

BRIAN JOSEPH

# Old Albanian

Morphosyntactic Structures – Part 4: The Noun Phrase



# Roadmap

- Case
- Definiteness
- Particles of Concord

## Sample Noun Paradigms

- *vajzë* ‘girl’ (FEM) / *qytet* ‘city’ (MASC)

NSgIndef	<i>vajzë</i>	NSgDef	<i>vajza</i>	NPlIndef	<i>vajza</i>	NPIDef	<i>vajzat</i>
ASgIndef	<i>vajzë</i>	ASgDef	<i>vajzën</i>	APlIndef	<i>vajza</i>	APIDef	<i>vajzat</i>
GSgIndef	<i>vajze</i>	GSgDef	<i>vajzës</i>	GPlIndef	<i>vajzave</i>	GPIDef	<i>vajzave(t)</i>
DSgIndef	<i>vajze</i>	DSgDef	<i>vajzës</i>	DPlIndef	<i>vajzave</i>	DPIDef	<i>vajzave(t)</i>
NSgIndef	<i>qytet</i>	NSgDef	<i>qyteti</i>	NPlIndef	<i>qytete</i>	NPIDef	<i>qytetet</i>
ASgIndef	<i>qytet</i>	ASgDef	<i>qytetin</i>	APlIndef	<i>qytete</i>	APIDef	<i>qytetet</i>
GSgIndef	<i>qyteti</i>	GSgDef	<i>qytetit</i>	GPlIndef	<i>qyteteve</i>	GPIDef	<i>qyteteve(t)</i>
DSgIndef	<i>qyteti</i>	DSgDef	<i>qytetit</i>	DPlIndef	<i>qyteteve</i>	DPIDef	<i>qyteteve(t)</i>

## Areas of innovation within the NP

- Case
- Definiteness
- Particles of concord

## Case

- Case distinctions inherited from Proto-Indo-European: Nominative/Accusative/Genitive/Dative, with a locative as well in Old Albanian (and in modern dialects, e.g. Arbëresh)
- There is a separate ablative (in *-sh*, e.g. *vajzësh*) but its use is somewhat limited (and only for indefinite plural).
- There are vocative expressions, consisting of particle *o* + Nominative (thus not a case, *sensu stricto*).

## Case

- Inherited case forms:
  - ablative *-sh* possibly < PIE Locative Plural *\*-su* (cf. Sanskrit *-su*, Greek (dative) *-σι*);
  - masculine indefinite singular Gen/Dat *-i* < PIE (thematic) *\*-ōi* (< *\*-o-ei*, cf. Greek *-ω*) or < just *\*-ei* (cf. Sanskrit *-e*).

## Case

- Inherited case forms:
  - GenPI -ve < PIE GenPI \*-ōm, with \*ō > e as in *tërmet* 'earthquake' (borrowed from Latin *terra mōta*) and -v- as hiatus development before original round vowel
  - other possibilities suggested but unsatisfactory include PIE \*-bhyas (Meyer — PIE Dat/AbIPI); \*ovōm (Skok — genitive plural of demonstrative *ovъ* (Skok)); \*-ois (Durante — thematic dative plural).

## Case Syncretism

- Merger of Genitive and Dative formally
  - E.g. *vajze* ‘of/to a girl’, *vajzave* ‘of/to girls’  
*qyteti* ‘of/to a city’, *qyteteve* ‘of/to (the) cities’  
(optional final *-t* analogical from NomPlDef or Gen/DatSgDef)
- Genitive and Dative distinguished syntactically
  - Genitive always occurs with Particle of Concord (*librin e Agimit* ‘book of Agim’)
  - Dative always occurs with corresponding weak object pronoun on verb (*ij dhashë librin Agimit* ‘I gave the book to Agim’)



## Case Syncretism

- Same development found in other Balkan languages:
- Greek, where surviving genitive serves both genitive and dative functions

AGrk	GenSg	DatSg	GenPl	DatPl	
	άνθρώπου	άνθρώπωι	άνθρώπων	άνθρώποις	'man/men'
	έμοῦ	έμοϊ	ήμῶν	ήμῖν	'I/we'
	αὐτοῦ	αὐτῶι	αὐτῶν	αὐτοῖς	'this/these'

