



## Archaic Features of the Verbal System in De Rada's Language, Similarities with Old Albanian Language

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### Abstract

In order to describe the archaic features in De Rada's work, we have examined the original edition of the poem "Canti Di Milosao, Figlio del Despota di Scutari", published in Naples in 1836. From the analysis of the material taken into consideration, both through comparison with the forms of the Albanian literary language, and with those of today's dialect language in Albania, we simultaneously notice similarities and differences with today's literary language and dialects in all verb forms as in the simple ones, even in the compound verb form. From our comparisons, it results that the greatest similarities are with the Tosk dialect, where the greatest density is occupied by similarities with that of Cham dialect. In the poem we find some constructions and verb forms of old Albanian that survive in Arbëresh discourses and in some conservative speech as grammatical variants. The archaic features of De Rada's language belong to an old era that reaches up to the beginning of the 19th century. It helps us understand the evolution of some of the phonetic-morphological changes that have developed in the later periods of Albanian until the formation of today's speech in both dialects of Albanian and in today's literary language.

**Keywords:** dialect language, old Albanian, literary language, conservative speech, archaic features

### Introduction

The main object of the paper is the description and analysis of the verbal system, the diversity of verbal forms, their internal developments as presented in the author's work to be compared with some features of the old Albanian language.

The purpose of the paper is not only to look at and describe the verbal system, but also to analyze, in particular, the variety of verbal forms, their endings, which appear according to tenses, persons and numbers, as well as the fluctuations of forms between the two major works of De Rada, such as: "Songs of Milosao" and "Grammar of the Albanian language".

The aim is to evidence out a good part of the linguistic richness of Arberesh Albanian. The study is an attempt to reflect and analyze the development paths of the Albanian language at this stage of its development. The poem draws our attention from the linguistic point of view, distinguishing within the poem the morpho-syntactic features of the verbal system within the Arberesh dialects.

### **Reviewed Literature**

For this research, in relation to Albanian studies for the old Albanian language there have been consulted the studies of Çabej "Linguistic history and dialectal structure of the Arberesh of Italy". We have also relied on the detailed description of prof. Gjovalin Shkurtaç with the title "Verbal forms of the demonstrative mode of the Arbëresh dialects of the Kozenza region" (Arbëresh Lectures, 2006, p.205-228). Altimari F., *La parlata di Machia Albanese. Appunti fonologici, "Zjarri", anno XVI, (1984), n. 29.*

In relation to the concept of the old verbal system in De Rada's language approaches suggested by foreign scholars, there have been researched ALTIMARI F. and Lambertz M., *Italo-albanische Dialektstudien.*

The analyzed corpus was extracted from the entire collection for the verbal system in the two works: "Songs of Milosao", "Albanian Language Grammar" and from partial observations in the periodical "Fiamuri i Arbërit".

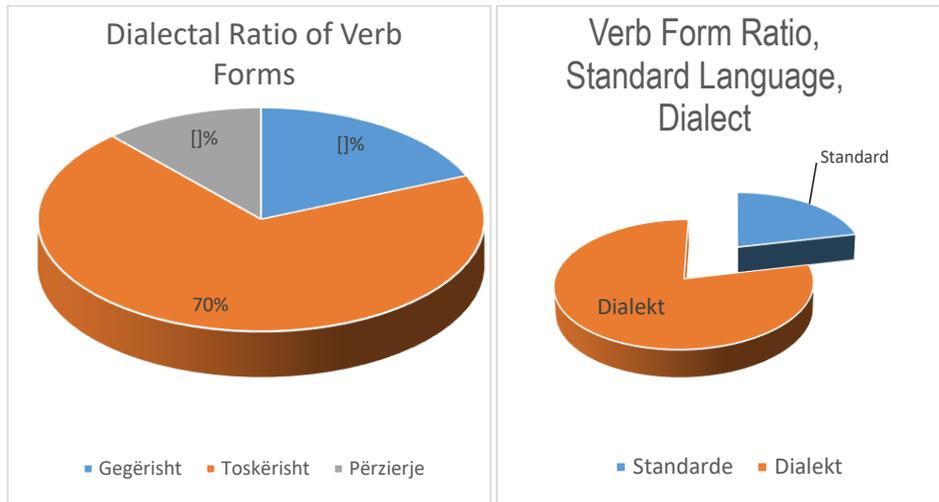
### **Study methods**

Our study is mainly descriptive and analytical, and aims to provide as open and complete a corpus as possible of verb forms and meanings in De Rada's main poem "Songs of Milosao", a major work and such that has been and continues to be in the hands of scholars since high school, when, rightly is being sought a language formation as wide as possible for our pupils and students of today. The concrete knowledge of the linguistic corpus and especially the verbal system of such a vast work, beyond the genuine study goals of Albanian grammar, we hope it will also be useful as an aid for new and valuable areas of text analysis in secondary and higher schools. .

