Doris Kyriazis

Aristotle University of Thessaloniki

“Why Gypsies and Albanians Do Not Have Their Own Letters”. Greek Attitudes Towards Neighbouring Languages During the 19th Century

The title of my paper is inspired by a folk text-myth, disseminated in the Epirus region during the last decades of the 19th century. It was recorded in the Kourenda province of Epirus (Πολίτης, 1994, p. 461). Since I have previously spoken extensively about its content as well as about the historical context of its emergence (Κυριαζής, 2011), I will now focus only on some of its main elements. First and foremost, let us present the most essential part of the myth:

“When God started sharing the letters of the alphabet, paper had not been invented yet, and those who went to take those letters carried them in wide cabbage leaves and left. All of the people took the letters home safely; however, the poor Albanian wasn’t able to carry his package all the way home because, while on his way, he got thirsty and bending to drink some water, he left the cabbage leaf aside. A cow that was grazing nearby smelled the cabbage and ate it.

This work was supported by the Ministries for Culture, Education and Religious Affairs of Greece.

Competing interests: no competing interests have been declared.

Publisher: Institute of Slavic Studies PAS.

This is an Open Access article distributed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution 3.0 PL License (creativecommons.org/licenses/by/3.0/pl/), which permits redistribution, commercial and non-commercial, provided that the article is properly cited. © The Author(s) 2015.

The Albanian returned to the Palace of God and asked for more letters. However, God was left only with Gypsy letters. «I'm not taking those letters, God. Not even if you turn them into gold.», said the Albanian. «I wanted to give you better ones but I don't have any others» was how God answered the man. «If things are like this then let it be. I'd rather be left without any letters», replied the Albanian. «And how is your tribe going to manage without an alphabet?», asked God. «We are going to use borrowed ones» decided the Albanian and left. Since then, the Albanians use and live with our Greek script”.

While the fact that the lack of a unique Albanian alphabet is interpreted as a random event, it is generally understood that this was what God wanted and what God chose! It also works as a reminder of the cultural debt the Albanians owe to the Greeks, as well as a means of proving the Greek superiority.

How can a traditional folk myth evolve into a carrier of such messages? The analysis suggests that we are probably dealing with an *ad hoc* adaptation of an older myth as well as with the dissemination of the official ideology in the popular mentality.

In other words, the prospective establishment of political frontiers in Epirus – bearing in mind that we are talking about the late 19th century – strongly required the establishment of linguistic frontiers in the region. Such frontiers, as can easily be understood, were not that clear.

The cultural influence of the Greek language in the Balkans, a heritage that goes back many centuries including the pre-national era, greatly exceeded the ethnological frontiers of the Greeks, whose determination became an issue along with the creation of the Modern Greek nation-state. Furthermore, the Great Idea (Μεγάλη Ιδέα) that had emerged in the mid-19th century, sought for a perfect match of these frontiers, creating expectations among the Greeks while also causing conflicts with the neighboring peoples. In our opinion, under these conditions, Greece may have grown significantly geographically, but the Greek language simultaneously lost a great part of its “cultural territories” (Κυριαζής, 2013, p. 91)¹.

The text above has marked heavily the national Albanian narration. In his work, entitled “Albania: what it was, what it is and what it will be” (1899) and widely considered as a manifesto for the Albanian National Movement,

¹ “This questioning regarding the national boundaries, assuming by definition the leading position of the Greek people and their ‘sacred’ language, initiated local tensions, which accelerated the entrenchment of the Vlachs and the Slavs” (Γούναρης, 2007, p. 35).

Sami Frashëri makes a direct reference to it as follows: "...the Albanians are considered as savages and uneducated, while everybody makes fun of them saying that their books have been eaten by a cow" (Frashëri, 1988, p. 36)².

Additionally, Sami expresses himself in a brutally realistic manner as far as the situation that prevailed in the late 19th century Balkans is concerned: "The world has changed, people have woken up, nations have been enlightened, with each one of them trying to go one step further, caring only about how it will grow in number and territory while conquering smaller and weaker nations" (Frashëri, 1988, p. 48)³.

I wouldn't like to dwell on this period any longer since it is fairly well known for its goals as well as for its results. Actually, I think that the decades before the Greek Revolution, known also as the period of maturity for the Modern Greek Enlightenment, deserve more of our attention and concern.

