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Përgatitën për botim:
Anila Omari
Shaban Sinani
Ledio Hala

Recensente:
Akad. Kristina Jorgaqi
Prof. dr. Mimoza Kore

Redaktore teknike:
Enkelejda Misha

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“Në shërbim të shenjtes dijes sonë”

Tabula gratulatoria

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• Andrea di Giuseppe - Università degli Studi Roma Tre

PËRMBAJTJA

• **Skënder Gjinushi** (fjalë hyrëse) 13

• **Shaban Sinani**
Një karrierë besnike dhe e suksesshme në albanologji 15

Gjuhësi indoeuropiane 25

• **Olav Hackstein**
Syllabicity or Non-Syllabicity of Preverbal Onsets in German and Albanian 27

• **Stefan Schumacher**
*EINHEGEN, ERGREIFEN, ANHEFTEN: Umfassendes zur Wurzel *keh₂p- im Albanischen* 41

• **Sergio Neri**
Zur Herkunft von alb. e ve ‚Witwe' 57

• **Giulio Imberciadori**
On Albanian nder *m. 'Honor'* 77

Filologji 85

• **Anila Omari**
Tekstet e vjetra shqipe (shek. XV-XIX) në shqyrtimin filologjik të Bardhyl Demirajt 87

• **Ina Arapi**
Lutja Ati ynë te Buzuku dhe Matrënga - një vështrim krahasues 120

• **Evalda Paci**
Çështje të njohjes së historikut të veprave të letërsisë së vjetër shqipe në gjurmimet e Bardhyl Demirajt 133

• **Joachim Matzinger**
Writing Albanian 150

• **Alexander Rusakov, Maria Morozova**
Albanian classical poetry in the Albanian National Corpus: Between linguistics and philology..... 182

• **Ledio Hala**
Sociolinguistika historike e shqipes përmes veprës së Bardhyl Demirajt..... 198

Historia e gjuhës shqipe dhe e trevave shqiptare..... 207

• **Seit Mansaku**
Problematika e elementeve latine në gjuhën shqipe në veprën e Guillaume Bonnet, Les mots latins de l'albanais 209

• **Mimoza Kore**
Autoktonia e shqiptarëve në mesjetën e hershme në një studim polemik të Bardhyl Demirajt 220

• **Mimoza Priku**
Rreth disa interesave për leksikografinë historike të studiuesit Bardhyl Demiraj..... 235

• **Cătălina Vătăşescu**
Les descendants albanais et roumain du lat. sclavus*. Notes sur l'histoire de leur employ* 247

• **Pëllumb Xhufi**
Trevat shqiptare në kohën e dyndjes së popujve 266

• **Xhelal Ylli**
Vëzhgime gjuhësore në hidroniminë e Shqipërisë Veriore: Pellgu i Drinit (dhe i Bunës)..... 297

Gjuhësi variantesh dhe shqipja në kontakt 313

• **Titos Jochalas**
Con gli indimenticabili arbresh della Calabria 315

• **Michiel de Vaan**
The Kelmendi dialect from Slavonia in 1782 and 1839. Transliteration and Concordance..... 326

• **Enkeleida Kapia, Josiane Riverin-Coutlée**
Agent-based modeling of dialect change and stability in Gheg Albanian 364

• **Dhori Qirjazi**
Fjalë me burim nga greqishtja në Fjalorin Etimologjik të Shqipes të Kolec Topallit 387

• **Marek Majer**
Mundësitë e një etimologjie sllave të fjalës prondit *'prodhoj'* 404

• **Plator Gashi**
Huazimet orientale dhe disa çështje të tjera leksikologjike te Kodiku Beratas (shek. XVIII) 421

• **Ema Kristo**
Sprachliche Barrieren und Bildungskultur: Einblicke in die Erfahrungen albanischer Studierender in Deutschland 440

Albanologu dhe publiku.....459

• **Ardian Vehbiu**
Ndërfaqja e albanologut me publikun – Bardhyl Demiraj si bashkëpunëtor i revistës kulturore online "Peizazhe të fjalës" 461