### **Archaic Features of the Verbal System in De Rada's Language, Similarities with Old Albanian Language**

From the analysis of the material taken into consideration, both through comparison with the forms of the Albanian literary language, and with those of today's dialect language in Albania, we simultaneously notice similarities and differences with

today's literary language and dialects in all verb forms as in the simple ones, even in the compound verb form. From our comparisons, it results that the greatest similarities are with the Tosk dialect, where the greatest density is occupied by similarities with that of Cham dialect.

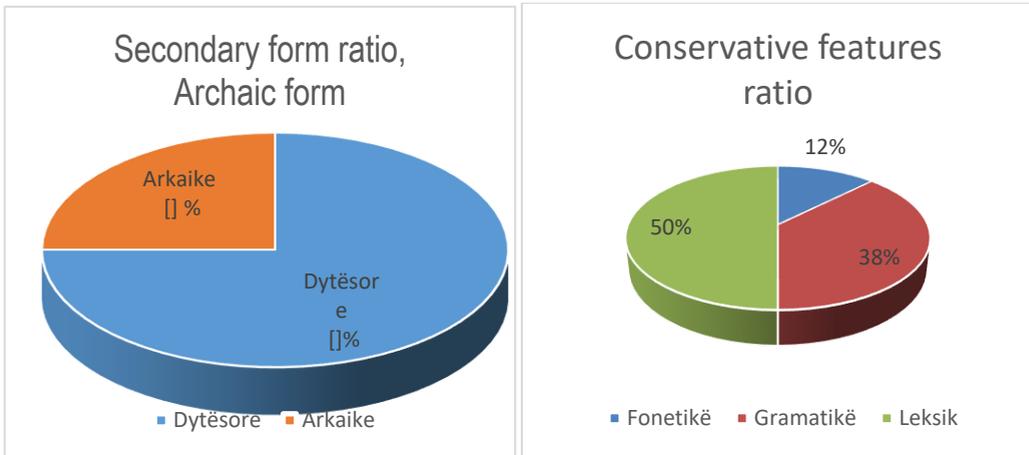


As can be seen graphically, the densest features of De Rada's verbal system are displayed by the dialects, among which the main place is occupied by the Tosk dialect (70%), similarities with Greek 19%, dialectal mixture 12%.

By distinguishing the meeting points with the standard language and the dialects, we have also presented the relationship between them in order to reach conclusions that shed more light, both in terms of the origin from which most Arbëresh people came, but also to help discover origin of folk songs, where De Rada was supported for the creation of the magnificent poem "Songs of Milosao".

From the research done about the verb in this work, it is noticed that the language that De Rada uses has, among other things, frequent encounters with old Albanian language.

De Rada's verbal system shows an archaic character while still preserving some features of Albanian, which over time have completely disappeared in Albanian dialects, or have been partially preserved in some conservative sub-dialect, such as Cham dialect. As can be seen from the statistical presentation of the data, from the conservative features in the verbal system, the largest amount is occupied by the conservative grammatical features, which shows once again that the Arberesh dialect has the biggest changes in the vocabulary and less in the grammatical forms.



75% binary forms, archaic forms 25%

Lexical archaisms 50%

Archaisms in grammar 38%

Archaisms in phonetics 13%

### Conservative phonetic features

- A phonological feature of old Albanian language was the length of the vowels, a feature that also exists in the "Songs of Milosao". This old feature, which has been lost in many Tosk dialects, often appears in De Rada.

