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AREAL AND INSULAR DIALECTS AND THE CASE OF ROMANI

1. AVERAGE DIALECT BEHAVIOUR

Dialects of the European languages which have been investigated in detail normally appear to form a continuum, sharp breaks between two or more dialects being absent. A given linguistic element, phoneme or grammatical morpheme or word, varies over the geographical area of a language in a way that mirrors the diachrony of this element and enables us to reconstruct the original relations between variants. An isogloss separates minimal varieties of a language. Sometimes a couple of isoglosses run close to one another, in roughly the same direction opening up the possibility of setting up a dialect boundary or at least a transitional zone between dialects. In other cases there is a continuous change/variation of features and elements as we cross a linguistic area from one end to the other. We can state as a rule that neighbouring dialects are more similar to one another than more distant ones (although this does not necessarily hold in regard to individual traits¹). This rule can be illustrated by a great number of examples drawn from languages like e. g. German or French or Albanian. In the case of German, variation between [p t k] in the northern parts and the corresponding affricates [pf ts kx] south of the "Rheinischer Fächer" may be mentioned, the affricates increasing their distribution in word positions as we go southward. A more specific phenomenon is the increase in the distribution of [š]: in the Flamish area this sound is met in foreign words only, whereas in areas east to it it appears in more and more environments until its distribution comes up to that of Standard German (cf. map 1 (= map 9 in Goosens 1969: 127)). Another example of regular dialectal behaviour is Albanian showing a clear-cut bipartition: the northern dialect (Gegue) is characterised by nasal vowels, preservation of intervocalic [n], affrication of [k'] to [č] or [č̣], preservation of infinitive, a future formed by 'to have', whereas the southern dialect or Tosque has [ə] "ë" instead of nasals, rhotacisme of *-n-*, preservation of [k'], some kind of (original) object sentences in the place of an infinitive, a future formed by 'will, want', the isoglosses running through Central Albania in west-east-direction marking a rather broad transitional area, without leaving isolated subareas in the "wrong" main area.

1 I prefer the term "traits" to "features" because what is referred to are not only features of sounds and words but types of morphemes and categories as well as meanings and functions. Where the term "features" is used it should be interpreted in this wider sense.

All such variations of phenomena structure a linguistic area in a consistent and plausible way. We would like to call this type of dialect AREAL DIALECTS (in German FLÄCHENDIALEKTE). The conditions for this type of dialect appear to be: sedentary way of life of the speakers for a long time, cohesive settlement combined with relatively high population density.

As is commonly known, this average picture can be distorted by certain historical factors, f. i.

- i. when an innovation takes place in the center, but the peripheries remain conservative (the so-called "marginal theory" of classic historical linguistics). This is the case with the diphthongization of [ī] and [ū] in German, which was not carried out in Low German as well as in the southernmost Alemanic dialects of Switzerland; or with the change of the diphthong [ua] in Albanian, which preserved this shape in the south (Tosque area) but changed to [ue] in the north and was monophthongized into [ū] in the Kosova area (north-east) – except for the northernmost area in Montenegro (Plav and Gusinje) where [ua] survived unchanged;
- ii. when groups of speakers change their domiciles, and their dialect is transposed into an environment where it did not originate, but which is linguistically related; f. i. the immigration of speakers of the so-called Štokavian dialect of Serbo-Croatian into Istria, where Čakavian dialects of this language were spoken;
- iii. when political frontiers, supported by different standard languages, lead to the levelling or the suppression of dialectal traits eventually resulting in the rise of linguistic boundaries. This phenomenon can be observed at the Dutch-German frontier;
- iv. when the linguistic continuity is interrupted by language loss in an intermediate area (as was the case with Low and Upper Sorbian, two small languages spoken in Eastern Germany).

2. INSULAR DIALECTS

As a rule, cases like these can be identified and explicated and do not pose any further problems. Another type of discontinuity is represented by languages or dialects in diaspora. We may quote here the Croatian dialects spoken in the Burgenland area of Austria (cf. map 2 (from Vlasits 1986: 263)). There are seven groups of speakers stemming from different places of Croatia. Since they settled in an area which was mainly German-speaking the diasporic character of these dialects becomes easily apparent. Each dialect is spoken in a few villages and is relatively homogeneous, whereas clear-cut boundaries can be found between neighbouring dialects, which may be separated from one another by German villages. If we cross the Burgenland from north to south we of course will not find a dialectal situation comparable to that of the German dialects of this province. Dialects of this type may be called INSULAR DIALECTS (in German INSELDIALEKTE) in a double sense – "insular" both with regard to the surrounding language and to the other dialects of the same language.