Kulturë shqiptare..... 473

• **Christian Voss**
Kulturelle Überläufer? Versuch einer Kulturgeschichte der Kosovoalbaner in Titos Jugoslawien 475

Eksperienca.....495

• **Barbara Epple**
Eindrücke aus der Zusammenarbeit mit Prof. Demiraj..... 495

Giulio Imberciadori
Ludwig-Maximilians-Universität München

On Albanian *nder* m. 'honor'[1]

1. Inner-Albanian analysis

Nder m. 'honor, glory, good reputation' expresses a central concept of the Albanian culture and society. Unsurprisingly, this word is attested already in the Old Albanian literature, especially in the Old Gheg works by Gjon Buzuku (*Missale*, 1555)[2] and Pjetër Budi (*Dottrina christiana*, 1618)[3] as well as in the Old Tosk *Mbsuame e Krështerë* by Lekë Matrënga (1592)[4]. The Old Albanian ancestor of *nder* is employed by Buzuku to translate Lat. *honos* 'honor' and by Matrënga to translate It. *riverenza* 'id.'. The Old Albanian form differs significantly from its modern descendant *nder*. As for the formal side, Old Albanian exhibits a long vowel /ē/ and (in Buzuku) an initial vowel *ë-* (= /ə-/): cf. OGheg *ëndēr* (Buzuku *Missale* 64.22)[5] and OTosk *ndēr* (Matrënga 23r)[6]. Morphologically, OAlb. (*ë*)*ndēr* is feminine whereas MAlb. *nder* is masculine – cf. the definite

[1] This article arose in the framework of the DFG-funded project "*DPEWA* – Digitales philologisch-etymologisches Wörterbuch des Altalbanischen (15.–18. Jahrhundert)" (DFG DE 2080/1-1 and DFG HA 3372/10-1). My warmest thanks go to Olav Hackstein and Sergio Neri for their valuable comments on earlier drafts of this paper as well as to the *honorandus* Bardhyl Demiraj for his help with the collection of the Old Albanian attestations. Of course, the responsibility for all remaining errors is only mine.

[2] Cf. Qendro (2014: 259-60); *LHGjSh* I: 288.

[3] Cf. *LHGjSh* II: 246.

[4] See Matzinger (2006: 209).

[5] References to Buzuku's *Missale* rely on the edition by Hock (2003).

[6] References to Matrënga's *Mbsuame e Krështerë* rely on the edition by Matzinger (2006: 164-259).

nominative singular OGheg *ënderja* (Buzuku *Missale* 49.66) and OTosk *ndērja* (Variboba)[7].

The Old Albanian evidence suggests that (*ë*)*ndēr* belongs to the small group of Albanian feminine consonant stems. As witnessed by the ending *-ja* in the definite nominative singular, (Old) Albanian feminine consonant stems go back to Proto-Albanian (inherited or borrowed) *i*-stems. Another lexeme belonging to this category is the Latin borrowing OAlb. *qytet* f. 'city' (← Balkan-Lat. **civitātis* f. 'id.'), which exhibits a definite nominative singular OAlb. *qytetja* and has been reinterpreted as a masculine in Modern Albanian (cf. *qytet* - *i*)[8]. Accordingly, OAlb. (*ë*)*ndēr* f. 'honor' points to the reconstruction of a Common Albanian ancestor **əndér*, whose vowel **e* underwent regular lengthening (> OAlb. /ē/) before a tautosyllabic and word-final **r*# (Matzinger 2006: 60). In turn, CAlb. **əndér* presupposes a pre-form PAlb. **əndéri-* f. < Pre-PAlb. **Vnd*/*tári-*. The vowel raising **á* > **é* is due to the Proto-Albanian *i*-umlaut (Klingenschmitt 2022: 109-10)[9]. In contrast, an alternative pre-form Pre-PAlb. **Vnd*/*tōri-* is excluded on formal grounds, as it would have led to OAlb. *(*ë*)*ndyer* – for the development Pre-PAlb. **ō* > PAlb. **ǣ* > (O)Alb. *ye* / _*r*#, see *VAABW*: 224.