The use of long vowels in the work from the graphematic point of view appears with doubling of vowels: Më laan të veshurat, friin asaj udhe, /theet/ "thot", /ngriin/, /rii. In the poem it is clear that the lengthening of the vowels carries expressive or emotional content

- The consonant group /lj/, which in today's Albanian appears everywhere /l/, for example, ljaj "wash" /ljehëmistin/ " bark "
- The common feature with old Albanian language is the existence of the unstressed /-ë-/ vowel. This vowel is very frequent in the poem and appears in positions up to three syllables before the end, e.g. zëgjonem, shtëfrinej, reshëtiet.
- In the system of consonants from old Albanian, the preservation of the groups /kl /, /ng/, të nguqëtin, klanith is also distinguished
- An old Albanian feature that appears in the work is the preservation of the palatal nasal nj, which today is spirantized to j, in the group of verbs of the first choice, such as: gjëmonj pusho-nj, bë-nj, shko-nj in time present active form, first person singular, first person plural shko-njëm, shko-njëmi, third person qeshë-njën, gjëmo-njën, mbanjën, rua-njën, ro-njën, futuro-njën,shko-njën etc.

- Instead of the voiced consonants of today's forms, voiceless ones appear as verbs *zbardh*, *zbuloj*, *zgjedh*, *zgjeroj*, which appear with the form *sbardh-ën/sbuluar* (*sbarthën para sivët*), *sgjedh*..
- The breakdown of the contrast between the vowel phonemes /y/ -/i/, the y being delabialized has ended in /i/: *friinj* “blow”, *ghiign*, “enter”.
- The presence of the consonant phoneme /hj/, in a limited number of verbs, such as /hjeth/ “throw”.
- Voicing of the voiceless velar fricative /h/ to /gh/ or /g/; /gholq/ “remove”, /ghiin/ “enter”, /shoghën/ “see”, /garronen/ “forget”, /gapën/ “open” etc.
- In quite a few cases the h sound is in the company of a voiced g, which in today's Albanian is not:

*Leghen djalë*, song X, p. 42. *Gnighen plot hare*, song XIII, p. 48

In quite a few cases, L comes out with j, a conservative form that has remained in today's Albanian language: *Dheut t'errëti tek ti fjë* (XV).

- The fsh group in all positions ends up assimilated in /sh/: *shinj* “erase”, *qosha* “may I be”

### **Conservative grammatical features**

In the poem we find some constructions and verb forms of old Albanian that survive in *Arbëresh* discourses and in some conservative speech as grammatical variants:

Forms of the past tense of the verbs *jam kam*; *keshë*, *kesh*, *jeshë* *jeshe* *jesh*

The characteristic shape-forming element *ith*, which is not found in today's Albanian in association with the verb: *vdekur-ith*, *garruam-ith*, *përljipur-ith*, *ngreitur-ith*.

Special particles that do not match today's Albanian *eg*; *arrën* (*ardhur*), *daljur dal*, *rar*, *rënë*, which we think carry early phonetic changes of the subject

The expression of the verb *them* is generally used with short forms: *Kujt të m'i thet?*, *Thuam ndë do gjë*. *Thomnie ju të dashurit e mi*.

Form of the present plural with *-mi* (*thomi*, *shomi*).

The use of the imperfect participle of the verb *sleep fle* (*dheut të errët tek ti flij*)

Sigmatic aorist *pe* (*pashe* I saw)

Expansion with *-enj* of non-subject verbs in vowels: *qeshënj*, *ljip-ënj*

The form *jam* and *vinj- po vij*

Verbs with vowels like *bëj*, *frij*, *shkoj*, etc. in the first person singular, plural and third person plural of the present end with *-nj*: *bënj*, *frinj*, *shkonj*.

The structure of the future form of the present I have Kam + relative:

In the third person plural of the demonstrative and relative mode, the old ending with the vowel-i is preserved; doi të na rreshti, lumi u me thoi mali, të vioi (të ruaj).

In the verb system of the old Albanian, in verbs with a consonant theme, the old endings of the present of the first and third person plural took the supporting vowel -ë-, which is older than the supporting vowel -i- of today's Albanian, a frequent occurrence in the poem; virëshin, dukëshin, duhëshin, shehëtin, zbardhëtin, presën llampariss-ëjin, rrumpular-ëshin, vir-ëshin etc.

The verb speak flas in the form of the third person singular number, shows one of the oldest forms of use with the zero ending (fji).

The verb say them comes without -sh, in the old version thoinin.

In De Rada, the endings -jim, -jit, -jin of the imperfect are also preserved: bijim, bijit, bijin; lajim, lajit, lajin, in addition to the old form of the imperfect ending with -nj, where there is still no drop of -j. lja-nja, nje, nej, njim, njit, njin.

In the field of word formation, common elements with old Albanian are the forms with -z- and -th-: In old Albanian, the suffix -z- also served as a plural suffix.

The plural with -z also appears in De Rada's language (in song IV, p. 26) illëzit comes above illez except in many cases with the suffix -z as a minimiser: Ish etje djegur-zze. Etjen mo i shuan-iz. (i shuaka) .

