

**Francesco Altimari & Leonardo M. Savoia (ed.): I dialetti italo-albanesi. Studi linguistici e storico-culturali sulle comunità arbëreshe.** Roma: Bulzoni 1994. 481 pp. (Biblioteca di Cultura, 488).

It is generally accepted that dialects at the geographical edge of a language community, like *Randsprachen* in a larger framework, tend to be more conservative and archaic than dialects in the middle. Colonial dialects (Canadian French, Kentucky English) also tend to show archaic features which have disappeared from the original homeland of the languages in question. It is for this reason one could suspect that the Albanian dialects of southern Italy, at the edge of the Albanian-speaking world, have a good number of archaic features, and this is indeed the case. The most archaic dialects of Albanian are in fact those of the Arbëresh colonies in Italy and Greece.

Albanian emigration to Italy began in the late thirteenth century. Sporadic groups of Albanians had found their way to Italy in 1272, 1388 and 1393, but it was not until the mid-fifteenth century that settlements were established when Albanian troops under the command of Demetrius Reres were summoned to Italy by Alfonso I of Aragon (r. 1435-1458), the King of Naples, to put down a revolt in Calabria. For his assistance, Reres was offered land in Calabria in 1448, and there his soldiers and their families settled. His sons, George and Basil, are said later to have made their way to Sicily to establish the first Albanian colonies there. Mass settlement first began, however, with the Turkish invasion of the Balkans which resulted in a great exodus of Albanians to Italy. This exodus which, together with earlier emigration has been masterfully documented by Alain Ducellier et al. in the volume *Les chemins de l'exil - bouleversements de l'est européen et migrations vers l'ouest à la fin du Moyen Âge* (Paris 1992), became all the more acute after the collapse of Albanian resistance and the death in 1468 of Scanderbeg, who had found a generous patron in the House of Aragon. Between 1468 and 1478, waves of refugees abandoned southern Albania to settle in Basilicata, Molise, Apulia, and particularly in Calabria. More Albanians fled Greece in 1532-1533 after Turkish encroachments in the Morea and settled mostly in Sicily. These waves of refugees formed the core of Albanian colonization in southern Italy, although other emigrants followed in later years.

There has long been a pressing need for a comprehensive study of Italo-Albanian dialects, and indeed of Albanian dialects in general. It is thus with great pleasure that European dialectologists and Albanologists in general will study the present edition, published under the direction of Francesco Altimari (b. 1955) of the University of Calabria in Cosenza and Leonardo M. Savoia (b. 1948) of the University of Florence. *I dialetti italo-albanesi* is a compilation of 23 articles in the field of Arbëresh dialect studies by 17 scholars from Italy, Albania, Greece, Germany and the United States. The vast majority of the articles are reprints (in fact only two are published here for the first time), but in view of the often inaccessible nature of Arbëresh publications outside Italy, most of them will be read by non-Italians for the first time. Also extremely useful are the many comprehensive bibliographies which accompany the individual articles.

After introductions by Tullio De Mauro and by the editors themselves, the edition begins with a number of non-linguistic articles, setting the Arbëresh community and the Albanian language in Italy in their historical perspective: *Gli arbëreshë: significato di una presenza storica, culturale e linguistica* (p. 9-32) by Francesco Altimari, a general introduction to the Arbëresh originally published in *L'esilio della parola* (Pisa 1986); *Parlare albanese nell'Italia unita* (p. 33-54) by Daniele Gambarara (b. 1948) of the University of Calabria, who has compiled statistics about the number of Albanian speakers in the various southern Albanian

regions beginning in 1861, the date of the first Italian census to include data on languages and dialects, in this paper originally published in *Zjarri* 27 (1980); *Per una educazione arbëreshe* (p. 55-72) by Leonardo M. Savoia, on questions of schooling and orthography, an article originally published in *Le minoranze etniche e linguistiche* (Palermo 1989); and *Le realtà storico-linguistica delle comunità albanesi d'Italia* (p. 73-81) by the eminent Francesco Solano (b. 1914) of Frascineto in Calabria, a paper reprinted from *Shkolla Arbëreshe* 1 (Lungro 1984).

