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Old Albanian

Introduction – Part 3: Dialectology: Geg and Tosk

Roadmap

- The Geg-Tosk split
- Rhotacism
- Nasal vowels
- Diphthongs
- Lexicon
- Verbal syntax
- Proto-Albanian

The Geg-Tosk split

- Demarcation line: the Shkumbin river in Central Albania
- Geg: Albanian in northern Albania, Kosovo, Serbia, Montenegro, and most of North Macedonia
- Tosk: Albanian in southern Albania, Greece, and SW North Macedonia



Geg-Tosk in the diaspora

- Pre-1900 diaspora: mostly Tosk varieties, e.g., in southern Italy, Greece, Bulgaria and Ukraine
- One Geg village in Croatia.
- Geg and Tosk migration to Turkey.



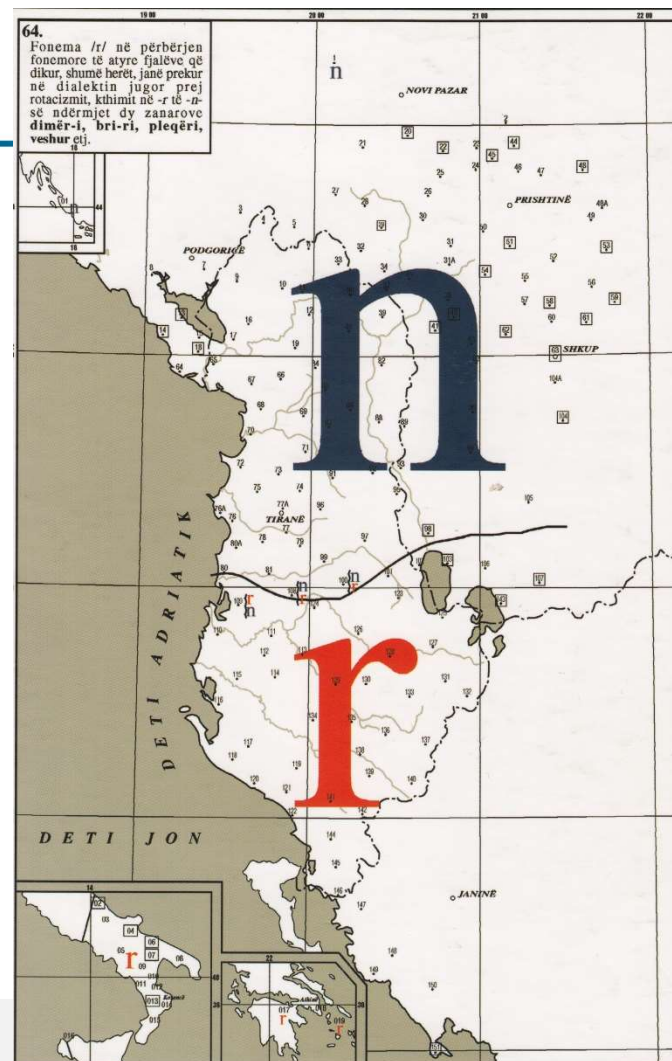
Rhotacism

Proto-Albanian **n* > Tosk *r* between vowels

MoAlb.	meaning	Proto-Albanian
Geg <i>zâni</i> , Tosk <i>zëri</i>	voice.DEF	* <i>zani</i>
Geg <i>eshtëna</i> , Tosk <i>eshtra</i>	bones.INDEF	* <i>aština</i>
Geg <i>vdekunë</i> , Tosk <i>vdekur</i>	dead.PTC	* <i>dekuna-</i>
Geg <i>gjûni</i> , Tosk <i>gjuri</i>	knee.DEF	* <i>gluni</i>

The Geg-Tosk split

- The isogloss $r \sim n$



Rhotacism

Where Tosk possesses intervocalic *n*, this goes back to **nn* from a cluster **nC* or **Cn*

MoAlb.	meaning	Proto-Albanian
OAlb. <i>-në</i> , MoAlb. <i>-(i/u)n</i>	ACC.SG.DEF	<i>*-anna < *-antan < -om+tom</i>
Geg <i>hânë</i> , Tosk <i>hënë</i>	moon.INDEF	<i>*hanna (< *skandna?)</i>
Geg <i>thânë</i> , Tosk <i>thënë</i>	said.PTC	<i>*thanna-</i>