Let me begin with Adamantios Korais, a leading figure of the latter phase of the Modern Greek Enlightenment, who is directly related to the French Enlightenment due to the fact that he lived in Paris. The findings that are presented next are taken from a letter by Korais to the bookseller and scholar Alexandros Vasileiou, whose origin was from Argyrokastro and who was one of the closest people to Korais. Due to the publishing of the *Geographics* by Strabo – geography was an important topic again – Korais asks Vasileiou about the current linguistic situation in Epirus, where, according to Strabo, there was bilingualism in Antiquity: «Ἐνιοὶ δὲ καὶ ΔΙΓΛΩΤΤΟΙ εἰσὶ». What he asks next is if the situation is similar to that of the ancient Macedonian-Epirotic bilingualism, where Macedonian (that is to say the Greek or the Greek dialect) was the language of the good people, of the educated "upper class"; whereas, the Epirotic was the language of the common people, the lower class. For the latter, he also adds that "it may possibly be the mother of the Albanian spoken nowadays"⁴.

² "... shqipëtarëtë pandehenë t'egër e të paditurë, gjith' i qeshinë duke thënë se ja u ka ngrenë buallica livrën e tyre".

³ "Bota u ndryshua, njerëzit u xgjuanë, kombet' u ndrituanë, sicilido përpiketë të vejë më parë se të tjerëtë, sicilido vështon qysh të shtohet' e të madhohetë edhe kujdesetë të përpijë ata që janë më të vegjël' e më të dobëtë".

⁴ «Εἰπέ με καὶ συ, φίλε, τώρα τούτο. Εἰς τὴν Ἑπειρον μεταχειρίζεσθε ἀληθῶς δύο γλώσσας, τὴν Γραικικὴν αὐτὴν εἰς τὴν ὁποῖαν σε γράφω καὶ με γράφεις, καὶ τὴν λεγομένην Ἀλβανικὴν; ... Τὰς μεταχειρίζεσθε ὡς οἱ Γάλλοι τοῦ Languedoc καὶ τῆς Provence, ὅπου οἱ καλοὶ καγαθοὶ λαλοῦν ἀναμεταξύ των τὴν Γαλλικὴν, με δε τοὺς υπηρέτας των καὶ ἀπλῶς με τὸν ὄχλον τὸν

Korais doesn't know many details about the current linguistic situation in Epirus, but compares it and makes parallelisms to the bilingualism observed in France: "I explain the term 'bilinguals', basing myself on what I saw in Montpellier where the good people who had been fairly well educated speak French to each other; whereas, as I previously noted, they speak *Patois Languedocien* with servants and common people. Nonetheless, many of the commoners sometimes also speak French and only very few of them (at least in the cities) don't speak French at all. To cut a long story short, they are indeed bilinguals" (Κοραΐς, 1966, p. 546).

A second element that is worth focusing on is the kind of Albanian words – look at the way he concentrates on the vocabulary! – Korais seeks to learn about: "The words that I'm interested in are firstly, the ones related to religion such as: God, angel etc.; next, the names of the domestic animals (*des animaux domestiques*) and last, several words describing grass and trees that are used for our nutrition" (Κοραΐς, 1966, p. 546)⁵.

Unfortunately we do not have Vasileiou's answer to Korais, which would enable us to find out more about this list of words of the Albanian language. In a later letter Korais says to his friend that: "Thank you for the time you

επιχώριον Patois Languedocien ου Provençal; Όλοι οι καλοί καγαθοί της Ηπείρου εξεύρουν και την αλβανικήν γλώσσαν, καθώς όλοι οι καλοί καγαθοί των ειρημένων δύο Γαλλικών επαρχιών, την Γαλλικήν; Ο ηπειρωτικός όχλος αγνοεί παντάπασιν την Γραικικήν; Δος με περί των τοιούτων καθαράν ιδέαν, αν ήναι δυνατόν. Το έβδομο βιβλίον του Στράβωνος, εις το οποίο καταγίνομαι τώρα μ' έδωκε την αφορμήν της τοιαύτης ερωτήσεως. Λαλεί περί της Ηπείρου και της Μακεδονίας ... και φέρει την γνώμην των όσoui ενόμιζαν συγγενή τα δύο έθνη. "Ένιοι δε και σύμπασαν την μέχρι Κορκύρας, Μακεδονίαν προσαγορεύουσιν, αιτιολογούντες άμα, ότι και κουρά και διαλέκτω, και χλαμύδι, και άλλους τοιούτοις χρώνται παραπλησίως. Ένιοι δε και ΔΙΓΛΩΤΤΟΙ είσι". Το Δίγλωττοι τούτο το εννοώ και το εξηγώ, καθ' ότι ίδα εις το Μονπελλιέρ, όπου οι καλοί καγαθοί, ήγουν όσoui έλαβον μετρίαν καλήν ανατροφήν λαλούν μεταξύ των Γαλλιστί· με δε τους υπηρέτας των και τον όχλον, ως είπα, Λαγκεδοκιστί. Από τον όποιον όμως όχλον πολλοί και λαλούν καμμίαν φοράν Γαλλιστί· και σπάνιοι είναι (εις τας πόλεις τουλάχιστον) όσoui αγνοούν παντάπασιν την Γαλλικήν. Εις ολίγα λόγια, είναι αληθώς δίγλωττοι. Διά ταύτης της λέξεως ο Στράβων εννοεί (αν δεν λανθάνωμαι) την Μακεδονικήν (ήγουν Ελληνικήν ή της Ελληνικής διάλεκτον) γλώσσαν, και την Ηπειρωτικήν, ήτις ενδέχεται να ήναι μήτηρ της νυν Αλβανικής» (Κοραΐς, 1966, p. 546).