The first section of the book on linguistics and dialectology itself concentrates on the *Caratteristiche generali e tipologia dialettale dell'Arbëresh d'Italia*. It begins with a number of well-structured overviews by eminent linguists: *Storia linguistica e struttura dialettale dell'albanese d'Italia* (p. 85-106) by historical linguist Eqrem Çabej (1908-1980) of Tirana, a reprint from the years 1975 (Albanian version) and 1976 (Italian version); *Appunti sull'albanese d'Italia* (p. 107-120) by Giovan Battista Pellegrini (b. 1921) of the University of Padua, an extract from his 1977 student handbook *Introduzione allo studio della lingua albanese*; and *L'importanza delle parlate arbëreshe d'Italia per la storia della lingua albanese* (p. 121-128) by Shaban Demiraj (b. 1920), head of the Albanian Academy of Sciences in Tirana. More specific articles then follow: *L'influenza dell'italiano sulle parlate albanesi d'Italia* (p. 129-140) by Gjovalin Shkurtaj (b. 1943), a dialectologist from Tirana; and *Considerazioni sull'elemento greco nell'arbëresh* (p. 141-160) by Titos Jochalas (b. 1940), director of the Centre for South-East European Studies in Athens, a paper originally published in *Festschrift für Rupprecht Rohr* (Stuttgart 1992), which investigates the substantial Greek element in the Italo-Albanian dialects. *Per una tipologia dell'arbëresh* (p. 161-168) by Martin Camaj (1925-1982), former professor of Albanian studies at the University of Munich, is a reprint of his lucid article originally published in Italian in *Etnia albanese e minoranze linguistiche in Italia* (Palermo 1983) and in English in *Studies on Kosova* (New York 1984). *Per la definizione di alcune isofone nell'italo-albanese* (p. 169-178), again by Francesco Solano, structures some of the phonological data presented in the *Atlante linguistico delle parlate albanesi dell'Italia meridionale. Alcuni elementi per una classificazione dei dialetti arbëreshë* (p. 179-210), again by Leonardo M. Savoia, is an attempt to classify Arbëresh dialects on the basis of the presence or absence of specific phonological and morphological characteristics. It goes without saying that such classifications are extremely difficult because the Arbëresh dialects, as opposed to the vast majority of Balkan Albanian dialects, are historically not native to the regions in which they are spoken, but are rather a product of historical immigration. Savoia has nonetheless done his best to put some order into the material available. *La distribuzione del passato 'presuntivo' nell'albanese d'Italia* (p. 211-221) by Francesco Altimari is an analysis of the presence in Italo-Albanian of the perfect tense of the type 'kam + participle'. Altimari has recently published two other papers on this tense, for which the Arbëresh dialects have undergone an interesting development: *Il passato presuntivo dell'arbëresh* in *La lingua albanese nell'Italia meridionale* (Salerno 1991), and *Alcune osservazioni sul passato 'presuntivo' dell'Arbëresh* in *Dialetti italo-albanesi e letteratura* (Palermo 1992), of which the present article is a reprint.

The second linguistic section is devoted to *Dialettologia italo-albanese: fonetica e fonologia*. It begins with *La parlata di Vaccarizzo Albanese - premesse fonetiche* (p. 225-238) by Eric Hamp (b. 1920), ubiquitous historical linguist from the University of Chicago. This paper is an extract from his 1954 doctoral dissertation *Vaccarizzo Albanese phonology. The sound-system of a Calabro-Albanian dialect*, which has been republished recently with an Italian translation as *Il sistema fonologico della parlata di Vaccarizzo Albanese* (Rende 1993). Another phonological survey, this time of the neighbouring Calabrian dialect of Macchia Albanese, is offered in *La parlata di Macchia Albanese: appunti fonologici* (p. 239-258) by Francesco Altimari, a reprint of his 1985 article in *Zjarri* 29. *Vocalismi arbëreshë a confronto: uno studio acustico comparativo*

(p. 259-280) by John Trumper (b. 1944) and Luciano Romito (b. 1964) of the University of Calabria, is a study originally published in *Dialetti italo-albanesi e letteratura* (Palermo 1992). Trumper has been doing interesting and for Albanian dialects quite unique research into acoustic linguistics recently. Equally of acoustic interest is *Uno studio acustico-percettivo del vocalismo delle parlate arbëreshe di Frascineto, Lungro e San Basile* (p. 281-304) by Giovanni Belluscio (b. 1961), also of the University of Calabria, an article originally published in 1989.

The third linguistic section is devoted to *Dialettologia italo-albanese: sintassi e morfologia*. It begins with *Sistemi flessionali e variazione morfologica in alcuni dialetti arbëreshë* (p. 307-355) by Leonardo M. Savoia, an analysis of flexional variations in the Italo-Albanian verb system. This article was originally published in 1986 in the *Quaderni dell'Istituto di Linguistica dell'Università di Urbino*, 4. *Osservazioni sull'aspetto verbale nella parlata arbëreshe di San Costantino Albanese* (p. 357-364) by Martin Camaj is an extract from his posthumously published volume *La parlata arbëreshe di San Costantino Albanese in provincia di Potenza* (Rende 1993). Walter Breu (b. 1949) of the Department of Comparative and Slavic Linguistics at the University of Bayreuth in Bavaria, a Slavist with a strong interest in Arbëresh verb systems, contributes *Forme verbali perifrastiche arbërisht* (p. 365-385), originally published in *Etnia albanese e minoranze linguistiche in Italia* (Palermo 1983). The third section is concluded by *Assegnazione di caso e proprietà strutturali nelle costruzioni causative e percettive del dialetto arbëresh di San Nicola dell'Alto* (p. 387-410) by Giuseppina Turano (b. 1961) of the University of Calabria; and *Per una descrizione funzionale della morfologia del sostantivo nella parlata arbëreshe di Contessa Entellina* (p. 411-426) by the veteran Antonino Guzzetta (b. 1922) of the chair of Albanian studies at the University of Palermo.

In a section of its own is Francesco Altimari's concluding essay *Lineamenti di storia della dialettologia arbëreshe* (p. 429-479), which traces the history of Italo-Albanian dialect studies in the German-speaking countries, in Italy, and in Albania and eastern Europe. An initial version of this annotated bibliographical study was published in *Quaderni di Zjarri* (Cosenza 1992).

In *I dialetti italo-albanesi*, Francesco Altimari and Leonardo M. Savoia have thus offered the interested public one of the most thorough compilations devoted to Italo-Albanian dialect studies, a work which will serve as a point of reference for all linguists in this field. Arbëresh and Italian linguists have been particularly active in recent years and have introduced many new, often computerized methods of research to the study of the Albanian language. They have also had the courage to take up long-abandoned projects such as the Albanian dialect atlas, the publication of which will be the next welcome addition to their multi-faceted endeavours.

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