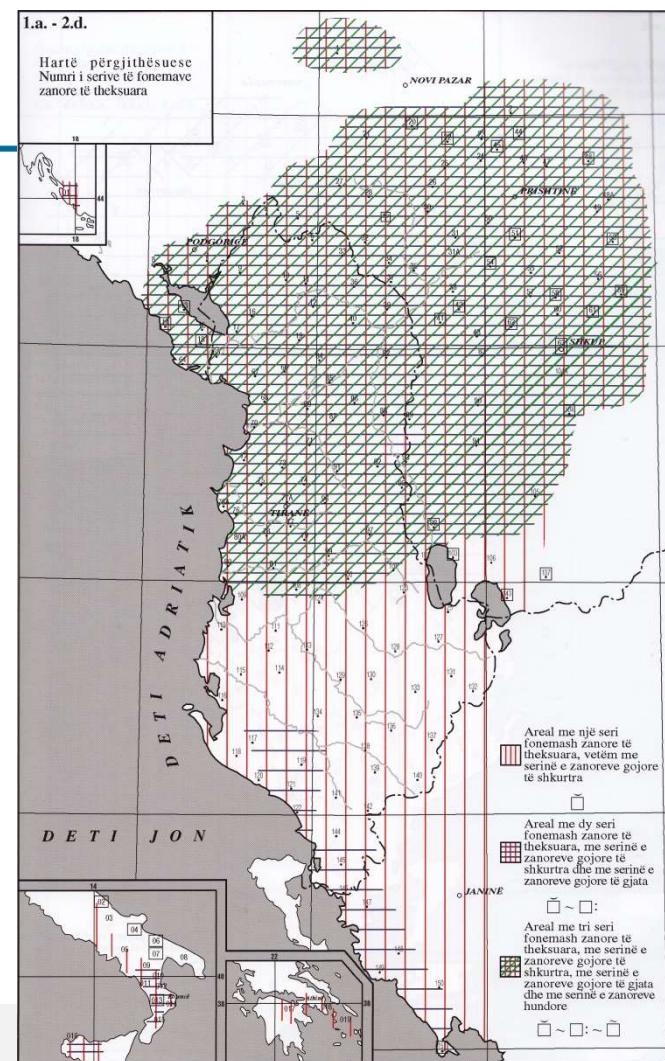
Nasal vowels

Inherited *-*ŨN*- yields Geg /*ũ*/ (nasal vowel) but Tosk /*V*/ (oral vowel);
PALb. **ã* is denasalized to /*ë*/ in Tosk.

Hence five nasal vowels in Geg, no nasal vowels but stressed /*ě*/ in Tosk:

MoAlb.	meaning	Proto-Albanian
Geg <i>gji</i> , Tosk <i>gji</i>	breast.INDEF	* <i>gjin</i>
Geg <i>zã</i> , Tosk <i>zé</i>	voice.INDEF	* <i>zan</i>
Geg <i>rrãnjë</i> , Tosk <i>rrěnjë</i>	root.INDEF	* <i>wradnja</i>

Vowel systems in modern dialects



Diphthongs

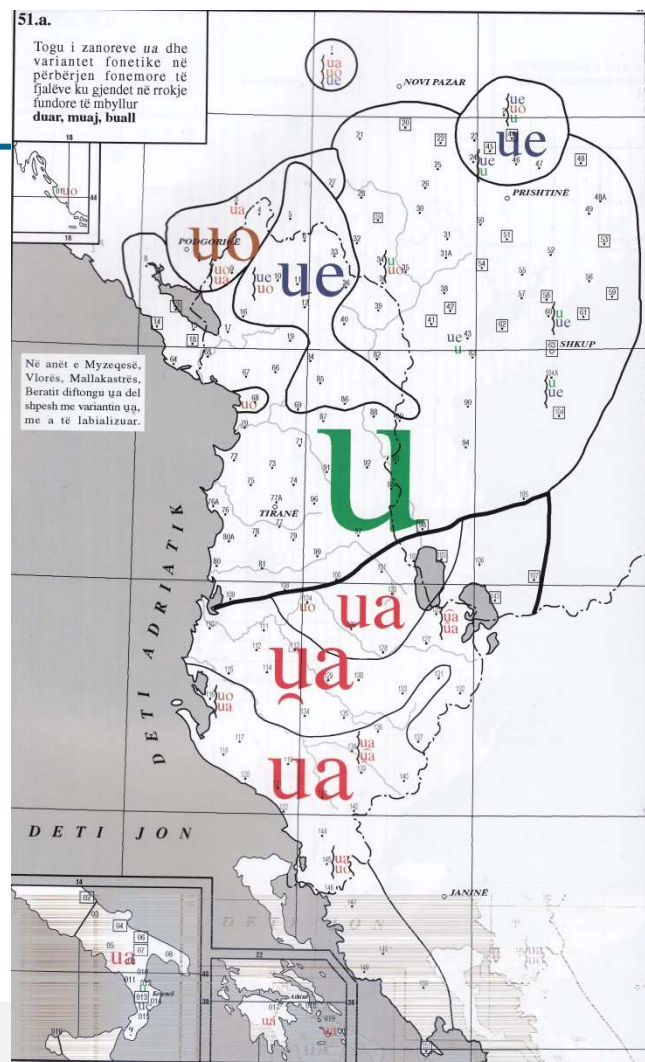
Proto-Albanian had 3 diphthongs from the lengthening of short mid vowels before resonants:

<i>*ie < *ē</i>	<i>qiell</i> 'sky' < <i>*qēl</i> < Lat. <i>caelum</i> <i>bie</i> 'fall' < <i>*bēr</i> < PIE <i>*b^herH-</i>
<i>*ye < *ō</i>	<i>dyer</i> 'doors' < <i>*dōr</i> PL < <i>*dēri</i> < PIE <i>*d^hwōr-</i>
<i>*uo < *ō</i>	<i>shuall</i> 'sole' < <i>*šōl</i> < Lat. <i>solum</i> <i>mua</i> 'me' < <i>*mōn</i> < PIE <i>*mēm</i>

Diphthongs

The PAlb. diphthong **uo* is preserved as /uo/ in Old Geg but became /ua/ in Old Tosk and in most modern Tosk dialects.