Mod Grk	άνθρώπου	-----	άνθρώπων	-----
	εμένα / μου	-----	εμάς / μας	-----
	αυτου(νού) / του	-----	αυτων(ών) / τους	-----

## Case Syncretism

- Bulgarian/Macedonian, *na* + Noun for both ‘of Noun’ and ‘to Noun’ (versus distinct GEN and DAT in Old Church Slavonic)
- Romanian, e.g.: ‘pupil’
  - GEN.PL (elev-)i-lor < Latin *illōrum*
  - DAT.PL (elev-)i-lor ← (replacing) Latin *illīs*
- Chronological considerations point to medieval period as the temporal locus for the generalization of a merged genitive/dative case in Balkan Slavic and Greek, and perhaps most of Balkan Romance, consistent with Old Albanian period

## Definiteness

- Built into endings in paradigm, thus an inflectional category
- Definiteness ending is enclitic within Noun Phrase:

*kal-i*          *i madh*          ‘the big horse’ (usual order)  
horse-the    PC   big

*i madh-i kal*          ‘the big horse’ (marked but  
PC   big-the   horse          possible order)

## Definiteness: the Endings

- Definiteness endings are from PIE nominal endings with a demonstrative added on, e.g.

*darkë* 'supper' (INDEF.ACC) < \*dork<sup>w</sup>om (cf. AGrk δόρπον 'supper')

*darkën* (DEF.ACC) < \*dork<sup>w</sup>om-tom

NOTE: \*-om# > ë, so a different source is needed for DEF -*ën* (\*tom gives a basis for -*n*- via assimilation)

## Definiteness: Areal Perspective

- Similar enclitic definite markers found in other Balkan languages:

Romanian:	<i>om-ul bun</i>	/ <i>bun-ul om</i>	'the good man'
	man-the good		
Aromanian:	<i>om-ul bun</i>	/ <i>bun-ul om</i>	'the good man'
	man-the good		
Meglenoromanian	<i>om-u bun</i>	/ <i>bun-u om</i>	'the good man'
	man-the good		
Macedonian:	<i>grad-ot novo</i>	/ <i>nov-iot grad</i>	'the new city'
	city-the new		
Bulgarian:	<i>pesen-ta xubava</i>	/ <i>xubava-ta pesen</i>	'the nice song'
	song-the nice		

## Definiteness: the Origin

- Origin in Albanian and Balkan Romance is a substrate construction seen in old Balkan place name *Drobeta*.
- Hamp 1982 argues that this represents a reanalysis of a form \*druḡā tā, literally “wooded(-place) the”, with a postposed definite marker, as a monomorphemic toponym *Drobeta*.
- Substrate language that had \*druḡā tā fed into both Albanian and Romanian.

## Particles of Concord

- Particles of Concord are from old demonstrative elements
- They function like “ezafe” constructions in Modern Iranian
- They link nouns to their modifiers (adjectives or possessives (whether possessive pronouns or genitive of nouns))
- Their form depends on the case, gender, and number of the head noun

E.g. *kali j madh* ‘horse.DEF PC big’ ‘the big horse’ (NOM)

*kali j Agimit* ‘horse.DEF PC Agim.GEN’ ‘the horse of Agim’ (NOM)

*kalin e madh/Agimit* ‘the big horse/the horse of Agim’ (ACC)

*kalit t̥ Agimit* ‘horse.DEF.DAT PC Agim.GEN’ (DAT)

## Particles of Concord in Balkan Romance

- Balkan Romance Parallel to Particles of Concord – Determiner *cel*

Romanian:        *băiatul cel mare*  
                      boy.DEF CEL big  
                      ‘the big boy’  
                      *cel mare*  
                      CEL big  
                      ‘the big one’

*cel* is from old demonstrative



## Particles of Concord: the Origin

- Could be an old Albano-Romanian shared feature
- Or, could be independent innovation, as a similar development (“ezafe”) arose in Modern Iranian languages, also from old pronominals (some of them perhaps from an Old Iranian connective use of the relative pronoun *ya-*)

## Conclusion

Thus Albanian nominal morphosyntax shows a mix of inherited features from Proto-Indo-European, innovations that parallel those found in other Balkan languages for which contact is a possible or even likely explanation, and innovations that may well be independent, since they have (non-Balkan) cross-linguistic parallels.

Faleminderit për vëmendjen tuaj!

Thank you for your attention!