Other languages as for instance Yiddish and Romani seem to be diasporic throughout, since they do not have a homeland or a kernel area in the strict sense of the word. Eastern Yiddish as earlier spoken in Poland, Ukraine, Belorussia, Russia and the Baltic countries was characterized by the fact that there were speakers in all towns of some importance, but that this area was not inhabited by Jews in a cohesive way. Taking into account that the Jews came to the East-European countries from various areas of South-Western Germany, and that groups neighbouring in Germany would in all likelihood not remain neighbours in the new places, we should expect a pattern differing from that of average areal dialects. However, what is actually found runs counter to these expectations. The regular distribution of traits can partially be explained by the fact that groups of Jews were expelled as early as in Germany from their original homelands and settled in other parts of the German-speaking area, which apparently led to dialect levelling before migration to the east started. Apparently, there is no full consense as to the classification of the dialects, but as far as individual linguistic features are concerned, simple isoglosses can be drawn dividing up the whole Yiddish area without leaving islands or creating chaotic partitions of the area (cf. the maps in Herzog et al. 1992). A look at some of the maps will confirm this view: cf. e. g. map 3 (map 17 in Herzog et al.) rendering the reflexes of Proto Yiddish A₂: there is a western area with *vo:gn*, a central area with *vu:gn* and similar, a southeastern area with *vogn*, and an eastern area with *vogn*; or map 4 (map 30 in Herzog et al.) rendering the reflexes of Proto Yiddish O₄: a western part has *ka:fn*, a central and southeastern part *kojfn*, an eastern part *kejfn*, and some parts of the Baltic area *keufn*. To be sure, all those isoglosses do not coincide, but they follow roughly the same directions, which makes it possible to define dialect areas (or at least centers or prototypical areas). In this way, an overall picture emerges which is plausible in terms of sound change and analogical levelling.

As for Romani, the situation appears to be quite different. We know that the Roma came from India, and that they arrived at Europe no later than in the XIth century, but we have no informations about the details of their migrations: we do not know how many waves of immigrants came to Europe, to what degree Romani has already then been split up into dialects, if there was dialect mixture as early as in the Near East and so on. Regrettably enough, no precursors that belong to the group of European Romani survived in the Near East. The only means to reconstruct the routes of migration is analyzing the loans that have been taken from European languages.²

2 By doing so we can state with certainty that the ancestors of the Spanish Calorré crossed the Balkans and Central European areas (Hungary, Bohemia, probably Southern Germany) and that they had no intensive contact with French before they arrived at Catalunya. In this way, immigration from North Africa can be excluded.

In general there was much fluctuation, and migrations did not proceed in only one direction. Nowadays so-called Vlach Gypsies live not only in Western Europe and in America, but "again" in the Southern Balkans and even in Anatolia and further east. Some Lovara left Romania for Russia, but then "returned" and settled in northern Yugoslavia. Roma from Greece are now found in the north of Iran. All this might seduce us to assume that a hopeless mixing of dialects has taken place, which would mean that neither individual dialects nor dialect areas can be marked off and identified. This is partially true as far as the areas are concerned, but the dialects themselves appear to have remained relatively pure. The reasons for why the dialects were kept distinct are to be found in a number of factors the most important of them being a quite closed tribal organization with all its consequences, at least in former times (cf. Boretzky 1995). Although dialects of greater extent like Sinti, Kalderaš or Erli do vary as to individual traits, in most cases we have no difficulties to affiliate a variety under inspection to a major dialect.

The situation is quite different, however, with regard to spatial delimitation. Groups of one tribe migrated to different places and often changed their domiciles several times, important towns and cities being the centers of attraction. This fluctuation resulted in a state of coexistence of distinct groups and dialects in one area and one locality, at least in the towns of Southeastern Europe and the Balkans. If the newcomers spoke a variety only slightly different from one of the dialects spoken in that place, a total levelling of dialect traits may have taken place. But if the differences were numerous and, what is more important, the people were conscious of belonging to a group of their own, the outcome would not be a far-reaching mixture of groups and dialects. Let me give some examples for the coexistence of various groups. In Kosova, there are the Arlije – a tribe settled down for a long time in the south (Macedonia, Albania, southern Serbia, and perhaps Greece as well). Second we have the Bugurdžides, which in all likelihood came from the east or southeast (Macedonia, Bulgaria). A third group of this area, the Gurbet (in other places called Džambazi), is of Vlach origin. These groups live together in nearly all towns of Kosova, especially in Priština. What is more, there are three different groups of Arlije in Priština speaking slightly different dialects and living separated in different quarters (or streets), that is they managed to keep distinct in spite of close neighbourhood. (Today, we have no detailed data about the extent of variation.) This example is suited to illustrate the insular character of Romani dialects, or to formulate it more cautiously, of some Romani dialects, in a most impressive way.

