

## It's all Greek to me: Missed Greek Loanwords in Albanian

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### *Abstract*

Albanian is a language that has borrowed words and patterns from various other languages with which it came into contact from time to time. One of the most prominent sources of loanwords and loan-structures in Albanian is Medieval and Modern Greek. This paper discusses cases of Albanian loanwords of obvious or probable Medieval or Modern Greek origin that fail to be identified as such in the relevant literature. The discussion starts with a brief sketch of the history, affinities and contacts of Albanian with special focus on Medieval and Modern Greek. Then a classification is attempted of the Greek loanwords usually missed on the basis of their treatment in various works, while exploring the reason(s) why the Greek origin of such loanwords was missed. The main conclusion is that most such etymological mishaps are due to the limited knowledge of the donor language in terms of phonology, lexis and morphology.

**Keywords:** Albanian, borrowing, etymology, loanwords, Medieval Greek, Modern Greek.

### 1. Introduction

This article discusses selected cases of Albanian loanwords that, although having obvious or probable Medieval or Modern Greek origin (notwithstanding their origin in Modern Greek itself), in the relevant literature they are either considered to be inherited or attributed to donor languages other than Modern Greek. Such languages are often the ones from which Modern Greek has borrowed the words in question (mostly Italian, Venetian and Turkish).

Albanian is an idiosyncratic member of the Indo-European language family, spoken as sole official language in the Republic of Albania, as co-official language in the partially recognized Republic of Kosovo, and in North Macedonia, while it has been recognized as a minority language in Serbia, Croatia, Italy and Romania. In Greece, Ukraine and Turkey there are some historically Albanophone communities, currently comprising mostly elderly speakers. Altogether, Albanian is spoken as first (and often sole) language by approximately 7.5 million people worldwide (Rusakov, 2017: 552). Two main dialectal continua are distinguished along the natural border of Shkumbin river: Gheg or Northern and Tosk or Southern (Gjinari, 1966; Sanz Ledesma, 1996: 25-29; (Morozova, Rusakov & Ovsjannikova, 2020: 279), with varying degrees of mutual intelligibility, with Tosk having provided the basis for modern Standard Albanian. Albanian could descend from some ancient language of SE Europe such as Illyrian, a view favored in Albania (Sawicka, 2013: 105-107) or Thracian (Vraciu, 1980: 27; Watkins, 1998: 31). Most recent trends speak rather of an “Albanoid” branch (Hamp, 2002: 249-250; Trumper, 2018: 379, 381, 385). Albanian shares most isoglosses with Baltic (Orel, 2000: 13, 212, 250-256) but is also a

prominent member of the Balkan *sprachbund* (Sandfeld, 1930) and has been for centuries subject to the strong and direct lexical, phonotactic, morphological, and possibly syntactic influence of neighboring languages. In particular, Albanian has undergone the direct influence of Medieval and Modern Greek (especially the Tosk variants), Latin/Proto-Romance, Italian, Venetian, South Slavic (mostly Old Church Slavonic, Serbian and Bulgarian), and Ottoman Turkish and, later on, the indirect influence of learned Latin, learned Italian, French, German, Russian and, most recently, English. Minor influences also exist from such languages as Aromanian, Dalmatian, and Old Germanic. Albanian influence on other languages, such as Greek and South Slavic dialects is minor and virtually only lexical, although its numerous traits shared with Romanian could be due to early Albanian influence on Balkan Latin (Ismajli, 2012 and 2015: 271-467; cf. Rădulescu, 1984; Gabinschi, 2012).

The Medieval and Modern Greek influence on Albanian is notably seen in the Tosk variants. Most Medieval and rather few Modern Greek loanwords are ecclesiastical and administrative terms, e.g., *ajazmë* “holy water” < MGk *ἀγίασμα* ‘id.; lit. blessing; sanctification’; *dhjak* “deacon” < MGk *διάκος*; *kallojjer* “monk” < Mv/MGk *καλόγερος* ‘id.; lit. “good old man”’; *metani* “prostration, reverence” < MvGk *μετάνοια* ‘id.; lit. repentance, change of mind’; *pronë* ‘possession; income’ < MvGk *πρόνοια* ‘system of granting dedicated streams of state income to individuals and institutions in the late Eastern Roman Empire; lit. care, forethought’; *qiri* ‘candle’ < MvGk *κηρίν* ‘wax; candle’ –without counting, of course, religious terms of ultimate Greek origin that entered Albanian via Latin, e.g., *kishë* (< older *qishë*) < Lat *ecclēsia* < Hellenistic Gk *ἐκκλησία*; *murg*, Gheg *mung* ‘monk’ < Lat *monachus* < Hellenistic Gk *μοναχός* (Mihăescu, 1966: 352).