Alb. *nder* 'honor' exhibits a plural ending *-e*, which already occurs in Old Albanian: cf. OGheg *nder-e* (Budi *Dottrina* 58, Bogdani *Cuneus* I.108.16)[10]. Since (i) an unstressed sequence Pre-PAlb. **-e̯i̯-es*# yielded Alb. *-Ø* (cf. Pre-PAlb. **u̯ós-e̯i̯e-s*(*i*) > Alb. 2.sg. *vesh* 'you dress', *VAABW*: 253-4), whereas (ii) a stressed sequence Pre-PAlb. **-éi̯-es*# led to Alb. *-e* (cf. PIE **tréi̯-es* > Alb. *tre* 'three', Matzinger 2006: 63), it is conceivable that the plural Alb. *ndere* goes back to a paroxytone nominative plural Pre-PAlb. **Vnd*/*taréi̯-es* – with accent mobility as against the nominative singular **Vnd*/*tári-s*. To be sure, Pre-PAlb. **Vnd*/*taréi̯-es* should have yielded a plural Alb. ˣ*nderé*. All the same, an oxytone plural Alb. ˣ*nderé* could have been reshaped as

[7] Cf. *LHGjSh* VI: 244.

[8] See further Klingenschmitt (1994: 225; 2022: 109-11); Matzinger (2006: 100-1); *SE* VI: 13.

[9] On the Proto-Albanian *i*-umlaut, see generally *VAABW*: 211.

[10] References to Budi's *Dottrina christiana* rely on the edition by Svane (1985). References to Bogdani's *Cuneus prophetarum* rely on the edition by de Vaan (2004) and the dictionary by Omari (2016; here p. 422).

ndér-e (paroxytone) at any time, due to the analogy with the singular *ndér* and the other Albanian plurals in *-e* < **-e̯u̯-es* (Matzinger 2006: 102) which were never accented. Moreover, as Sergio Neri reminds me, one cannot exclude that after the regular change Pre-PAlb. **-e̯u̯-es* > **-o̯u̯-es* in the *u*-stems the sequence Pre-PAlb. **-e̯i̯-es* of the *i*-stems was analogically remade into **-o̯i̯-es*. The latter would have led to a plural Alb. *-e* independently from the position of the accent. Nonetheless, it remains possible that the plural ending *-e* of Alb. *nder-e* 'honors' is simply analogical to the ending *-e* (< **-e̯u̯-es*) of the inherited *u*-stems.

Due to its feminine gender, (*ë*)*ndēr* 'honor' was recharacterized through *-ë* or *-e* already in Old Albanian: cf. OGheg *ënder-ë* f. (Buzuku *Missale* 49.63), *ndĕr-ë* f. (Bogdani *Cuneus* I.87.4), and *ndĕr-e* f. (*Kuvendi i Arbenit*)[11] beside Arb. *nder-ë* f., which according to Giordano (*FAI*: 298) coexists with a masculine *nder*. In those dialects, in which no recharacterization through *-ë* or *-e* took place, OAlb. (*ë*)*ndēr* was reinterpreted as a masculine: cf. MAlb. *nder* and see further Matzinger (2006: 100-1) and Topalli (*FEGjSh*: 1034).

Among the inner-Albanian derivatives of *nder*, the secondary adjectives *i nder-shëm* 'honest', *i nder-të* 'id.', and *i pa-ndershëm* 'dishonest' are built according to synchronically productive patterns[12]. Besides, one finds Alb. *pa-nder* 'dishonest', which is a possessive compound (lit. 'having no honor') and is already attested in Old Gheg as *pāndēr* (Matzinger 2016: 263). Finally, four denominal verbs occur in Old Albanian[13]: (i) *ndēr* 'to honor' (Matrënga, Budi) is derived without an overt derivational suffix (conversion) and inflects according to the type Alb. *djeg* 'burn'; (ii) *ndēr-ën* 'to honor' (Bogdani) exhibits the productive verbal morpheme OAlb. *-(ë)n* (< Pre-PAlb. **-n̯e̯/a-*) and inflects according to the type Alb. *ecën* 'go'; (iii) *ndēr-on* 'to honor' (Budi, Bogdani, Variboba) is continued in MAlb. *nderon* 'id.'; (iv) finally, *ënder-í* 'to honor' (Buzuku) displays *í*-suffixation in analogy to the type Alb. *di* 'know' (cf. de Vaan 2015: 2; *VAABW*: 31).