⁵ «Περί δε της Αλβανικής ταύτης, αν την ξεύρης, παρακαλώ σε ... να με σημειώσης μίαν ή δύο εκατοντάδας λέξεων των συνηθεστέρων με την εξήγησίν των. ... Αι λέξεις τας οποίας ζητώ είναι, πρώτον αι θρησκευτικάί, Θεός, άγγελος κ.τ.λ., έπειτα τινών ζώων κατοικιδίων (*des animaux domestiques*), τρίτον χορταρίων και δένδρων τινών των πλέον χρησίμων εις ημετέραν τροφήν» (Κοραΐς, 1966, p. 546).

spent and the effort you made to write down the words of Epirus” (Κοραΐς, 1979, p. 3).

Interesting information as far as the relations among the Epirotic, the Illyrian, the Albanian as well as the Slavonic languages are concerned, is to be found in several texts by Athanasios Psalidas (1767–1829), especially in his works *Η Τουρκία κατά τας αρχάς του ΙΘ΄ αιώνας* (Turkey during the early 19th century) (Ψαλίδας, 1931) and *Αρχαιολογία των Αρβανιτών* (The archaeology of the Albanians) (Ψαλίδας, 1941). As an eminent figure of the Greek Enlightenment, Psalidas basically describes the territories of European Turkey denouncing the “lack of education” and the “lack of crafts” of the indigenous peoples – Greeks included – which, according to the author, is due to “inadequate leadership”.

Psalidas, in this way, works not only as a geographer but also as a person who records and analyzes the psychology and the ethos of the era. His broader linguistic views are presented through several random references he makes on the languages of the Balkan peoples. According to Psalidas, “The peoples ... that live in the European part of Turkey are Turks, Slavons, Greeks and Vlachs. [...] By Slavons are meant the Bulgarians, the Serbians, the Bosnians and the Albanians, who were called Burgarian Thracians and, Alvanites Illyrians in a previous era” (Ψαλίδας, 1931, p. 43)⁶.

Psalidas believes that languages change, are affected and damaged as time goes by and as other languages interact with them. For example, the Greeks, “who are now called Romaioi, also live [...] in Epirus where they live side by side with the Albanians, by whom they have been deformed” (Ψαλίδας, 1931, p. 44)⁷. And further “In the Illyrian territory, although the provinces were Greek, [...] the Greek language is spoken, neither in towns nor in villages. There is only one seaside village called Arta, located close to the remains of Apollonia, where Greek is spoken. However, what happened to the rest of the Greek settlers? Of course, they could have been enslaved or could have spread out to other places, they could have left or mingled with the fairly populous Taulantioi or Gegides. Consequently, as time went by, they lost their language

⁶ «Τα γένη οπού κατοικούν εις την Ευρωπαϊκὴν Τουρκίαν εἶναι Τούρκοι, Σλάβωνες, Ἕλληνες καὶ Βλάχοι. [...] Σλάβωνες εἶναι οἱ Βουλγάροι, Σέρβοι, Μποσνάκοι καὶ οἱ Αρβανίταις, οπού τον παλαιόν καιρόν ονομάζονταν οἱ Βουργάροι Θράκες, καὶ οἱ Αλβανίταις Ἰλλυριοί».

⁷ «Οἱ Ἕλληνες ὅμως, οπού τώρα λέγονται Ρωμαῖοι, κατοικούν ... καὶ εις τὴν Ἠπειρον οπού εἶναι ενωμένοι με τοὺς Αρβανίτας, ἀπὸ τοὺς οἱοῦς καὶ ενωθεύθησαν».

as well as the name of their peoples..." (Ψαλίδας, 1931, pp. 59–60)⁸. Regarding the Vlachs, they «live in Vlachobogdania and speak in a version of distorted Italian using Slavonic letters and many Slavonic words»⁹.

According to Psalidas, the 'deformed' languages are as a rule also 'incomplete'. He writes that "language [of the Albanians] is deformed and incomplete, being made up of words of Illyrian, Greek, Pelasgic, Latin and Turkish origin" (Ψαλίδας, 1931, p. 46)¹⁰. As for the liturgical books of Vlachs, they "are all translated into the Vlach language, which is mixed with the Slavonic, due to the fact that the Vlach language is incomplete and had borrowed a lot of elements from the Slavonic" (Ψαλίδας, 1931, p. 44)¹¹.