Modern Greek loanwords in Albanian originate in native Modern Greek dialects of South Albania (cf. Nystazopoulou-Pelekidou, 1991: 274), as suggested by various phonological traits (Kyriazis, 2001: 18-19; Krimpas, 2007: 110-113), although it is not always easy to distinguish Modern from Medieval Greek loanwords whenever the only distinguishing trait would be some inflectional suffix, which has been adapted to the Albanian inflectional system (cf. Morozova, Rusakov & Ovsjannikova, 2020: 284). Wealthy Albanians often studied in Greece (Sawicka, 2013: 103), which may account for at least a small part of Modern Greek loanwords. Generally speaking, Modern Greek loanwords in Albanian are numerous and productive, even though many of them are now obsolete or dialectal (Southern Tosk). They are mostly nouns and verbs, but adjectives, numerals, adverbs and prepositions do exist among them, while they cover a wide range of thematic areas such as household, construction works, tools and utensils, cuisine, clothing, livestock farming, agriculture, trade, warfare (cf. Surovčák, 2010: 42-46). Some examples are *dhrom* ‘highway’ < MGk *δρόμος* ‘street; road, way’; *fole* ‘nest’ < MGk *φωλιά*; *gomar* ‘donkey, ass’ < MGk *γομάρι*; *kallam* ‘reed; cane’ < MGk *καλάμι*; *koran* ‘wash paddle’ < MGk *κοπάνι*; *kuti* ‘box’ < MGk *κουτί*; *kuvli* ‘cage’ < MGk *κλουβί*; *litar* ‘rope’ < MGk *λητάρι*; *lloj* ‘sort, kind, type; variety’ < -λόι; *nikoqir* ‘good family provider and manager; economically responsible person’ < MGk *νοικοκύρης*; *sqepar* ‘adze’ < MGk *σκεπάρι*; *tigan* ‘frying pan’ < MGk *τηγάνι*; *varkë* ‘boat’ < MGk *βάρκα*; *armatos* ‘to provide with arms’ < MGk *αρματώσω*; *feks* ‘to shine; to dawn; to polish’ < MGk *φέξω* pf. of *φέγω* ‘to shine; to dawn’; *(m)riks* ‘to coagulate’ < MGk *πήξω* pf. of *πήζω*; *pllakos* ‘to come down hard on sb.; to slam down sb.; to attack’ < MGk *πλακώσω*; *rrufis* ‘to sip, to slurp; to suck in; to swallow up’ < *rouφήσω* (Standard MGk *ρουφήξω*) < pf. of *ρουφάω*; *sos* ‘to finish, to use up; to complete; to arrive’ < MGk *σώσω* pf. of *σώζω* ‘to save; *pop.* to have time to do sg’ *inter alia*; *vithis* ‘to cause to sink into the ground; to hurl down’ < *βυθίσω*, pf. of *βυθίζω* ‘to sink, *tr.*’; *zileps* ‘to make sb envious; to envy’ < MGk *ζηλέψω* pf. of *ζηλεύω* ‘to envy; to be jealous of sb’; *pastër* ‘clean’ < back-formation on MGk *πάστιρα* ‘cleanliness’; *akoma* ‘yet; still’ < MGk *ἀκόμα*; *anames* ‘among’ < MGk *ἀνάμεσα*; *me* ‘with; by means of’ < MGk *με*; *mes* ‘in/through the middle of; between’ < n. *mes*, definite form: *mesi* ‘middle’ < MGk *μέση* (see more examples in Kyriazis, 2001: 287-569; and Krimpas 2007: 116-175). Some learned Greek loanwords (now all of them obsolete) have entered Albanian when learned Greek was the language of education in Albania during the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> c. AD (Nystazopoulou-Pelekidou, 1991: 285; Kyriazis, 2001: 19-21), e.g.,

*kamillopardhallë* ‘giraffe’ < learned Gk *καμηλοπάρδαλις* (now *gjirafë* < It/Fr *giraffa/giraffe*); *qindhin* ‘danger’ < learned Gk *κίνδυνος* (now *rrezik*, not unambiguously connected with It *risico*).

The rich material of Medieval and Modern Greek origin found in Albanian comprises also calques (Kyriazis, 1997), e.g., *Hyjëlindëse* ‘Mother of God, i.e. Virgin Mary’ < *Hyj* ‘God’ + *lindëse*, f. ‘the one who has born’, calqued on Gk. *Θεοτόκος* < *Θεός* ‘God’ + *-τόκος* ‘the one giving birth’ and *punëdhënës* ‘employer’ < *punë* ‘work’ + *dhënës* ‘the one who gives, giver’ < learned MGk *ἐργοδότης* < *ἔργον* ‘work’ + *δότης* ‘the one who gives, giver’ and grammatical borrowings, namely derivational affixes such as the deverbative suffixes *-is* and *-os*, the nominal suffix *-omë*, or the pejorative prefix *palo-* (Kyriazis, 2001: 254-261; Kume, 2011: 257; Krimpas, 2017: 440-445). Moreover, Medieval and Modern Greek, which had been itself under the long-lasting influence of (Balkan) Vulgar Latin, is most probably the source of some morphosyntactic traits found in all or most Balkan languages, including Albanian (Krimpas, 2007: 178-188, 254-256; Krimpas, 2017: 440-443; cf. Joseph, 2001: 32), such as the replacement of infinitive constructions by finite ones (cf. Sandfeld, 1930: 175; Tonnet, 1995[1993]: 58), the periphrastic future comprising an indeclinable, grammaticalized *WANT*-auxiliary and a finite construction, which is much older in Greek than in the other Balkan languages (cf. Sandfeld, 1930: 56; Browning, 1983: 79; Stanišić, 1995: 58-59; Tonnet, 1995[1993]: 80), and the periphrastic future perfect, comprising a grammaticalized *WANT*-auxiliary followed by a construction identical with the present perfect, i.e. *HAVE*-auxiliary + participle (Krimpas, 2007: 185-186).