[11] On these forms, see Qendro (2014: 259-60); Omari (2016: 422); and *LHGjSh* V: 126.

[12] See *SE* VI: 13 and *FEGjSh*: 1034. On the adjectival suffixes Alb. *-shëm* and *-të*, see Xhuvani & Çabej (1976: 272-4 and 278-9, respectively).

[13] For the attestations, cf. *VGjB*: 726-7 and *VAABW*: 646-7.

2. Previous etymological explanations

Meyer (*EWAS*: 299) deemed OAlb. (*ë*)*ndēr* f. ‘honor’ to be a loanword from Lat. (acc.sg.) *honōrem* ‘id.’ – so also Jokl (1912: 205), Tagliavini (1937: 202-3), and *FEGjSh*: 1033-4; cautious is Bonnet (1998: 101). As noted by Çabej (*SE* VI: 15) and Ölberg (2013: 89, 111), however, this hypothesis leaves the segment *-d-* of OAlb. (*ë*)*ndēr* unexplained. Moreover, since the Common Albanian diphthongizations before tautosyllabic final resonants also affected Latin loanwords (Matzinger 2006: 60), one would expect *-ō-* in Lat. *honōrem* to have yielded *-ye-* rather than *-ē-* in Old Albanian[14].

According to Orel (*AED*: 283), OAlb. (*ë*)*ndēr* f. would be a “suffixal derivative of *ndej* ~ *nder* [‘to spread’] depicting ‘fame’ as ‘(wide)spread’”. Yet, the assumed semantic connection is weak. In addition, it remains unclear which morpheme would have been responsible for the derivation of the “suffixal derivative” OAlb. (*ë*)*ndēr*[15].

Building on a brief remark by Bopp (1855: 40), Klingenschmitt (2022: 109-10) proposed to connect OAlb. (*ë*)*ndēr* f. ‘honor’ with the verbal root Ved. *dar-* (med.-pass. *ā-dar-*) ‘pay attention’, on which see *EWAia* I: 702-3. In particular, Klingenschmitt (2022: 110) set up an *i*-stem pre-form Pre-PAlb. “**endari-* < **en-dor-*” – so also Matzinger (2006: 209). Nonetheless, Klingenschmitt does not specify the function of the reconstructed prefix Pre-PAlb. **en-*; the more so, since prefixation is otherwise extremely rare among Albanian nominal formations.

Finally, Çabej (*SE* VI: 15-6) argues OAlb. (*ë*)*ndēr* f. ‘honor’ to have exhibited an original meaning ‘face, appearance’ and to be etymologically related to Alb. *ëndërr* f. ‘dream’. He posits a pre-form Pre-PAlb. “**andár-*”. Certainly, the assumption of a semantic development ‘face’ ⇒ ‘honor’ is plausible, as shown, e.g., by OIr. *enech* n. ‘face’ ~ ‘honor’ (*eDIL* s.v.) or by the German collocation *das Gesicht verlieren* ‘to lose face (i.e., suffer a loss of respect or

[14] But note that the strength of the latter argument may be weakened by the fact that Alb. *tmer*(*r*) m. ‘fear’ – if from Lat. *timor*, *timōris* m. ‘id.’ – shows no diphthongization as well. The origin Alb. *tmer*(*r*), however, is disputed, see *SE* VII: 124-6 and *FEGjSh*: 1474. I am grateful to Sergio Neri for having called this word to my attenation.

[15] On the verb Alb. *nden* ‘spread’, see Neri in *DPEWA* s.v.

honor)'[16]. However, Alb. *ëndërr* f. 'dream' goes back to PAlb. **ándrə* << Pre-PAlb. **ándrā-* < **ánrā-*, as per Neri in *DPEWA* s.v. Accordingly, Çabej's hypothesis leaves both the accentual shift in the presumed pre-form "**andár-*" (see above) and the origin of the vowel *-ē-* in OAlb. (*ë*)*ndēr* unexplained. For a position of skepticism concerning Çabej's hypothesis, see also Demiraj (*AE*: 171 s.v. *ëndërr*).