Psalidas, in his short text entitled *The Archaeology of the Albanians* presents similar views, developing his view on the close relation between Albanian and the Slavonic. According to Psalidas' perception the "uneducated" nations also have "imperfect" languages; whereas, on the other hand, the "perfect" languages constitute an advantage of the "educated" people. In the following quote: "So, this Albanian tribe must have come from the northern parts of Europe during the time that the Slavons, being free and adequately educated (the latter is proven by the old Slavonic language which is perfect), came down to Thrace, Bulgaria, Macedonia, Serbia, Bosnia, Dalmatia, Carniolia, Bohemia, Albania..." (Ψαλίδας, 1941, p. 220)¹². Furthermore, the Slavons "...were

⁸ «Εἰς δὲ τὸ Ἰλλυρικόν μ' ὅλον πού ἐπαρχίαις ἐλληνικαῖς ἦταν, ... ἡ ἐλληνικὴ γλῶσσα δὲν κρένεται, οὐδὲ σε πόλι οὐδὲ σε χωριό, χώρια ἀπὸ ἑνὸς χωριό παραθάλασσο, οὐ ποὺ λέγεται Ἄρτα σιμά εἰς τὰ ἀπομεινάρια τῆς Ἀπολλωνίας, ἐδῶ μονάχα ομιλοῦν ἐλληνικά. Οἱ ἐπίλοιποι ὅμως ἀποικοὶ Ἕλληνες τι νὰ ἐγίναν; βέβαια ἢ ἐσκλαβώθηκαν καὶ διεσκορπίσθηκαν εἰς ἄλλα μέρη, ἢ ἐφυγαν, ἢ ἀνακατώθηκαν με τοὺς πολὺς Ταυλαντίους καὶ Γκέγγιδες, καὶ με τὴν πολυκαίρῳ ἔχασαν καὶ τὴ γλῶσσα μαζί με τὴν ονομασίαν τοῦ γένους ...».

⁹ «Οἱ Βλάχοι κατοικοῦν εἰς τὴν Βλαχομπογδανιά, οἱ ὁποῖοι ομιλοῦν μίαν γλῶσσαν διεφθαρμένην Ἰταλικήν με γράμματα Σλαβωνικά καὶ πολλὰς λέξεις Σλαβωνικαῖς».

¹⁰ «Ἡ τωρινὴ γλῶσσα τοὺς [τῶν Ἀρβανιτῶν] εἶναι διεφθαρμένη καὶ ἐλλειπὴς καὶ συσταίνεται ἀπὸ λέξεις Ἰλλυρικαῖς, Ἑλληνικαῖς, Πελασγικαῖς, Λατινικαῖς καὶ Τούρκικαις».

¹¹ «Τὰ ἐκκλησιαστικά βιβλία εἶναι ὅλα μεταφρασμένα εἰς τὴν Βλάχικην γλῶσσαν, οὐ ποὺ εἶναι ἀνακατωμένη με τὴν Σλαβωνικὴν, ἐπειδὴ ἡ Βλάχικη γλῶσσα εἶναι ἐλλειπὴς καὶ ἀναπληρώθηκε ἀπὸ τὴν Σλαβωνικὴν.»

¹² «Τοῦτο λοιπὸν τῶν Ἀρβανιτῶν τὸ γένος πρέπει νὰ ἦρθε ἀπὸ τὰ βορειότερα μέρη τῆς Εὐρώπης τὸν καιρὸν οὐ ποὺ οἱ Σλάβονες ὄντες ἐλευθεροὶ καὶ ἱκανῶς πολιτισμένοι (τὸ ὁποῖον δείχνεται ἀπὸ τὴν παλαιὰν Σλαβωνικὴν γλῶσσαν οὐ ποὺ εἶναι γλῶσσα ἐντελής) κατέβηκαν εἰς τὴν Θράκην, Βουλγαρίαν, Μακεδονίαν, Σερβίαν, Μπόσναν, Δαλματίαν, Κρανιολίαν, Μποεμίαν, Ἀρβανητιάν...».

always an educated tribe even if they didn't have any letters; since at the end of the 10th century [...] all the Greek liturgical books were translated into the Slavonic language without being mixed with words from foreign languages; and this proves that the Slavonic language was and still remains rich, efficient and easy to combine and, consequently, it doesn't constitute the language of an uneducated and savage nation...” (Ψαλίδας, 1941, pp. 221–22)¹³.

On the contrary, “the Illyrians inhabited Albania in a scattered manner, located in several different small centers and they have continued to live like this until today. As a result, they lost their own authentic language and all of its words, making their language so poor (the once rich Illyrian language¹⁴) that it could be compared to that of a savage nation. And this is the extent to which the prudent and united nation of the Slavons was degraded in Albania” (Ψαλίδας, 1941, p. 223)¹⁵.