## 2. Method

Throughout this article, etymological information other than mine derives mostly from Meyer (2007[1891]), Orel (1998) and Dashi (2013) and, to a lesser degree from Çabej (1976) and Topalli (2017). The loanwords selected fall under various categories according to the traits that suggest their missed Modern Greek origin. In some cases, the Modern Greek origin of an Albanian word that is not attributable to other donor languages is obvious only to those who are well acquainted with the Greek vocabulary and its history. In other cases, the Modern Greek origin is suggested by phonological changes that are not justified in Albanian in general or with respect to the particular donor language to which the loanword is attributed. For example, if a Turkish word that exists in Albanian is reported in the literature as being borrowed from Turkish but exhibits a phonological change that could be justified only in case of Modern Greek mediation (e.g. because Modern Greek does not have a Turkish sound shared also by Albanian), such loanword should count as a Modern Greek borrowing. In yet other cases it is the morphophonological treatment that suggests the Greek origin of a word in Albanian. Nouns, verbs and, to a lesser degree, adjectives undergo various morphophonological changes in order to be accommodated into the Albanian inflectional system, and the whole process is influenced by several perceived similarities and analogies between Albanian and the donor language. To find the origin of some loanwords in Albanian one has first to know the Albanian modalities of morphophonological adaptation, since they may vary depending on the donor language. Such variation is due to the fact that Albanian has many layers of loanwords that have entered the language in different periods usually marked by different linguistic phenomena. As far as inflected Albanian words are concerned, the distinction between indefinite and definite declension of nouns and the one between present and aorist stem of verbs are of crucial importance, as the respective treatment of loanwords can often reveal which the donor language is. In the case of non-inflected loanwords, the donor language can only be inferred by means of phonology, lexicon and/or semantics.

A useful methodological tool is the awareness that most borrowed indefinite nouns in Albanian are in fact back-formations, produced by spontaneously reinterpreting and re-segmenting the definite singular form into an indefinite form and its postposed definite singular article. Such reinterpretation and re-segmentation is made on the basis of perceived

(morpho)phonological similarities between the Albanian definite singular article and the eventual thematic vowel of the loanword. Thus, by removing the postposed definite singular article one obtains the indefinite singular form of the noun (see more in Kyriazis, 2001: 184-227, 261-264; Krimpas, 2007: 114-115; Krimpas, 2017: 433-434). When it comes to verbs, the morphophonological treatment of the loanword is inextricably connected to which the donor language is. This is particularly obvious in the different treatment of Slavic-borrowed and Modern Greek-borrowed verbs ending in *-is* and *-as* (cf. Kyriazis, 2001: 230-233; Krimpas, 2007: 115; Curtis, 2012: 72-73), with the pattern of the Greek-borrowed ones having been transferred also to Turkish-borrowed verbs.

### 3. Results and discussion

#### 3.1 Turkish and Venetian or Modern Greek? Missed phonological evidence

(a) *ahur* [a'hur] ‘cellar, barn, shed’: Mann (1948: 3) marks this Albanian noun as ‘Tk’, which means that it was thought to be a borrowing from Turkish, in particular from *ahır* [a'hir]. However, one should wonder why the central vowel [u] is reflected in the Albanian word as the round high vowel [u], given that Albanian does have the [u]-sound (spelled *ë*); in other words, if the word was borrowed directly from Turkish, it would be \**ahër* rather than *ahur*. On the other hand, Modern Greek has no [u]-sound, which explains why Turkish loanwords originally containing this sound exchange it for an /i/ or, more rarely, /u/ in Modern Greek, e.g., Tk *hatır* ‘favour’ > MGk *χατίρι* [xa'tiri], Tk *hanım* ‘lady’ > MGk *χανούμυσα* [xa'numisa] ‘Turkish lady’. Indeed, the Turkish word *ahır* [a'hir] was borrowed into Modern Greek as *αχούρι* [a'xuri], which is obviously the true source of Albanian *ahur*. One could object that Albanian retains the Turkish [h], while Modern Greek has changed it into [x]. However, since Standard Albanian has no [x]-sound (although the latter does exist in the Arvanite dialect due to Modern Greek influence), a change [x] > [h] is expected.