It will have become clear that it is impossible to picture all the data of a given area on one map. Rather, we need different maps in accordance with what we want to demonstrate. In the case discussed above we should set up separate maps: for the varieties of Arli a map comprising the Southwest Balkanic area, for Bugurdži together with the dialects closely

related to it, Drindari and Kalajdži, southern Serbia, Macedonia as well as the whole of Bulgaria, and for Gurbet/Džambazi southern Serbia, Kosova and Macedonia, southern Serbia being a constituent part of all those maps. If we wished to represent all Vlach dialects together, a map encompassing the wider Balkan area would be needed. On the other hand, it would not make much sense to combine the data of not closely related dialects as Arli, Bugurdži and Gurbet on one map comprising, say, southern Serbia, Kosova and Macedonia, because there is no geographical distance between those dialects. There is a similar pattern of coexistence in Southern Poland, Slovakia and Hungary, where we find first Vlach Gypsies (Lovara and Kalderaša), second the so-called Central tribes, third a few Sinte, and last some minor groups difficult to affiliate. In order to compare the data of major dialects another type of map will have to be sketched where the data of different groups might be entered at fictitious places roughly representing recent group centers or historical radiation centers. This means that, other than for areal dialects, the choice of the map and the map size as well as the choice of the entry type is a real problem.

When speaking of the insular character of Romani dialects we refer to the relations between the major dialects, which as a consequence of long separation differentiated to a considerable degree. Needless to say that here geographical neighbourhood does not imply linguistic closeness. But even dialects traditionally subsumed under a major dialect or a dialect group often display the same puzzling behaviour. I tried to shed some light on the internal relations of the so-called Balkanic (or South-Balkanic) group (cf. Boretzky: *Die Verwandtschaftsbeziehungen zwischen den Südbalkanischen Romani-Dialekten*, forthcoming), consisting of the Arlije of Macedonia and Kosova, the Erlides of Bulgaria, the Ursarja of Romania, the dialect of the Crimean peninsula, the Paspatian dialect of Eastern Thracia (geographically not well identified), the dialect of Prilep (a small community in south Macedonia), and two closely related dialects in northern Iran (cf. map 5), and most likely other varieties not described. There are no indications to the existence of transitional zones between the dialects enumerated above, and I am very doubtful about the existence of a real dialect continuum, of a gradual transition between even some of these dialects. As will be shown, geographical neighbourhood always implies some common traits, but these are not important and numerous enough to break up the group into subgroups in a convincing way. Each dialect is connected with each other dialect and differentiated from each other dialect by a number of traits, but in a way difficult to interpret diachronically.

Map 6 shows how many exclusive traits, that means traits not occurring in the other dialects of the group, two neighbouring dialects have in common, conservative and innovative traits not being distinguished; in detail:

I. Arli / Prilep

1. *-s* is lacking in masc.sg. *-o*, *-i*, fem.pl. *-e*
2. 3rd sg.pres. *-ola* beside *-ela*
3. 1st sg.past *-um* (for *-om*)
4. 'thus' *akjaar* and sim./*ajkjar*
5. 'when?' Slavic *keda*, *koga* instead of *kana*.

II. Prilep / Sepeči

1. copula 1st sg. *sinum/isinom* (with additional *n*)
2. past of *phand-* *phandum/phandom* instead of *phandlom*

III. Erli / Crimean

1. masc.pl. of loanwords *-o(v)ja*
2. short pres. in *-el* (*ker-el*)

IV. Ursaritiko / Crimean

1. fem.article *e* only
2. genitive both in *-ko* and *-koro*
3. 'thus' *ajakha*
4. 'a little' *zalag* (Bulg.)