It is high time to recall that G. Frantzis wrote about “the worst and utterly unavailing nation of the Arvanites... [who] instead of using the term *κώμας* or *άστεα* (small town or urban center) they used the term *κάστρος* (castles) in their barbarian-like language” (Φραντζής, 1838, p. 391)¹⁶ in the middle of the 15th century, introducing in this way a tradition that relates the “worst” of a nation with the “barbarianism” of the language it uses.

With the ability of a person who knows many languages Psalidas notes that “I observed [in Albania] too many Illyrian, many Asian, many Greek and many Latin words” (Ψαλίδας, 1941, p. 224)¹⁷. Nevertheless, albeit indirectly, he

¹³ «... οι Σλάβοι ήταν ποτέ γένος πολιτισμένο και ας μην είχαν και γράμματα· επειδή περί το τέλος του δεκάτου αιώνας ... μετεφράσθησαν εις την Σλαβονικήν γλώσσαν όλα τα Ελληνικά Εκκλησιαστικά βιβλία χωρίς να έμβουν λέξεις από ξέναις γλώσσαις· και τούτο αποδείχνει φανερά ότι η Σλαβωνική γλώσσα ήταν και είναι και πλουσία και εύστροφος και ευσύνθετος και επομένως γλώσσα γένους όχι απολίτιστου και αγρίου...».

¹⁴ “This is a very honored dialect, because it was the oldest one spoken by the nations that inhabited the northern areas”, reports Γ. Φατζέας in 1760. See note 21 below.

¹⁵ «οι Ιλλυριοί εις την Αρβανητιάν κατοίκησαν κατά κώμας, σκρόπιοι, καθώς έως την σήμερον κατοικούν, και ακολουθώς έχασαν το πολίτευμα και όλαις ταις λέξεις του πολιτεύματος και κατέστησαν την γλώσσαν των τόσοσιν πτωχήν (την πλουσιωτάτην Ιλλυρικήν) οπού ωμοίαζαν γλώσσαν αγρίου γένους. Τόσων είχε ξαгриωθή το συνετόν και άβουλον γένος των Σλαβόνων εις την Αρβανητιάν».

¹⁶ «...έτι δε και το κάκιστον και ανωφελέστατον των Αλβανιτών γένος ... αντί του ειπείν κώμας ή άστεα κάστρος έλεγον κατά την αυτών γλώσσαν την βαρβαρίζουσαν».

¹⁷ «Επαρτήρησα [εις την Αρβανητιάν] παραπολλαίς Ιλλυρικαίς, πολλαίς Ασιατικαίς, πολλαίς Ελληνικαίς και πολλαίς Λατινικαίς».

ascertains that the character of a language is not defined solely by its vocabulary: "The weird thing is that it is formed and pronounced differently and has a different syntax from all the others that I have mentioned; this fact that can be clearly perceived by a person who speaks Albanian as well as two or three of the other languages I mentioned" (Ψαλίδας, 1941, p. 224)¹⁸.

He observes that "although the Albanian language adopted many foreign words, it has always been poor and imperfect and the language of an uneducated nation", and notes also that "in Albanian, words such as: human/person/man, humankind, humanity, humanizes, humanitarian, humanism, distinguish, distinction, discrete, please, pleasure, ungrateful etc. are virtually impossible to translate exactly" (Ψαλίδας, 1941, p. 224)¹⁹. Psalidas attributes this decadence to the fact that "it lost both the word composition and derivation of the Illyrian from which it could have been enriched, if the nation had been educated" (Ψαλίδας, 1941, p. 224)²⁰.

The cornerstone of Psalidas' theory is the following: "My long experience in Epirus showed me that the Albanians lost their Slavonism²¹ [...]. However, Dalmatians, Bosnians, Serbians, Macedonians and Bulgarians all over Thrace and Paristrida conserved it, with Montenegrins and Serbians being its best 'guardians'" (Ψαλίδας, 1941, p. 224)²². We should also add here that in 1760 G. Fatzeas wrote that "The Illyrian dialect... is more clearly spoken in Dalmatia,

¹⁸ «Το παράξενο όμως είναι όπου έχει και σχηματισμόν και προφοράν και σύνταξιν διαφορετικήν από όλαις ταις γλώσσαις, όπου είπα, καθώς γίνεται φανερόν εις εκείνον που γνωρίζει την Αλβανήτικην γλώσσαν και δύο ή τρεις από ταις άλλαις οπού είπα».

¹⁹ «... η Αρβανήτικη γλώσσα αν και επήρε πολλάς ξέναις λέξεις, είναι κατά πάντα πτωχή και ελλιπή και γλώσσα απολιτίστου γένους εις την Αρβανήτικην γλώσσαν δεν ημπορεί να εξηγηθή τινας λέγωντας, άνθρωπος, ανθρωπότης, ανθρωπιά, ανθρωπίζει, φιλάνθρωπος, φιλανθρωπιά, διακρίνω, διάκρισις, διακριτικός, ευχαριστώ, ευχαρίστησις, αχάριστος και καθεξής».

