

*The Letter “q”: Albanian Influence on Romani Orthography in Kosovo and the Republic of Albania*

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DIVERSITY OF ROMANI ORTHOGRAPHIC SYSTEMS

- Pan-Vlax—employs carons (*č*, *dž*, *š*), shares many features with South Slavic Latin Orthographies
- International Standard—employs “morpho-graphs” *θ* {/t/, /d/}, *q* {/k/, /g/} and *ç* {/s/, /ts/} to accommodate morphophonological changes in affixes
- Region-specific orthographies—Cyrillic (Russian Romani), Finnish Romani
- *q*-orthography—employs no diacritical marks; uses *q* for /tʃ/

SELAHETIN KRUEZI, AUTHOR OF *STANDARDIZUYIMI I ROMANI QHIB*

- Romani writer and activist
- Born 1960 in Prizren, Yugoslavia (modern day Kosovo)
- Educated in Turkish, as well as Serbian and Albanian
- Based in Denmark
- Disseminating self-written grammar that does not conform to official standards

ABECEDA OF KRUEZI’S *Q*-ORTHOGRAPHY

*A, B, C, D, E, F, G, H, I, J, K, [Kh], L, M, N, O, P, [Ph], Q, [Qh], R, S, [Sh], T, [Th], U, V, Y, Z.*

COMPARATIVE ORTHOGRAPHY

<i>q</i> -orthography	Pan-Vlax	Intl. Standard	
<i>qhib</i>	<i>čhib</i>	<i>čhib</i>	“language,” “tongue”
<i>najanelpe</i>	<i>na džanelpe</i>	<i>na džanelpe</i>	“it is not known”
<i>shukar</i>	<i>šukar</i>	<i>šukar</i>	“good,” “pretty”
<i>thay</i>	<i>thaj</i>	<i>thaj</i>	“and”
<i>manca</i>	<i>manca</i>	<i>mança</i>	“with me”

*Q* IN ALBANIAN

- Denotes Tosk /c/, a phoneme often unrealized in Geg—Friedman’s formula—“In many Geg dialects...*q* + *ç* = *ç*”
- Albanian nationalism in Kosovo led to Geg emulation of the Tosk standard established in Albania, which subsequently led to usage of *q* in writing among Geg speakers

- A effect of this phenomenon is the conflation of *q* with *ç*—e.g. /tʃeni/ for *qeni* (“the dog”)

#### POSSIBLE INFLUENCE OF KOSOVAR REALIZATIONS OF TOSK ORTHOGRAPHY ON Q-STANDARD OF ROMANI?

- *q* corresponds to Pan-Vlax *č* (/tʃ/)
- The only digraph (besides aspirated stops *kh*, *ph*, *qh*, *th*) is *sh*, corresponding to Albanian realization of *ʃ*
- Some contrastive orthographic elements:

<i>q</i> -orthography	Albanian Orthography	
<i>y</i>	<i>j</i>	/j/
<i>j</i>	<i>xh</i>	/dʒ/
<i>th</i>	n/a	/t <sup>h</sup> /

#### INFLUENCE OF KOSOVO-BASED ROMANI ORTHOGRAPHY ON ALBANIAN ROMANI

Excerpt from an email from the head of a Tiranë-based Romani language NGO:

Original	<i>Paqav o vaver kurko.</i>
Pan-Vlax	<i>Pačav o vaver kurko.</i>
	“I shall write next week.”

#### ADAPTABILITY AND CONVENIENCE OF Q-ORTHOGRAPHY FOR ELECTRONIC USE

- Eliminates the need for diacritic marks in electronic media, especially when compared with the International Standard and Pan-Vlax writing systems
- Employment of *q* makes certain that no more than two letters will indicate one segment or phoneme; digraphs, but no trigraphs (if *q* were instead *ch*, then “language” would be *chhib*, not *qhib*; *sh* is not a problematic digraph since it is never aspirated)
- Due to particularities of Southwest Balkan dialects, the *q*-orthography does not indicate a contrast like *h* vs. *x* in Pan-Vlax; still, the letter *x* could easily be added to the *q*-orthography

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