(b) *bojatis* [boja'tis] ‘to paint’: Mann (1948: 33) marks this Albanian verb as ‘Tk’, which means that it was thought to be a borrowing from Turkish, namely from *boyadı-* (aorist stem of *boyamak*). However, one should wonder why the voiced stop [d] is reflected in the Albanian word as its devoiced counterpart [t], given that Albanian does have the [d]-sound; in other words, if the word was borrowed directly from Turkish, it would be *bojadis* (which does exist in non-standard variants) rather than *bojatis*, given that Turkish [d] is normally retained in Albanian, e.g., *deve* ‘camel’ < Tk *deve*; *dollap* ‘cupboard’ < Tk *dolap*. On the other hand, Modern Greek has many verbs in *-ατίζω* [-a'tizo], which derive from *-μα-τ-* [-ma-t] neuter stems such as *αρωματίζω* [aroma'tizo] ‘to flavour’ < *άρωμα* [aroma] ‘flavour’; *ονοματίζω* [onoma'tizo] ‘to name’ < *όνομα* [onoma] ‘a name’, which explains why Modern Greek has changed Tk *boyadı-* into *μπογιατίζω* [boja'tizo] instead of \**μπογιαντίζω* [boja'dizo]. In Modern Greek the d > t change is also triggered by the previous voiced labial [b], in other words it is due to dissimilation, a usual phenomenon in Modern Greek but not in Albanian, e.g., MGk *καμπαρντίνα* [kabar'dina] ‘a trench coat’ < Fr *gabardine* > Alb *gabardinë*. Thus, it is obvious that the source of Alb *bojatis* is the abovementioned Modern Greek verb, in particular its perfective stem *μπογιατίσ-* [boja'tis-], as is normal with Modern Greek verbs borrowed into Albanian (the same is true of all Balkan languages). One would say that the suffix *-is*, itself of Modern Greek origin (Kyriazis, 2001: 230-233; Krimpas, 2007: 115; Krimpas, 2017: 434-435), points already to Modern Greek as a source; however, this deverbative suffix has become quite productive in Albanian, and indeed appears in almost all Turkish verbal loanwords, and hence it is not in itself suggestive of Modern Greek origin in such loanwords. This is why most Ottoman Turkish verbal borrowings in Albanian end in *-dis/-tis*, e.g. Tk. *dayanmak* ‘to endure’ > *dayandı-* (aorist stem) > Alb. *dajandis* ‘I endure/to endure’; Tk. *kavurmak* ‘to roast’ > *kavurdu-* (aorist stem) > Alb. *kaurdis* ‘I roast/to roast’; Tk. *gezme* ‘to go on a stroll’ > *gezdi-* (aorist stem) > Alb. *gjezdis*, which Orel (1998: 134) viewed as a Slavic

loanword from *jezditi* ‘to ride’, despite that its past tense stem (*gjezdisa*, *-ise*, *-isi* etc.) clearly suggested its non-Slavic origin (Slavic-derived verbs in *-is* have past tense stems in *-ita*, *-ite*, *-iti* etc., e.g. SSLav. *habiti* ‘to destroy’ > Alb. *habis/habit* ‘to surprise, to astonish’ > past tense *habita*, *-ite*, *-iti* etc.).

(c) *cimë* [ˈt̪ɪmɐ] ‘mooring line, rope; cyme’: As suggested *ex silentio* from Dashi (2013: 131), this word is generally considered as borrowed from Ven *cima* [ˈt̪ɪma]. However, the change [t̪] > [t̪ɪ] is not expected in Albanian, which has the [t̪ɪ]-sound, but it is the normal outcome of t̪ɪ in Modern Greek. Indeed, the non-standard word *τσιμα* [ˈt̪ɪma] ‘top; edge; tip’ (now only in the idiom *τσιμα-τσιμα* [ˈt̪ɪma-ˈt̪ɪma] ‘narrowly; tight’), itself a borrowing from Ven *cima*, is obviously the source of the Albanian word.

(d) *fanellë* [faˈnɛlə] ‘undershirt; sweater’: As suggested *ex silentio* from Dashi (2013: 201), this word is generally considered as borrowed from Ven *fanela* [faˈnela] or [faˈneea]. However, the change [l] or [e] > [ɫ] is not expected in Venetian loanwords in Albanian, cf. Ven *lotaria* [lotaˈria] or [ɛotaˈria] ‘lottery; lottery ticket’ > Alb *lotari* [lotaˈɾi], but it is the most usual rendering of Modern Greek /l/ before back vowels, reflecting the non-standard [ɫ]-sound heard in many regional variants as an allophone of /l/ before back vowels, cf. MGk *λαχτάρα* [laˈxtara] (standard) or [ɫaˈxtara] (non-standard) ‘terror, terrible anxiety; craving, longing, yearning’ > *llahtar(ë)* [ɫahˈtaɾə]; *lloj* [loj] ‘kind, sort’ > MGk *-λόι* [-loj] (standard) or [-ɫoj] (non-standard) ‘a collection/swarm of’. This means that Alb *fanellë* < MGk *φανέλα* (non-standard pronunciation: [faˈnela]) (itself from Ven *fanela*). A similar case is Alb *llotari* [ɫotaˈɾi] ‘lottery; lottery ticket’, a variant of *lotari* (< Ven *lotaria*), although Dashi (2013: 260) does not seem to suspect that this variant was borrowed from Modern Greek *λοταρία* [lotaˈria], a regional pronunciation of standard *λοταρία* [lotaˈria] rather than Venetian. Modern Greek, of course, has borrowed this word from the identical Venetian word.

(e) *furtunë* [furˈtunɐ] ‘severe storm’: As suggested *ex silentio* from Dashi (2013: 214), this word is generally considered as borrowed from Ven/It *fortuna* [forˈtuna]/[forˈtuːna]. However, the change [o] > [u] is not as usual in Venetian loanwords in Albanian, cf. Ven *notar* ‘to swim’ > Alb *notoj*, but it is very frequent and well-documented in Modern Greek, cf. Ven/It *compàre/compare* ‘best man (in weddings or christening ceremonies)’ > MGk *κουμπάρος* [ku(m)ˈbaros]; Ven *bastòn* ‘walking cane, stick’ > MGk *μπαστούνι* [baˈstuni]. It is, therefore, obvious that Alb *furtunë* is borrowed from Modern Greek *φουρτούνα* [furˈtuna], itself borrowed from Ven *fortuna* (After all, for semantic reasons one would expect for the [o] to be retained in Albanian, as the Venetian word would be associated with Alb *fortë* ‘strong’). Similar cases are Alb *bunacë* [buˈnat̪ɛ] ‘calm sea; calm, stagnation’ and *kuvertë* [kuˈveɾtɛ] ‘bedcover; deck of a ship’ and which are not borrowed, respectively, from Ven *coverta* and *bonazza*, as implied from the works cited in Dashi (2013: 100, 159), but from Modern Greek *μπουνάτσα* [buˈnat̪sa] and *κουβέρτα* [kuˈverta] ‘blanket; deck of a ship’, themselves borrowed, respectively, from Ven *bonazza* and *coverta*.