²⁰ «έχασε και την σύνθεσι και την παραγωγήν της Ιλλυρικής από ταις οποίαις ημπορούσε να πλουτίσι, εάν πολιτιζόνταν το γένος αυτό».

²¹ Actually, the view related to the identification of the Illyrian (and the Albanian) with the Slavonic languages was widespread at least since the mid 1700s and not only among Greek scholars. See Gounarēs, 2007, pp. 38–39, where one of G. Fatzeas' works is also being mentioned (Γ. Φατζέα, Γραμματική γεωγραφική ... Βενετία, 1760), which was based on well-known work of Patrick Gordon, *Geography Anatomiz'd: or, a Compleat Geographical Grammar* (Γούναρης, 2007).

²² «Η πολυχρόνιος πείρα εις την Ήπειρον με επληροφόρησεν ότι οι Αρβανίταις έχασαν τον Σλαβωνισμόν διά τα αίτια οπού είπα. Οι Δαλμάτες όμως, Μποσνάκοι, Σέρβοι, Μακεδόνες και Βουλγάροι εις όλην την Θράκην και Παριστρίδα τον διεφύλαξαν, οι Μαυροβούνιοι ως τόσον και Σέρβοι τον διαφύλαξαν καλήτερα».

without any additions or foreign words, and as it was pronounced in the past” (Γούναρης, 2007, p. 39).

If we tried to reformulate this presentation, we would observe that in both cases the “uneducated” status of the Albanians is interpreted as the consequence of a loss. Unlike the other nations, they lost the letters God gave them and “since then, they use our Greek alphabet”; “they [also] lost their Slavonism” and their language remained “poor and imperfect”.

Nonetheless, there is a critical difference between those two interpretations. The first one perpetuates a certain situation, considering it as a choice by God; whereas, the second, in spite of its inconsistencies, expresses the faith of the prophets of the enlightenment in the potentiality of humankind for progress. This progress will be a result of the dissemination of education and the revival of the virtues through which, according to Psalidas, the Ancient Greeks “enlightened Europe, and consequently, showed to the world the degree of perfection they could achieve, becoming a prototype of this perfection” (Ψαλίδας, 1931, p. 46)²³.

The close and careful reading of this quotation cannot leave us confused or failing to understand in any way. Even when he considers that the Ancient Greeks constitute “a scale of virtue for the rest of the nations” (Ψαλίδας, 1931, p. 46), Psalidas doesn’t dissimulate when faced with the bad situation his people has fallen in: “In all of the Peloponnese area there are no signs of education; however, there are magnificent remains of the antiquity” (Ψαλίδας, 1931, p. 66)²⁴.

He hopes that the people of his nationality will “soon be receptive towards all those virtues that embellished their ancestry” (Ψαλίδας, 1931, p. 46). We are actually dealing with the promotion of a “paradigm” that could be sought not only by Greeks but also by other Balkan nations.

Another interesting case of using the Balkan linguistic experience is observed in the work of Stefanos Koumanoudis, the well-known Greek scholar

²³ «Οι Έλληνες τέλος πάντων όσοι δεν ενοθεύθηκαν με την επιγαμίαν των άλλων γενών είναι αληθινά απόγονοι των παλιών τους προγόνων· [...], και σύντομα φυσικά δεκτικοί όλων εκείνων των αρετών, οπού εστόλισαν τους προγόνους τους, με τας οποίας ετρόμαξαν τους Πέρσας και εφώτισαν την Ευρώπην, και επομένως έδειξαν εις τον κόσμον εις ποίον βαθμόν τελειότητος ημπορεί να φθάση, και έγιναν πρωτότυπον της τοιαύτης τελειότητος και κλίμαξ όλων των αρετών εις τα λοιπά γένη από τα οποία κανένα ακόμη δεν έφθασεν εις τον υπέρτατον βαθμόν επάνω εις τον οποίον αυτοί και έφθασαν, και πολλούς χρόνους εσταμάτησαν».

²⁴ «Σ’ όλον τον Μωριά δεν ευρίσκεται κανένα σημάδι μαθήσεως, ευρίσκονται όμως ερείπια μεγαλοπρεπέστατα της αρχαιότητος».

of the 19th century. Referring to the plethora of neologisms that were acquired by modern Greek during the 19th century, he observes that the rest of the nations didn't follow the same paths and didn't made the same choices. The Serbians, for instance, “...while having a naturally rich and workable language... didn't coin new words ... [but] were limited to just borrowing foreign words” (Κουμανούδης, 1998, pp. XIV–XV)²⁵.