3. A new etymological proposal

Building on Çabej's assumption of an original meaning 'face' (§ 2 above), I propose to regard OAlb. (*ë*)*ndēr* f. 'honor' as etymologically related to the root noun PIE **h₂ént-* / **h₂n̥t́-* 'forehead', directly continued in Hitt. *ḫant-* 'forehead, front(age)' (*EDHIL*: 287-9)[17]. In particular, I start from an *ér*-locative PIE **h₂ent-ér* 'in/on the forehead', which would have functioned as the derivational base of a thematic hypostasis PIE **h₂ent-er-ó-* 'being in/on the forehead' ⇒ 'front (adj.); opposite'.

In the meaning 'opposite', PIE **h₂ent-er-ó-* underwent a lexicalization process which led it to assume a barytone accent as well as the semantics 'other'. In the latter meaning, PIE **h₂ént-er-o-* is continued in Ved. *ántara-* 'other, second', YAv. *aṇtara-* 'id.', Goth. *anþar* 'id.', etc.[18] – so Neri (2009: 7), differently *LIPP*: 66.

At the same time, I argue the adjective PIE **h₂ent-er-ó-* in its meaning 'front' (rather than 'opposite') to have functioned as the derivational base of a feminine abstract PIE **h₂ent-ór-i-* 'frontness' ~ (concretized) 'front body part, face'. Under the plausible assumption of a semantic development 'face' ⇒ 'honor' (see above), the latter pre-form yielded regularly Alb. *nder*: cf. PIE **h₂ent-ór-i-* f. 'face' > Pre-PAlb. **andári-* > (*i*-umlaut) PAlb. **əndéri-* > CAlb. **əndér* > OAlb. (*ë*)*ndēr* f. 'honor' >> MAlb. *nder* m. 'id.'. The proposed derivation PIE **h₂ent-er-ó-* 'front' → substantive **h₂ent-ór-i-* 'frontness; face' follows the derivational pattern adjective **-eC(-C)ó-* → substantive **-óC(-C)o/i-*, for which parallels are known – cf.

[16] See further Buck (1949: 1153) and *SE* VI: 15.
[17] On PIE **h₂ént-* / **h₂n̥t́-* 'forehead', see, most recently, Bičovský (2023).
[18] On these forms, see (among others) *LIPP*: 65 and *EDPG*: 30.

adjective *b^hh_1-etó-* ‘heating’ → substantive *b^hh_1-óto-* ‘the heating one’ > PGerm. *ƀaþa-* n. ‘bath’; adjective *°-*es-tó-* (type Lat. *honestus* ‘honorable’) → substantive *°-*ós-ti-* (type Hitt. *dalugašti-* ‘length’); and see further Neri (2016: 41; 2020: 22-3; in *DPEWA* s.v. *hije*, *drithë*).

Finally, it seems reasonable to assume that the semantic development ‘face’ ⇒ ‘honor’ took place only after Lat. *facies* / Vulg.-Lat. **facia* ‘face’ had been borrowed as *faqe* f. ‘id.’ in Albanian. The younger lexeme *faqe* acquired the primary meaning ‘face’, whereas the older lexeme (*ë*)*ndēr* was specialized in the metaphorical semantics ‘honor’. This would then be a further example of Kuryłowicz’s “Fourth Law of Analogy” (Hock 1991: 223-7)[19].

May this diachronic analysis of Albanian *nder* represent a small gift of honor for the *honorandus* of this *Festschrift*, who has so deeply contributed to the thriving of Albanian philology and etymology!

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[19] This scenario has been kindly suggested to me by Sergio Neri (p.c.).

DPEWA = Bardhyl Demiraj, Olav Hackstein, Plator Gashi, Giulio Imberciadori, Sergio Neri and Anila Omari. 2021-. *Digitales Philologisch-Etymologisches Wörterbuch des Altalbanischen (15.–18. Jh.)*. https://www.dpwa.gwi.uni-muenchen.de/dictionary/?lemmaid=9538 (last accessed: 15/02/2024).

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