Diphthongs

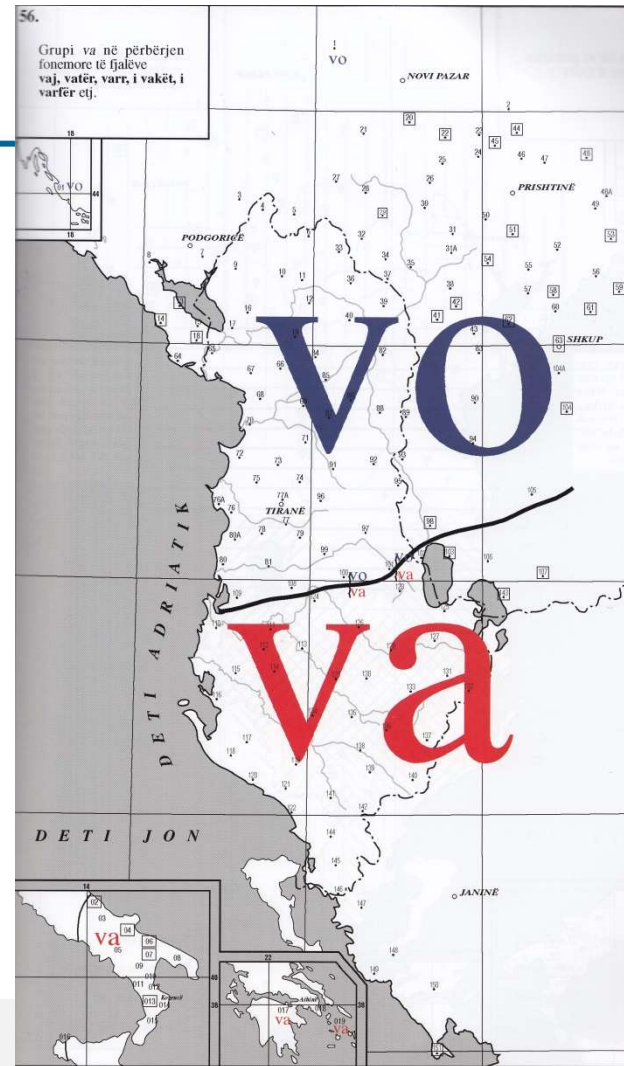


Initial vo-/va-

The behaviour of word-initial **ō*- resembles that of **uo*:
it becomes *vo*- in Geg but is unrounded to *va*- in Geg.
Compare the next slide, with map 113 from ADGSH.

	Geg	Tosk	from
PAIb. * <i>ō</i> -	<i>votrë</i>	<i>vatër</i>	* <i>ōtra</i> < * <i>ātra</i> - ‘hearth’
Latin <i>o</i> -	<i>vorfën</i>	<i>varfër</i>	Lat. <i>orfanus</i> ‘orphan’

Initial *vo-/va-*



Lexicon

Only ca. 3% of the lexicon is divided along the Shkumbin isogloss. Very little core vocabulary, e.g.

Meaning	Geg	Tosk
'butter'	<i>gjalpë</i>	<i><u>të lyen</u></i> ('spread')
'milk'	<i><u>tambël</u></i> ('sweet')	<i>qumësht</i> (also SGeg)
'scops owl'	<i>qok(th)</i>	<i>gjon</i>
'great owl'	<i>hut</i>	<i>buf</i>

(underlining indicates clear innovations for expressing the given meanings)

The future tense

Future in Geg: *kam* + INFINITIVE

Future *do* 'want' + subjunctive

do të shkoj

'I want that-I-go' = 'I will go'

This is an innovation of Tosk.

Old Tosk *do*-constructions still mean 'want', e.g.,

von Harff (1497) *do da ple* 'I want to buy it'

= MoAlb. *do ta blej*

The (lost) infinitive

Infinitival *ME* + PARTICIPLE is productive in Geg but also found in remnants in Tosk. So it is **not** a Geg/Tosk isogloss:

Geg *me shkue(m)* ‘to go’, *me kjên* ‘to be’

Tosk *domethënë* ‘that-is-to-say’,
lit. *do me thënë* ‘it means to say’

Tosk *meqenëse* ‘because’
lit. *me qenë se* ‘with being that’

Dating and locating Proto-Albanian

- Tosk rhotacism of **n*: general in Latin loanwords but (almost) absent in Slavic loanwords. Hence before the main Slavic influx after 600 AD.
- Diphthongs: trivial reductions and monophthongizations.
- Otherwise, Geg and Tosk share same basic lexicon, morphology and syntax.

☞ Tosk has developed from a small innovative core (**n > r*) at the southern end of the Proto-Albanian continuum.

Faleminderit për vëmendjen tuaj!

Thank you for your attention!