there is no likely source for \**-ā-* in \**kjā-* in anything connected to *ditë*; therefore, it seems best to assume that Albanian once had \**āmer-* ‘day’, the lexeme otherwise found only in Greek and Armenian, and that later, \**diti-* (cf. *ditë* ‘day’) was substituted in for \**āmer-*, replacing the opaque part of the composite for ‘today’ with a more transparently ‘day’-related form. To suppose that the \**kjā-* created in Greek was

<sup>25</sup> Loss of medial *-d-* is regular (cf. *erë* ‘smell’ from \**ōd-r-o-*, discussed above).

<sup>26</sup> Note also Mycenaean Greek *za-we-te* ‘this year’, where the symbol read as ‘za’ stands for the outcome of a Greek velar plus *yod* (thus \**kjā-wetes*, built on the stem of *έτος* ‘year’).

<sup>27</sup> This assumes a special treatment for \**k* before \**j*, since \**k* regularly gives <th> ([θ]) in Albanian; nothing in Albanian speaks against such an assumption.



borrowed into Albanian seems difficult for two reasons: first, the creation of *\*kĵā-* must have happened very early in Greek since a reflex of it shows up in Mycenaean Greek (see footnote 26) and there is no guarantee that a form that would have been independent enough to allow for development of an *-o-* in Albanian would have had a consonantism that could yield the *s-* of *sot/sonte*; second, borrowing of just an affix without the rest of the form seems somewhat unlikely, and if the whole form were borrowed, it is not clear why the Albanization of the form through the substituting in of *\*diti-* would have left *\*kĵā-* intact rather than segmenting it as *\*kĵ-āmer-* or *\*kĵi-āmer-*. These considerations mean that the reanalysis of *\*X-āmer-* as *\*Xā-mer-* is probably best taken as a development that occurred independently in Albanian and in Greek.

But what is to be made of the occurrence of *\*āmer-*, then, in both Greek and Albanian? It is hard to see the use of *\*āmer-* as a shared retention, since it is not a widely distributed term across Indo-European. Nor is the use of *\*āmer-* likely to be an independent innovation in each language, as it is not clear where it would have come from. And, it is difficult to see it as a borrowing, since it is not a cultural item as are other old Albanian words from Greek. So the occurrence of *\*āmer-* in these two languages, and Armenian as well, would seem best taken as an innovation shared by these three languages, and a significant one at that. Thus, the innovations seen here in *sot/sonte* and *σήμερον/σῆτες* are the key to the positing of an old connection between Albanian and Greek, namely the sharing of the restricted word for ‘day’.

## 5 Assessment and conclusion: what can these facts mean?

To sum up, there appear to be many shared features between Albanian and Greek, but they raise various questions. Some are retentions (e.g. the form and basic prohibitive function of *mos/μή*), and thus are neither dialectologically revealing nor indicative of sprachbund-like convergence. Some may be borrowings (e.g. prepositional *me/με*), but without a clear indication as to whether they are old or recent; if recent, then they would be relevant only for the present-day (i.e. Ottoman-era Balkan sprachbund), while if old, then they could be indicative of sprachbund-like contact, but also of a dialectological link within Indo-European between Greek and Albanian. Finally, some may be innovations (e.g. the question use of *mos/μή*), but as all are old (that is, found in ancient Greek) it is unclear if they are borrowings or shared, or even independent, innovations. Only the matching in *sot/σήμερον*, showing need for *\*āmar*, is unassailably a shared

innovation, though other old features, if innovations, may well be further evidence for a Greek-Albanian dialectological link.

Thus, the examination of various shared features between Greek and Albanian yields no ‘smoking gun’ pointing definitively to a prehistoric zone of intense contact involving these languages, and therefore no evidence for a prehistoric Balkan sprachbund. Rather, new views emerge from the foregoing discussion not only of the contact relation between the two languages (e.g. perhaps the *me/με* prepositional convergence) but possibly a deep – that is to say, old – dialectological one as well, based (largely) on *sot/sonte*, σήμερον, and \**āmer*. Nonetheless, if even some of the matchings between ancient Greek and Albanian are due to contact, then an ancient sprachbund is not to be ruled out, and the sifting of features hinted at here would be a start towards a better understanding of such a prehistoric construct, but only as far as Greek and Albanian are concerned.<sup>28</sup>

Indeed, if we knew more about the other languages in the ancient Balkans, specifically more about their structure and all aspects of their lexicon, then we would be in a better position to make a more definitive assessment concerning a prehistoric Balkan sprachbund. But as things stand, all we have is some tantalizing bits of evidence, and some suggestive indications, but nothing more, an unsatisfying situation but a realistic one, given the state of our knowledge.