V. Arli / Erli

1. *ṛḍ* > *r/ř* (*r*)

VI. Paspatis / Sepeči

1. fem.article oblique *i*
2. *si te* for 'must' is lacking
3. '50' *peninda* (Greek original form)
4. 'when?' *ka* < *kana*
5. 'where?' *ka* < *kaj*

VII. Paspatis / Erli

1. 'so much' *abor/aborkha*
2. 'encore' *adžaj/ažaj*

VIII. Paspatis / Crimean

1. *ṛḍ* > *nr*
2. loanverbs in *-iz-*

IX. Paspatis / Zargari —

X. Zargari / Romano

1. $u > i$ (*e*)
2. elimination of initial clusters
3. Loss of article
4. 1st sg.pres. with additional *-ni* (*-ne*)
5. 'can' *aešte/aiš*

This map might give the impression that, notwithstanding the lack of transitional zones, at least three groups each made up of two dialects can be "extracted": Arli-Prilep, Sepeči-Paspati, and especially the Iranian dialects. However, this impression is hardly supported by the following maps. Map 7 combines all positive traits shared by pairs of neighbouring dialects, that is it includes the data contained in map 6. Although there is slightly more similarity between Arli-Prilep, Sepeči-Paspati, and Zargari-Romano, the differences in number are not significant enough to confirm the subgroups suggested by map 6. It should be added that simple trait-counting would not do, age and weight of the traits should be valued as well.

In what follows the non-exclusive traits are listed:

I. Arli / Prilep

1. fem. article *e* besides *i* (+ Crimean)
2. instrumental in *-sar* besides *-sa* (+ Sep.)
3. no complex prepositions
4. abstract suffix *-ipa* and *-iba*
5. '50' *pinda* (possible in Erli too)
6. 'since long' *čirla*

II. Prilep / Sepeči

1. instrumental in *-sar* (+ Arli)
2. depalatalisation in pret. *kerdum/kerdom*
3. 'how much?' *keti* (+Pasp., Erli)
4. demonstr. without *-kha* (+ Erli)

III. Erli / Crimean

1. complex prepositions (+ Sep., Pasp.)
2. demonstr. with *-kha* (+ Pasp.)
3. no *ther-* 'have'
4. past *kerdjom/kerdjom* (+ Arli)
5. 'first' *avgo-* (+ Pasp.)

IV. Ursaritiko / Crimean

1. *nđ* > *nr* (partially Pasp., Iranian dialects)
2. demonstr. of the type *adaukha/adavkha* (+ Erli)
3. short copula form *som, san* etc. (+ Pasp. I, Zarg.)
4. pres. *ker-el*, fut. *ker-ela*
5. no past forms in *-t-*
6. loanverbs in *-iz-* (+ Pasp.)

V. Arli / Erli

1. copula *hijnum/sinjom* with *-nj-* (most dialects)
2. past *kerjum/kerjom* (+ Crimean)
3. '50' *pinda* (+ Pril.)
4. 'so much' *do-bor-kha, a-bor-kha* and sim.
5. 'since long' *čirla* (+ Pril.)

VI. Paspati / Sepeči

1. *c* > *č* (+ Iranian dialects)
2. complex prepositions (+ Crimean, Erli Rhodopes)
3. 'which?' *kava, kova* (+ Erli)
4. 'so much' *abor, azom/aboka* (without *k-*)
5. 'encore' *adžaj, adže* (+ Erli)

VII. Paspati / Erli

1. complex prepositions (+ Erli Rhodopes)
2. pers.pron. 'they' *ol*
3. demonstr. in *-kha* (+ Crimean)
4. 'which?' *kava, kova* (+ Sep.)
5. 'all' *sarore*
6. past forms on *-t-* (+ Iranian dialects)
7. 1st sg.pret. *kerjom*
8. 'first' *avgo-* (+ Crimean)

VIII. Paspati / Crimean

1. complex prepositions (+ Erli Rhodopes)
2. demonstr. in *-kha* (+ Erli)
3. 'may' *me* < *mek* (+ Zarg.)
4. 'first' *avgo-* (+ Erli)

IX. Paspati / Zargari

1. *nđ* > *nr* (+ Crimean)

2. $c > \check{c}$ (+ Sep.)
3. copula *isom* (in Pasp.I)
4. 'may' *me* < *mek* (+ Crimean)

X. Zargari / Romano

1. vowel harmony (+ Sep.)
2. pers.pron. 'they' *ola/ula* (+ Arli)
3. depalatalisation of past forms (+ Pril., Sep.)