(f) *fundul* [fuˈndul] ‘arrogant, haughty’: Meyer (2007: 156) mentions it as a Calabrese Arbereshë variant of standard *fodull* < Tk *fodul*. However, Albanian has no reason to change Turkish [d] into [nd] and [ɫ] into [l], since it has these sounds. On the other hand, Modern Greek is peculiar as to the absence of [ɫ] before front vowels and the treatment of voiced stops between vowels (also across words), since it has to ‘support’ them by a preceding nasal (Krimpas, 2019: 114-115). This phenomenon is currently rare in Standard Modern Greek (Arvaniti, 2007: 159-160) and Southern variants, but it was regular in all Modern Greek variants a century ago. Indeed, all Modern Greek words that are borrowed into Albanian and are currently pronounced without the nasal in Standard and Southern Modern Greek, always retain their original nasal in Albanian, e.g., *αντάρτης* [a(n)ˈdartsis] ‘a rebel, guerilla’ > Alb *andart*; *αφεντικό* [afe(n)diˈko] ‘a master, boss’ > Alb *afendiko*. Moreover, the usual raising of unstressed /o/, typical of Northern Greek variants

but sporadically found throughout the Greek-speaking territories is additional evidence that *fundul* was not borrowed from Tk *fodul*, but from non-standard MGk *φουντούλης* [fu(n)'dulis] (itself from Tk *fodul*), now surviving mostly as a Greek surname.

(g) *kalcunja* [kal'tɕuna] (pl.) ‘a kind of men’s stockings’: This loanword is not borrowed from Ven *calzoni* [kal'tɕoni] (pl.) as suggested by Dashi (2013: 109), because in such a case one would expect something like \**kalconë*, \**kalcune* etc. The suffix [-una] points clearly to the identical Modern Greek *καλτσούνια* [kal'tɕuna], plural of *καλτσούνι* [kal'tɕuni], itself a back-formed singular borrowed from Ven *calzoni* (pl.) due to the similarity of Venetian pluralizer *-i* with the thematic vowel *-i* [-i] of a very large class of neuter nouns.

(h) *kuzhinë* [ku'zinə] ‘kitchen’: As suggested *ex silentio* from Dashi (2013: 165), this word and its variants are generally considered as borrowed from Ven *cusina* [ku'zina]. However, the change [z] > [ʒ] is not expected in Albanian, which has the [z]-sound, but in several Modern Greek regional variants this change is automatic before /i/, cf. *να ζήστε!* [na'ziste] ‘may you long live!’ = standard *να ζήσετε* [na'zise]. Therefore, the Albanian word is probably borrowed from MGk [ku'zina], a regional pronunciation of *κουζίνα* [ku'zina], itself borrowed from the identical Venetian word.

(i) *ostrogarb* [ostɾo'gaɾb] ‘SW wind’: This rare word, which mostly belongs to the maritime jargon, was not borrowed from Ven *ostro-garbin* [ostrogaɾ'bin] as suggest the works cited by Dashi (2013: 312), since the suffix *-in*, which is stressed in Venetian, was not expected to be dropped in Albanian. If the word was a direct Venetian borrowing, the outcome would rather be \**ostrogarbi(n)* [ostɾo'gaɾ'bi(n)], since Albanian, being a language with a strong dynamic stress, never drops final-syllable vowels when stressed. This phonological fact leads directly to the regional MGk *οστρογάρμπι* [ostro'ɾarbi] as the source of Albanian *ostrogarb*, which is exactly the expected outcome from MGk *οστρογάρμπι* [ostro'ɾarbi], borrowed into Albanian as a definite noun *ostrogarbi* [ostɾo'gaɾbi] ‘the SW wind’ and producing the back-formation *ostrogarb* ‘SW wind’ after dropping the suffixed definite article, cf. MGk *γομάρι* [go'maɾi] ‘donkey, ass’ < Alb *gomari* [go'maɾi] ‘the donkey, the ass’ < *gomar* ‘donkey, ass’; MGk *καλάμι* [ka'lami] (regional pronunciation of standard [ka'lami]) ‘reed; cane’ < *kallami* [ka'lami] ‘the reed; the cane’ < *kallam* ‘reed; cane’; MGk *λητάρι* [li'taɾi] ‘rope’ < *litari* [li'taɾi] ‘the rope’ < *litar* ‘rope’. In other words, the thematic [i]-vowel of Modern Greek words is perceived as the Albanian masculine nominal definite article *-i* in contact situations (loanwords from other donor languages are treated in analogous ways). Interestingly, the regional Modern Greek word *οστρογάρμπι* [ostro'ɾarbi] is still current in Cephalonia, which lies in the wider Ionian-Adriatic region like Albania and was similarly (and for more time) under Venetian rule (on Venetian Albania see more in Schmitt, 2001).