In this article several aspects of the Greek attitudes towards neighbouring languages during the 19th century have been presented and analyzed. The issue needs to be further investigated²⁶ and the written resources from the specific time must be exhaustively researched in order for us to form a broader view of the situation.

In our opinion, the observation is still appropriate that “After the Greek Revolution and the creation of the Greek State a sudden interruption of interest in the rest of the Balkan nations is noticeable. The Greek nation folded back, turned itself exclusively towards the study of its past while looking for those elements that would reinforce (its) national consciousness” (Νυσταζοπούλου-Πελεκίδου, 1976, p. 215).

Nonetheless, this introversion was not so intense in the period of the Modern Greek Enlightenment, during which two trends can be observed that are symbolically represented by the writings of Rigas and Korais, on the one hand, and by the work of Neofytos Doukas on the other²⁷. And we believe that the fact that the former was closer to the popular language whereas the latter despised it is definitely not coincidental.

It is also true and worth noting that the views of Kopitar and Miklosich regarding Balkan linguistics didn't have any effect on Greek scholars. The Greek (and the Balkan) 19th century was characterized mostly by the delimitation of otherness and not so much by research into the common (linguistic) network of the Balkan nations.

²⁵ Οι Σέρβοι «... και περ έχοντες γλώσσαν εκ φύσεως πλουσίαν και εύπλαστον ... δεν επεβάλλοντο ειμή αδρανέστατα εις την ονοματοθεσίαν των αναγκαιούντων [αλλά] ... ετράπησαν ... επί τω απλώς δανείζεσθαι τας ξένας λέξεις».

²⁶ Amongst the most recent work we could single out that of K. Giakoumis (2011), where the stance of the Ecumenical Patriarchate towards the Albanian language, in connection with the needs and the pursuits of both the Greek and the Albanian factor, is being reexamined in an innovative way.

²⁷ It is worth mentioning the attack of M. Boiatzis (Boiatzēs, 1813, p. ια'-ιβ') against Doukas, «ος τις ... αγαπά να εξολοθρευση όλας τας γλώσσας του κόσμου, κι αντ' αυτών να συστήση την ειδικήν του μακαρωνικήν γραϊκήν»/ “who ... wants to exterminate all the languages of the world, and replace them with his macaronic Greek”.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Frashëri, S. (1988). Shqipërija ç'ka qenë, ç'është e ç'do të bëhetë? In Z. Xholi et al. (Eds.), *Sami Frashëri: Vepra* (Vol. 2, pp. 17–90). Tiranë: Akademia e Shkencave.
- Giakoumis, K. (2011). The policy of the Orthodox Patriarchate toward the use of Albanian in church services. *Albanohellenica*, 4, 137–171.
- Γούναρης, Β. (2007). Τα Βαλκάνια των Ελλήνων. Θεσσαλονίκη: Επίκεντρο.
- Κοραΐς, Α. (1966). Αλληλογραφία: τόμος Β', 1799–1809. Αθήνα: Βιβλιοπωλείον της «Εστίας».
- Κοραΐς, Α. (1979). Αλληλογραφία: τόμος Γ', 1810–1816. Αθήνα: Βιβλιοπωλείο «Ερμής».
- Κουμανούδης, Σ. (1998). Συναγωγή νέων λέξεων υπό των λογίων πλασθεισών από της Αλώσεως μέχρι των καθ' ημάς χρόνων, επιμέλεια-εισαγωγή Κ. Θ. Δημαράς. Αθήνα: Ερμής.
- Κυριαζής, Δ. (2011). Ιδεολογικές όψεις και πρακτικές της γλωσσικής περιθωριοποίησης. In C. Everhard & E. Mela-Athanasopoulou (Eds.), *Selected papers from the International Conference on Language Documentation and Tradition* (pp. 149–166). Thessaloniki: University Studio Press.
- Κυριαζής, Δ. (2013). Λαϊκές λέξεις και νεολογισμοί: Λεξιλογική διαστρωμάτωση στα ελληνο-αλβανικά λεξικά των Ε. Μήτκου και Π. Κουπιτώρη. *Albanohellenica*, 5, 85–105.
- Μποϊατζής, Μ. (1813). Γραμματική Ρωμανική, ήτοι Μακεδονοβλαχική. Βιέννη: Τυπογραφία Ιωάννου Σνύρερ.
- Νυσταζοπούλου-Πελεκίδου, Μ. (1976). Οι βαλκανικές σπουδές στην Ελλάδα. Δωδώνη, 5, 209–222.
- Πολίτης, Ν. Γ. (1994). Παραδόσεις: τόμος Α'. Αθήνα: Γράμματα.
- Φραντζής, Γ. (1838). Χρονικόν. Βόννη.
- Ψαλίδας, Α. (1931). Η Τουρκία κατά τας αρχάς του ΙΘ' αιώνος. *Ηπειρωτικά Χρονικά*, 6, 38–74.
- Ψαλίδας, Α. (1941). Αρχαιολογία των Αρβανιτών. *Ηπειρωτικά Χρονικά*, 16, 220–225.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