- There are many formations with the suffix -th: çehren më i shuan-ith, gjumi mua më ljodhën-ith (song VIII), dielli që dihet vashës i qeshënith, noerit më bienith (song XI), vera më e magjepsënith (song XXVI), shkone jëma e klanith (Song XXIII) bushtëren njerëz të kanith (Song XXVII) vdekur-ith, garruam-ith, përljipur-ith, ngrëtur-ith

### **Conservative features in the lexicon**

#### **Models that are not found in the modern Albanian Language**

These are the following:

- Sillej e përpiquej "wandering on the road". Mbrëmjeve thoin vashën e nëmur "they talk about the poor girl", a pattern that we do not find today for the verb them (tell).

- Besën e kanë mbi vete "they are people of faith/ loyal people"/ E lja besa (the faith is gone) -As a model we do not find them in today's Albanian, in which the noun besa comes together with the verb kam /jam. Of course, in the first case it is the verb kam, but it is in no case accompanied by the prepositional phrase with which it is followed. The second case is not found today as a model.

Noerit më bienith (I have lost my mind)

Së dii të frijgn (I can't breathe, my breath stops, I freeze)

Gjithë bota na sqepën “the earth covers us all”

Pra që shpin ti më rëzove “ you worked behind my back ”.

Lirisë që buartim “That we won”. In the sense that welcome, the verb buart we think is of Turkish origin, it is a historical archaism.

Atje e qëlloi gjum “he fell asleep” / Qëlluan gjuum “slept”. The verb qëlloi here comes out in the sense of the aspectual verb zë. We think it's an old model, perhaps an extinct metaphor.

Trint kitara, is a model that the verb tringellin, which has its origin in an onomatopoeia, does not have today.

Më shture sit “ looked at me”. Skemantilj i ngit mbë truall “the handkerchief touches the ground”

They are structures that we don't come across today, we think they are dialectal forms in which we can see some already extinguished structure of the verbs shtyj push and ngit drive.

Shkodra s’thuhet më qytet. We have ellipsis in the sense that it can no longer be called a city.

Një hare m’u rodh tek kurmi “a joy took over my body”. As soon as I see you / kurmi më rrodhet (body shakes). We think we have a metaphor with the semantic nuances of the verb rrjedh flow as something that moves, features of youth, which create a very interesting semantic cohesion.

Lexical archaisms: pështjer, sqepet bota, lefteris që buartin, delet rrumpullarëshin, shi i butë bunarënej, u pruretj.

Semantic archaisms: çonj (find), resht (keep off), rodhet (shakes); shtiu (cast) përpiq (stop), patën fjalë (had a row) lampariss (shine)

Historical archaisms , Greekisms such as. potis, parakaljesa, tagjis, skotis, serpos etj.

## **Results and discussions**

The archaic features of De Rada's language that we noticed above belong to an old era that reaches up to the beginning of the 19th century, according to the written evidence we have for Albanian. They help us understand the evolution of some of the phonetic-morphological changes that have developed in the later periods of Albanian until the formation of today's speech in both dialects of Albanian and in today's literary language.

They are meeting points with old Albanian that help to go up in time and to explain older stages of Albanian language.

Arbëresh dialects have undergone a long historical process, with special characteristics and problematics. The formation of the Arberesh language in Italy and

its characteristics are related to the linguistic heritage of the ancestors transformed over the centuries into a coexistence with another language system, Italian and its dialects. The state of Arbëresh speech has been described somewhat unclassifiable.

## **Conclusions**

Arbëresh discourses have a complex character, influenced by crucial extra-linguistic factors such as the factor of time and the place from which the Arbëresh people moved, as well as the linguistic features and phenomena characteristic of these discourses covered with a variety of dialects where phonetic differences are the most prominent.

Arbëresh discourses have an archaic character "They still preserve some features of Albanian, or Arberesh of the Middle Ages, that over time have completely disappeared in the speech of Albania or have been partially preserved in some conservative sub-dialect, such as Chamërisht". Conservative features are distinguished in the lexicon, the phonetic system, and in grammatical forms.

Arbëresh dialects are mixed with Italian or its dialects.

A common morphological feature is the absence of exclamation in all utterances at once.

The biggest changes in the Arbëresh language have been the vocabulary, which under the influence of Italian and Greek has been filled with borrowings, especially in terms of religious terminology.

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