AKADEMIA E SHKENCAVE DHE E ARTEVE E KOSOVËS ACADEMIA SCIENTIARUM ET ARTIUM KOSOVIENSIS

# STUDIME 

Revistë për studime filologjike
23
2016


## AKADEMIA E SHKENCAVE DHE E ARTEVE E KOSOVËS KOSOVA ACADEMY OF SCIENCES AND ARTS

## STUDIME

## A Review for philological Studies

## 23

## 2016

Del një herë në vit.
Published annually.

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Redaksia e revistës Studime për vitin 2016 njofton se numri 23 i vitit 2016 është bërë gati për shtyp në pjesën e parë të vitit 2017, por për arsye të natyrës së procedurave financiare nuk ka qenë e mundur të botohej në versionin e shtypur deri në fillim të vitit 2018. Meqenëse ndërkohë redaksia për përgatitjen e numrit 24 e më tutje ka përbërje të re, në marrëveshje me Sekretarin e Seksionit vendosëm që versioni elektronik në formatin PDF ta nxjerrim në faqen e ASHAK-ut qysh tash. Kuptohet që versioni i shtypur do të jetë plotësisht i njëjtë me këtë version.

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# Brian D. JOSEPH, The Ohio State University Kdu $811^{\prime} 14.04$ UNDERSTANDING GREEK THROUGH ALBANIAN: THE CASE OF PRO(S)PAPPOUS 

Combing through lexicographical works often can yield a small gem that helps to illuminate a detail here or there about a word in another language. For instance, the form strittavus in a somewhat obscure Latin source (Paulus ex Festo), with its unexplained initial $s$ - for what otherwise in Latin is tritavus 'great-great-great-great-grandfather', served as a basis for injecting some clarity, in my view, into the understanding of the development of the Albanian prefix stër- (shtër- in older sources, especially Meyer 1891, where it is written šter-) that occurs in kinship terms of generational distance, among other functions, e.g. stër-gjysh 'great-grandfather' (built on gjysh 'grandfather'). ${ }^{1}$

In the same way, a related Albanian word found in Meyer's lemma for gjysh (for him: ǵüs) serves as a basis for the explication of an oddity in a Greek dialectal form. In particular, he gives treǵüš alongside of štcrǵüš for 'great-grandfather' as well as, for 'Ururgr.', i.e. 'great-great-grandfather', both what he cites as katrغǵüis (equivalent to what would now be spelled katrëgjysh), and a form with an extra initial $s$-: skatraǵüš. It is this last pair of forms especially, if the $s$ - form is real, ${ }^{2}$ that provides the key to understanding the Greek form.

[^0]The Greek form in question is one that I encountered while doing fieldwork on the Greek of southern Albania in the past few years, namely $\pi \rho o ́ \sigma \pi \alpha \pi \pi \mathrm{o}$ ([próspapos]) 'great-grandfather', for what for the most part elsewhere in Greek, e.g. in the standard language, is $\pi \rho \circ \pi \alpha \dot{\pi} \pi \pi \circ \varsigma$ ([propápos]) or $\pi \rho \circ \pi \alpha ́ \pi \pi \sigma 0 \varsigma$ ([propápus]). ${ }^{3}$ Descriptively, this Southern Albania Greek form signifies a kin term of generational distance and contains an extra $-s$ - that is absent from comparable forms in other dialects. These facts ultimately become important in understanding how this form came to be.

The form with the $-s$-, prospappos, is not restricted to the Greek of southern Albania, as it is listed in one authoritative dictionary, that of the Triandafilidis Institute (Triandafilidi Instituto 1998). Interestingly, though, it is absent from another recent large dictionary (Babiniotis 1998), suggesting that it is not so widespread a variant.

The more broadly attested form, propappo(u)s, makes sense compositionally in that it is a compound built from a generational kin term, pappous (also pappos) 'grandfather', with a prepositional prefix pro-, meaning 'before', added on so as to give an extra degree of generational distance. Moreover, it fits into a very common pattern for the marking of degrees of ancestral remoteness found in several other Indo-European languages involving that very prefix; in Latin, for instance, there is pro-auus 'greatgrandfather', built on auus 'grandfather', in Sanskrit there is pra-pitāmaha-'great-grandfather', built on pitā-maha- 'grandfather', and in Slavic, e.g. Russian, there is pra-ded 'great-grandfather', with a long-vowel variant of the prefix *prō- added to ded 'grandfather'.

By contrast, the variant form prospappos does not show the same logic to its composition nor does it have the same claim to an Indo-European pedigree. Ostensibly, prospappos would appear to be built on pappos, but

[^1][^2]the prepositional prefix pros- does not seem to be particularly appropriate for marking generational distance as it generally means 'towards; near'. And, whereas there is at least one parallel in other Indo-European languages to its use in a term of generational displacement, specifically Sanskrit prati-naptr-'great-grandson', built on naptr- 'grandson', where prati is cognate with Greek pros, from a Proto-Indo-European *proti, it is not clear how widespread the use of *proti is in this function; to judge from the forms cited here, it would appear to be far less common across the family than *pro.