(j) *bundë* ['bundə] ‘strong, wet wind; cold caught in cold climates’: As suggested *ex silentio* from Dashi (2013: 340), this word is generally considered as borrowed from Ven *ponta* ['ponta]. However, the changes [o] > [u], [nt] > [nd] and, above all, [p-] > [b-], although not unprecedented in Albanian, are not the ones expected in Venetian loanwords, given that they are more recent (in comparison to Latin and Old Slavic ones, where such changes are more usual) and the perception of the equivalence between the respective Venetian and Albanian sounds has not yielded to one or another phonological rule that would justify a different outcome in Albanian. On the other hand, these changes are well-documented in Modern Greek, cf. Ven/It *compàre/compare* ‘best man (in weddings or christening ceremonies)’ > MGk *κουμπάρος* [ku(m)'baros]; Ven *cantada* > MGk *καντάδα* [ka(n)'daða] ‘serenade; traditional urban Heptanesian song’; It *paccottiglia* [pak:o'ti:l:a] ‘trifle, trinket; shoddy goods (on ship)’ > MGk (slang) *μπακοτίλια* [bako'ti:li:a] ‘savings’ (for the alternation between unvoiced and voiced stops see more in 3.2 on *prokë*). All this suggests that *bundë* was borrowed from a non-standard Modern Greek *μπούντα* ['bunda] for *πούντα* ['pu(n)da], itself from Ven *ponta*, with initial voicing due to

the preceding accusative of the definite article, i.e., *την πούντα* [ti(m)'bunda] > *τη μπούντα* [ti'bunda] > *η μπούντα* [i'bunda] (back-formed nominative).

(k) *sigurt* ['sigurt] 'sure, certain': According to Dashi (2013: 389-390) this Albanian word is borrowed from Ven *seguro* [se'guro] and the stress shift from the [u] to [i] is a recent phenomenon. However, even if the stress shift is a recent phenomenon as argued by Dashi (2013: 389), when combined with the change of /e/ into /i/ in the same word it points to mediation of MGk *σίγουρος* ['siɣuros]. This is because MGk *σίγουρος* ['siɣuros], which comes from Medieval Greek *σιγούρος* [si'ɣuros] (for older *σεγούρος* [se'ɣuros]), itself borrowed from Ven *seguro* [se'guro] exhibits exactly the same phonetic changes, which are well-documented in Modern Greek, cf. Standard and Southern MGk *στρογγυλός* [stroɣi'los] > Northern (substandard) MGk *στρογγυλος* ['stro(ŋ)ɣilos]; Tk *seyran* 'a stroll, walk' > MGk *σεριάνι* [ser'jani] or *σιριάνι* [sir'jani], but less so in Albanian. It seems that the older Alb *sigurt(ë)* [si'gurt(ə)] was borrowed from Medieval Greek *σιγούρος* [si'ɣuros], while Alb *sigurt* ['sigurt] was either borrowed directly from Modern Greek *σίγουρος* ['siɣuros] or the variant [si'gurt(ə)] (of Medieval Greek origin) changed its stress under Modern Greek influence. Interestingly, Rom *sigur* ['sigur], Bg *цигура* ['siguren], SCr *цигура/сигура* ['siguran] were all borrowed from MGk *σίγουρος* ['siɣuros], which suggests that this word is a lexical Balkanism of Modern Greek origin.

(l) *vardhë* ['vaɪðə] 'guard': As suggested *ex silentio* from Dashi (2013: 442), this word is generally considered as borrowed from Ven *varda* ['varda]. However, the change [d] > [ð], although documented in older loanwords in Albanian (mostly Slavic ones), is not the expected one in Venetian loanwords, given that they are more recent and the perception of the equivalence between Romance and Albanian [d] has not yielded to some phonological rule that would justify a different outcome in Albanian. On the other hand, this change is well-documented in Modern Greek, cf. Ven *moneda* 'coin' > MGk *μονέδα* [mo'neða] 'coin; money'; Ven *corda* 'string' > MGk *κόρδα* ['korða], which suggests that the (now obsolete) MGk *βάρδα* ['varða] 'guard' (still alive as a toponym in Peloponnese), itself from Ven *varda*, is probably the source of the Albanian word.

### 3.2 Italian and Latin or Modern Greek? Missed morphophonological evidence

(a) *bizele* [bi'zele] '(a) pea': According to Topalli (2017: 219) this word is borrowed from It *pisello* [pi'zel:ɔ]. However, its initial [b] makes it improbable for this word to be borrowed from Italian. More importantly, the fact that its definite form is *bizelja* [bi'zelja] 'the pea', almost identical to the Modern Greek *μπιζέλια* [bizeɫa], plural of *μπιζέλι* [bi'zeli], itself borrowed from Ven *biseli*, suggests that the Albanian word was borrowed from the above-mentioned Modern Greek plural, which was reinterpreted as a feminine definite noun of the *-e ~ -ja* class and resegmented accordingly. Exactly the same has happened with other Albanian words of missed Modern Greek origin such as *daulle* 'drum' < *daullja* 'the drum' < MGk *νταούλια* [da'uɫa] 'drums' < *νταούλι* [da'uli] 'drum' < Tk *davul*; *ravjole* < *ravjolja* < MGk *ραβιόλια* [ra'vjoɫa] (pl.) < It. *ravioli* [ravi'ɔli], even though Dashi (2013: 365) thinks it is borrowed from It *raviolo/-i*. See also (Kyriazis, 2001: 430-431) on *mandile* 'kerchief' < *mandilja* 'the kerchief' < MGk *μαντίλια* [man'diɫa] 'kerchiefs' < *μαντίλι* [man'dili] 'kerchief' < Lat *mantile*, the Modern Greek origin of which in Albanian was not recognized neither by Meyer (2007: 303) nor by Orel (1998: 244), who consider it a direct borrowing from Latin.