(TRANSLITERATION)

- Boiatzēs, M. (1813). *Grammatikē Romanikē, ētoi Makedonovlachikē*. Vienna: Typografia Ioannou Snurer.
- Frashëri, S. (1988). Shqipërija ç'ka qenë, ç'është e ç'do të bëhetë? In Z. Xholi et al. (Eds.), *Sami Frashëri: Vepra* (Vol. 2, pp. 17–90). Tiranë: Akademia e Shkencave.
- Giakoumēs, K. (2011). The policy of the Orthodox Patriarchate toward the use of Albanian in church services. *Albanohellenica*, 4, 137–171.

- Gounarēs, V. (2007). *Ta Valkania tōn Hellēnōn*. Thessalonikē: Epikentro.
- Koraēs, A. (1966). *Allēlographía: tomos B'*, 1799–1809. Athēna: Vivliopōleion tēs «Estias».
- Koraēs, A. (1979). *Allēlographía: tomos G'*, 1810–1816. Athēna: Vivliopōleio «Hermēs».
- Koumanoudēs, S. (1998). *Synagōgē neōn lexeōn hypo tōn logiōn plastheisōn apo tēs Alōseōs mechri tōn kath' hēmas chronōn*. (K. Th. Dēmara, Introduction). Athēna: Hermēs.
- Kyriazēs, D. (2011). Ideologikes opseis kai praktikes tēs glōssikēs perithōriopoiēsēs. In C. Everhard & E. Mela-Athanasopoulou (Eds.), *Selected papers from the International Conference on Language Documentation and Tradition* (pp. 149–166). Thessaloniki: University Studio Press.
- Kyriazēs, D. (2013). Laikes lexeis kai neologizmoi: Lexilogikē diastrōmatōsē sta hellēno-albanika lexika tōn E. Mētkou kai P. Koupitōrē. *Albanohellenica*, 5, 85–105.
- Nystazopoulou-Pelekidou, M. (1976). Oi Valkanikes spoudes stēn Hellada. *Dōdōnē*, 5, 209–222.
- Phrantzēs, G. (1838). *Chronikon*. Bonnē.
- Politēs, N. G. (1994). *Paradoseis: tomos A'*. Athēna: Grammata.
- Psalidas, A. (1931). Ē Tourkia kata tas archas tou ITh' aiōnos. *Epeirōtika Chronika*, 6, 38–74.
- Psalidas, A. (1941). Archaialogia tōn Arvanitōn. *Epeirōtika Chronika*, 16, 220–225.

„Dlaczego Cyganie i Albańczycy nie mają własnych liter”. **Dziewiętnastowieczny stosunek Greków do języków sąsiadów**

W artykule przedstawiono i przeanalizowano kilka dziewiętnastowiecznych greckich poglądów na temat języków sąsiadów. Zdaniem autora na dogłębną analizę zasługują dziesięciolecia przed odzyskaniem niepodległości przez Grecję, nazywane również okresem dojrzałego oświecenia greckiego. Dla lepszego zrozumienia sytuacji konieczna jest kontynuacja badań pisanych źródeł tego okresu.

Słowa kluczowe: podejścia językoznawcze; ograniczenia i inność; języki bałkańskie

"Why Gypsies and Albanians Do Not Have Their Own Letters". Greek Attitudes Towards Neighbouring Languages During the 19th Century

In this article several aspects of the Greek attitudes towards neighbours' languages during the 19th century are presented and analyzed. We believe that the decades before the Greek Revolution, known also as the period of maturity for the Modern Greek Enlightenment, deserve more of our attention and concern. The issue needs to be further investigated and the written resources from the specific time must be exhaustively researched in order for us to form a broader view of the situation.

Keywords: linguistic attitudes; delimitation of otherness; Balkan languages

Notka o autorze

Doris Kyriazis (kyrdoris@lit.auth.gr) – językoznawca, grecysta, albanolog, bałkanolog. Wykładowca na Uniwersytecie Arystotelesa w Salonikach. Zajmuje się kontaktami międzyjęzykowymi i międzykulturowymi oraz historią języka. Członek Bałkanologicznej Komisji Językoznawczej przy Międzynarodowym Komitecie Sławistów.

Doris Kyriazis, PhD (kyrdoris@lit.auth.gr) – linguist, lecturer at the Aristotle University of Thessaloniki. He is interested in Albanian, Greek and other Balkan languages, history of languages, interlinguistic and intercultural contacts. Member of the Balkan Linguistic Commission of the International Committee of Slavists.