Thus, how might the variant form prospappos be explained? The entry in the dictionary of the Triandafilidis Foundation at the University of Thessaloniki (Triandafilidis 1998: 1147) says that it is due to folk etymology (" $\tau \alpha \rho \varepsilon \tau \cup \mu(\mathrm{o}$ о $\gamma \dot{\prime} \alpha)$ ") based on phrase pappou pros pappou '(handed down) by tradition', literally "of-grandfather from grandfather", also known in the form apó páppou pros páppon 'from grandfather to grandfather', in either case referring to the transfer across generations. Still, the question must be asked as to how one can get from such a phrase to a noun meaning another degree of generational displacement? Generations are involved in the meaning of the phrase, to be sure, the phrase is more about traditional transmission, so it is not clear how to get from it to the specific sense of prospappos.

I propose that Albanian kin terms of generational distance with an extra $-s$ - provide a basis for understanding prospappos, and for the specific meaning that the form has. That is, just as according to Meyer, Albanian has both katr... and skatr... in such kin terms, I propose that there was a *spropappos in Greek built to propappos in the same manner that Meyer's skatraǵüš was built to katreǵüš. ${ }^{4}$ At that point, then, since *spro- has no basis in any prefix in Greek, it was remade, in essentially a folk-etymological way, ${ }^{5}$ in such a way as to preserve the pro-, which was meaningful in

[^3]the context of generational distance, and to preserve the $-s$-, but just in a different order. This process then yielded a form pros that made somewhat more sense within the Greek context - in that it matched an already-existing prefix - and thus gave the form prospappos with the meaning of propappos.

Admittedly both the ultimate source of the $s$ - and its specific function are unclear. Still, given the occurrence of prospappos in the Greek of southern Albania, though presumably along with other regions, ${ }^{6}$ and given the specific occurrence of the initial -s- in Albanian terms semantically related to words like propappo $(u) s$, it is tempting to look to Albanian as a source for the introduction of this extra $-s$ - into the Greek for a kinship term of generational displacement.

[^4]
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## STUDIME

23
2016
Botues:
AKADEMIA E SHKENCAVE DHE E ARTEVE E KOSOVËS

Redaktor teknik:<br>ASHAK<br>Realizimi kompjuterik:<br>ASHAK<br>Madhësia:<br>19.44 tabakë shtypi<br>Tirazhi:<br>200 сорё<br>Formati:<br>$16 \times 24 \mathrm{~cm}$<br>U shtyp në shtypshkronjën:<br>Focus Print<br>Shkup


[^0]:    ${ }^{1}$ I have written about the Latin and Albanian forms in two related papers: Joseph 2010 and Joseph 2012.
    ${ }^{2}$ Meyer's source for this form is "Ro.", i.e., Rossi da Montalto 1866. I am assuming that Meyer has cited this form correctly, though I do not find it in my perusal of Rossi; my concern here as to this form rests on the fact that for Italian "bisnonno" ('greatgrandfather'), Rossi gives a form $<$ Sctragi8sc $>$, presumably standing for something that would now be spelled < shtragjush > (phonetically [Jtra...]), and for Italian "trisavole, terzavolo" ('great-great-grandfather', based on tre 'three' and terzo 'third',

[^1]:    respectively), Rossi gives $<$ Stragi8sc $>$, presumably representing something like $<$ stragjush $>$ (phonetically [stra...]). Thus I worry that Meyer might have incorrectly taken $<$ Sctragi8sc $>$ to stand for his skatra..., though perhaps he inferred a form with [sk-] as a basis for the [ [] indicated by Rossi's spelling < sctra...> distinct from the [s] of his $<$ stra...>); more investigation is needed here, to be sure.

[^2]:    ${ }^{3}$ Hereafter I cite the forms in a transliterated form.

[^3]:    ${ }^{4}$ Even if the katrc-/skatra- variation turns out to be a mirage (see footnote 2), the Albanian shtër- / tre-, as well as Latin stri- compared with tri- (cf. Meyer's štcr-ǵiš / tre-ǵïš but also Latin tritavus/strittavus), could indicate the availability of an $s$ - versus $\varnothing$ - model that could have been a suitable basis for the form *spropappous supposed here.
    ${ }^{5}$ I thank Bethany Christiansen of The Ohio State University for enlightening discussion on this very point.

[^4]:    ${ }^{6}$ Clearly further research into the dialect distribution of this form is needed, so it is to be hoped that this note provides a stimulus in that direction.