(b) *flashqe* [fa'ʃcɛ] 'swaddling band': According to Meyer (2007: 147) and Orel (1998: 94) this word is borrowed from Lat *fascia* (Orel, *Ibid.*, thought it was a singularized plural and connected it to *fashe*, which in fact is borrowed from It *fascia*, a descendant of Lat *fascia*). However, the stressed final [-e] points clearly to the regular change of Modern Greek *-ιά* [-ja, -ja] suffix, cf. MGk *φωλιά* [fo'ɫa] > Alb *fole* [fo'le], which suggests that the Albanian word was borrowed from MGk *φασκιά* [fa'sca] (now mostly plural: *φασκιές* [fa'sces]). The change [s] > [ʃ]

is usual in Albanian before [c̣], cf. MGk σκέτο [ˈsɛto] (< It *schietto* [ˈsɛjɛtːo]) ‘without additional ingredients; plain’ > Alb *shqeto* [ˈʃc̣ɛto].

(c) *prokë* [ˈpɾokə] ‘hobnail’: According to Meyer (2007: 404), Orel (1998: 347), and (*ex silentio*) Dashi (2013: 103), this Albanian word is borrowed from Ven *broca* ‘kind of very small nail’. However, the Modern Greek mediation is clearly visible in the regular Modern Greek alternation between initial voiced and unvoiced stops, which is due to the amalgamation of the final -v [-n] of the accusative of the definite article with the initial consonant of the following noun or adjective. This phenomenon results in back-formed nominatives by either voicing or devoicing due to re-segmentation. Thus Ven. *broca* ‘kind of very small nail’ was originally borrowed in Modern Greek as *μπρόκα* [ˈbroka] ‘nail, doornail, hobnail’, with its accusative *τη μπρόκα* [ti(m)ˈbroka] ‘the nail etc.’ being re-segmented into *την πρόκα* [ti(m)ˈbroka], which produced a new nominative *η πρόκα* [iˈproka] < (*την*) *πρόκα* [ti(m)ˈbroka] (Krimpas, 2007: 160; cf. Krimpas, 2019: 89-90).

(d) *shkoq* ‘to husk, to hull’ and its cognate *shkoqis* ‘to explain, to clarify’: The initial *sh-* is clearly a prefix of Latin and Romance origin meaning ‘de-, dis-, un-, ex-, completely’, the final *-is* is the well-studied Modern Greek deverbative suffix based on perfective stems of Modern Greek verbs (Kyriazis, 2001: 230-233; Krimpas, 2007: 115; Krimpas, 2017: 434-435), while the stem *-koq-*, according to Orel (1998: 190-191, 422) derives from Alb *kokë* ‘head’, which he considered to be a non-borrowed word, and according to Meyer (2007:251-252) is of only ultimate Greek origin via Lat *coccum* and \**cocceus*. However, if one considers the phenomenon describe above on *bizele*, it becomes obvious that the indefinite form of *koqe* ‘kernel, grain’ is a back-formation from its definite form *koqja*, which is borrowed from MGk *κόκκια* [ˈkoca] ‘seeds, grains, legume seeds’, plural of *κόκκι* [ˈkoci], as suggested also by the [c̣] that renders MGk [c], cf. also Alb *koqis* [koˈc̣is] ‘to pick/gather/eat (fruit etc.) piece by piece’ < MGk *κοκκίσω* [koˈciso], perfective stem of the non-standard verb *κοκκίζω* [koˈcizo] ‘to de-seed’ < *κόκκι* [ˈkoci] (cf. Kyriazis, 2001: 395 on *κοκκίζω*).

(e) *dhjoli* [ðjoˈli] ‘violin (in folk orchestra)’, a non-standard variant of *vjoli*: Dashi (2013: 448) *ex silentio* does not recognize the Modern Greek origin of this word and its variants. Meyer (2007: 539, 137), although properly recognizing that the standard form *vjoli* is a Modern Greek borrowing, he missed the Modern Greek origin of *dhjoli*, which is obviously borrowed from non-standard MGk *διολί* [ðjoˈli] (for this word, used at least in Cephalonia, see e.g., Gasparinatos & Gasparinatos-Tzouganatos 2004: 89), as shows the change [vj] > [ðj], which reminds of the well-documented change [j] > [ðj], cf. [joˈfiri] ‘bridge’ > [ðjoˈfiri] in Cephalonian Greek.