## References

- Babiniotis, G. D. 2010. *Ετυμολογικό λεξικό της νέας ελληνικής γλώσσας* [Etymological Dictionary of the Modern Greek Language], Athens.
- Bammesberger, A. & Vennemann, Th. (eds.) 2004. *Languages in Prehistoric Europe*, Heidelberg.
- Campbell, L. 2006. “Areal Linguistics: A Closer Scrutiny”, in: Y. Matras, A. McMahon & N. Vincent (eds.), *Linguistic Areas: Convergence in Historical and Typological Perspective*, Houndmills – Basingstoke – Hampshire, 1–31.
- Campbell, L., Kaufman, T. & Smith-Stark, Th. C. 1986. “Meso-America as a Linguistic Area”, *Language* 62, 530–570.
- Cowgill, W. 1960. “Greek *ou* and Armenian *oc*”, *Language* 36, 347–350.
- Crespo, E. 2012. “Languages and Dialects in Ancient Macedon”, in: G. K. Giannakis (ed.), *Ancient Macedonia: Language, History, Culture*, Thessaloniki, 121–131 (online: [http://ancdialects.greeklanguage.gr/sites/default/files/studies/\\_makedonia\\_tomos.pdf](http://ancdialects.greeklanguage.gr/sites/default/files/studies/_makedonia_tomos.pdf)).
- Emeneau, M. B. 1956. “India as a Linguistic Area”, *Language* 32, 3–16.
- Fortson IV, B. 2010. *Indo-European Language and Culture. An Introduction*, Oxford.

---

<sup>28</sup> In principle, despite claims to the contrary by some (cf., for instance, Thomason 2001), two languages should be sufficient to determine a sprachbund, if the right type of contact is involved; see Friedman & Joseph (2018, ch. 3) for discussion of this very point.

- Friedman, V. A. & Joseph, B. D. 2014. "Lessons from Judezmo about the Balkan Sprachbund and Contact Linguistics", *International Journal of the Sociology of Language* 226, 3–23.
- 2018 (forthcoming). *The Balkan Languages*, Cambridge.
- Hamp, E. P. 1999. "The History and Dialectology of Albanian", lectures presented at The Ohio State University, 29 November – 4 December 1999.
- Hatzidakis, G. 1892. *Einleitung in die neugriechische Grammatik*, Leipzig.
- Hatzopoulos, M. B. 2007. "La position dialectale du macédonien à la lumière des découvertes épigraphiques récentes", in: I. Hajnal (ed.), *Die altgriechischen Dialekte. Wesen und Werden (Akten des Kolloquiums Freie Universität Berlin, 19.-22. September 2001)*, Innsbruck, 157–176.
- Horrocks, G. 2010. *Greek. A History of the Language and its Speakers*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed., Malden, MA – Oxford – Chichester.
- Joseph, B. D. 2002a. "Balkan Insights into the Syntax of \**mē* in Indo-European", in: M. Southern (ed.), *Indo-European Perspectives (Journal of Indo-European Studies Monograph Series 43)*, Washington, DC, 103–120.
- 2002b. "More on the PIE and post-PIE Dimensions to Albanian-Greek Negation Parallels", Paper presented at the *21st Annual East Coast Indo-European Conference (ECIEC)*, University of Pennsylvania, June 13, 2002.
- 2013. "On Old and New Connections between Greek and Albanian: Some Grammatical Evidence", in: A. Spiro (ed.), *Albano-Hellenica 5 (Papers from the First International Conference of Greek-Albanian Studies, Tirana, Albania, March 24–25, 2012)*, 7–21.
- Masica, C. 1976. *South Asia as a Linguistic Area*, Chicago.
- Maynard, K. & Joseph, B. D. 2000. "Hamp Lectures on the Albanian Language, Ohio State University 11/29–12/4, 1999", *Indo-European Studies Bulletin* (University of California at Los Angeles) 9.1 (March–April 2000), 25–27.
- Méndez Dosuna, J. 2012. "Ancient Macedonian as a Greek Dialect: A Critical Survey on Recent Work", in: G. K. Giannakis (ed.), *Ancient Macedonia: Language, History, Culture*, Thessaloniki, 133–145 (online: [http://ancdialects.greeklanguage.gr/sites/default/files/studies/\\_makedonia\\_tomos.pdf](http://ancdialects.greeklanguage.gr/sites/default/files/studies/_makedonia_tomos.pdf)).
- Pedersen, H. 1900. "Die Gutturale im Albanesischen", *KZ* 36, 277–340.
- Ronzewalle, P. L. 1911. "Les emprunts turcs dans le grec vulgaire de Roumélie et spécialement d'Andrinople", *Journal Asiatique* 18.1, 69–106, 257–336, 405–462.
- Sandfeld, Kr. 1930. *Linguistique balkanique. Problèmes et résultats*. Paris. (first published: *Balkanfilologien*, Copenhagen, 1926).
- Thomason, S. G. 2001. *Language Contact: An Introduction*, Edinburgh.
- Trubetzkoy, N. 1923. "Vavilonskaja bašnja i smešenie jazykov", *Evrazijskij vremennik* 3, 107–124.
- 1928. "Proposition 16", in: *Actes du premier Congrès international de linguistes*, Leiden, 18.
- Tuite, K. 1999. "The Myth of the Caucasian Sprachbund: The Case of Ergativity", *Lingua* 108, 1–26.
- Tzitzilis, Ch. 2007. "Greek and Illyrian", in: A.-F. Christidis (ed.), *A History of Ancient Greek. From the Beginnings to Late Antiquity*, Cambridge, 745–751.
- Watkins, C. 1963. "Preliminaries to a Historical and Comparative Analysis of the Syntax of the Old Irish Verb", *Celtica* 6, 1–49.
- 2001. "An Indo-European Linguistic Area and its Characteristics: Ancient Anatolia. Areal Diffusion as a Challenge to the Comparative Method", in: A. Aikhenvald & R. M. W. Dixon (eds.), *Areal Diffusion and Genetic Inheritance. Problems in Comparative Linguistics*, Oxford, 44–63.