### 3.3 Unknown and native or Modern Greek? Missed lexical evidence

(a) *zigur* [ziˈguɾ] ‘male yearling lamb; young ram’: Admittedly, Morozova, Rusakov and Ovsjannikova (2020: 284) are at least honest when stating that they could not establish the etymology of *zigur* ‘male yearling lamb; young ram’. However, a better command of Modern Greek vocabulary would have easily led them to MGk *ζυγούρι* [ziˈɣuri] ‘two-year old lamb’, itself derived from the adjective *ζυγός* [ziˈɣos] ‘even’.

(b) *pispiilos* [pispiˈilos] ‘to dress ostentatiously, to doll up’: Orel (1998: 327 s.v. *pispiilohem* ‘to dress up, to smarten oneself’) thought this verb derived from *pillōj* [piˈloj] ‘to hackle (flax)’ with expressive reduplication, itself from *pillē* ‘flax comb’, in its turn from Lat. *pīlō* ‘to comb’. However, he probably did not know the non-standard MGk *πισπιλώνω* ‘to cover; to dredge’, which obviously continues Gk. \**ἐπισπιλώ* [epispilōː] < *ἐπί* [epi] ‘on, all over’ + *σπίλος* [spīlos] ‘spot’, *lit.* ‘to make spotted; to sprinkle all over’ (Krimpas, 2007: 157-158, although I had not yet verified my hypothesis about the existence of a non-standard Modern Greek verb *πισπιλώνω* [pispiˈlonɔ], which I now know that does exist in Epirus – i.e., very close to Albania –



and elsewhere. Alb *pispillos* is, therefore, borrowed from *πισπιλώσ-* [pispí'tos], which is the perfective stem of *πισπιλώνω* [pispí'tono].

(c) *porropi* (also *poropi*, *perupi*) [poro'pi pɔ.ɔ'pi pɛ.u'pi] 'devastation; remote region': According to Orel (1998: 339), this word and its variants are 'deverbatives based on an unattested prefixal \**për-rjep*, cf. *rjep*'. However, the multiple variants are not phonologically regular neither when compared to their putative origin (*për* cannot change into *per* in any known Albanian variant) nor when compared to each other (especially the [r] > [ɾ] change is irregular). On the other hand, if one posits a dialectal MGk \**αποροπή* < \**απο(ρ)ροπή* < *ἀπό* 'from, off' + *ρόπή* 'inclination', all changes are regular: elision of initial unstressed vowel (cf. Lat *Aprilis* > Alb *Prilli* and/or MGk *επιθυμώ* [epiθi'mo] 'to desire' > *πεθυμάω* [peθi'mao] 'to miss, long for'); alternation between [r] and [ɾ], a typical difference between diplotic and non-diplotic Modern Greek dialects (cf. Standard MGk *απορρέω* [apo'reo] 'to result from' with its Cypriot MGk variant [apo'reo]), let alone that many Northern Greek variants have generally a more trilled [r] than Southern ones; alternation between unstressed /o/ and /u/, a typical difference between Southern and Northern Modern Greek varieties (cf. *μπορώ* [bo'ro] 'can, be able to' with its Northern variant [bu'ro]). Çabej (1976: 44), although correctly etymologizing *rupi* from Gk *ρόπή* [ro'pi] 'inclination' (in fact from a Northern Modern Greek variant pronounced [ru'pi]), thought that *porropi* and its variants were influenced by Alb *përrëpinë* 'steep slope'. However, given what has been said above, *përrëpinë* [pɛrɛ'pinɛ] may instead have been influenced by the Modern Greek words in question or be a hybrid consisting of some further variant \**përrëpi* [pɛrɛ'pi] (given that centralization of vowels is very usual in Albanian, cf. MGk *πουνάρι* [pu'r'nari] 'kermes oak' > Alb. *përnar* [pɛr'nai]) and the frequent Albanian suffix *-inë* (itself of Slavic origin).

#### 4. Conclusions

As the above examples clearly show, Albanian etymology is a rather complicated task, given: (a) the practically unknown early stages of this language due to its late documentation; and (b) the multiple substrate and superstrate layers that have accumulated on its core vocabulary and structure through the centuries. This means that even a small progress in Albanian etymology could be of particular importance for the reconstruction of its history. Modern Greek has had a profound lexical and morphological influence on Albanian, although less so than Latin/Proto-Romance and South Slavic. Therefore, it is important for the researcher to have a good command of Ancient, Medieval and Modern Greek, especially of non-standard varieties of the latter, in order to be able to discern possible Modern Greek borrowings in Albanian. The above discussion shows that Modern Greek should be one's first choice as possible etymological source of borrowed words that do not clearly originate in other well-documented donor languages. Non-standard varieties spoken in Epirus and the Ionian Islands are of particular importance in this connection, given that the whole Ionian-Adriatic region has always been marked by the co-existence of various linguistic groups, including Greek, Romance, Albanian, and Slavic. Generally speaking, Modern Greek borrowings in Albanian are not difficult to recognize once diachronic and diatopic evolution of Greek is mastered as solidly as possible. Their relatively recent date has not allowed for profound changes that could obscure their origin. The main reasons why the Modern Greek origin or mediation of some Albanian loanwords has been missed so far in the relevant literature lie mostly in phonological and morphological similarities among donor languages and/or defective mastery of non-standard Greek vocabulary and structure. More often than not, the Modern Greek etymology of an Albanian loanword is suggested by a combination of phonological and morphological traits. Most words with missed Modern Greek etymology are nouns and verbs, and more rarely adjectives.

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