Map 8 shows the dialect divergencies which, as can be seen, are both numerous in general and nearly equally numerous for all pairs of neighbouring dialects, again except for the Iranian dialects. This means that cohesion within the group is quite low. (Since the traits are too numerous, they will not be listed here; for the full data cf. Boretzky, forthcoming). It is puzzling that Ursaritiko and Crimean, which share a lot of linguistic data (cf. maps 6 and 7) and which are believed to have a common ancestor, nevertheless display an unusually high number of differences (apparently caused by late change including interference).

Map 9 contains the idiosyncratic traits of the individual dialects. The number is high for Arli, which is understandable since Arli seems to be marginal in this group for other reasons as well. It is even higher for Sepeči although this is not corroborated by intuition. The reason may be that Sepeči has borrowed a lot of traits from Vlach. The same holds for Ursaritiko; the details:

I. Arli:

1. -s lacking in verbal forms
2. preposition *tar* 'from' (instead of *katar*, *kotar*)
3. the hybrid preposition *biz-o* 'without' (instead of *bi*)
4. the preposition *uz-o* 'at, on' (from Slavic)
5. possess. pron. *mlo*, *tlo/klo*, *plo* (*l* instead of *r*)
6. *kuri* 'where?' and *koro* (*kori*) 'at, to'
7. copula *hinum* with *h-* < *s-* (only partially)
8. no imperfect and pluperfect in -as
9. inflected participle *-im-o/-im-i/-im-e* with loan verbs
10. gerund in *-indor* (in varieties only)

II. Prilep:

1. $\eta d > nd$ (partially in Pasp. as well)
2. '-times' *-fora* (from Greek)
3. 3rd sg. past *-as* and *-o/-i* hardly distinguished
4. 'so much' *eleti*, *eletka*

III. Sepeči:

1. accentuation with *d*-verbs *rodél* (instead of conservative *ródel*)
2. prepositions *andral* 'from, out of' and *džak* 'till' (< *džikaj*)
3. pers. pron. 3rd pers. *vov, voj, von* (with *v-* as in Vlach)
4. '60' *eksinda* (from Greek)
5. 'become' *avel, avilo* (as in Vlach)
6. negation of future *ma ka*
7. negation of subjunctive and conditional *ma ti*
8. type of passive in *-d-iv-ola*
9. type of passive in *-as-ajlo* with *a*-verbs
10. 'can' *džanela te* (for actual ability)
11. 'today' *adives* (instead of *avdives*)
12. 'tomorrow' *javin* (instead of *tasja* and the like)
13. adverb 'around' *dondolal*

IV. Paspati:

1. variation between *s* and *š* (Sedentaries)
2. preposition *palé* 'behind, after' (reliable?)
3. preposition *te* (*to, ti, te*) 'at, to' (along with *ke*)
4. demonstr. of the types *avaka* and *kadava* (*kadava* < Vlach?)
5. past of 'become' *ulino/unilo* (instead of *ulo*)

V. Erli:

1. preservation of *ř* (in the older variety)
2. preposition *asal* (*ašal*) 'for, because of'
3. pers. pron. nom. *ame, tume*; acc. *amen, tumen*
4. *andekhora* 'at once'
5. oblique case form frequent after prepositions

VI. Ursaritiko: 8

1. article pl. *ol/îl/l* (Vlach forms)
2. preposition *andor-/ander-* (instead of *ande*)
3. pl. of borrowed masc. *-urja* (Vlach form)
4. 'how much?' *kazom*
5. 'the other' det. *ko-aver* (as in Rumanian Vlach, = Rumanian *cel-ăl-alt*)
6. future marker *kamé-* (as in Rumanian Vlach)
7. inflected 'can' *aštizel, aštijel*
8. 'also, too' *li*

VII. Crimean:

1. $\check{h} > \check{c}$ (late)
2. short genitive in *-ko* more frequent than *-koro*
3. *ankha* temp. 'at once, immediately'

The low figure is perhaps due to our insufficient knowledge of the dialect.

VIII. Zargari:

1. systematic vowel harmony
2. loss of instrumental (late)
3. merger of genitive and dative in *-eske* (late)
4. fem.obl.pl. *-jan* (as partially in Vlach) instead of *-jen*
5. '20' *jukos* < $\epsilon\check{\iota}\kappa\omicron\sigma\iota$

IX. Romano:

1. loss of aspiration
2. abstract formation in *-paj/-baj*
3. compar. *federi* 'better' preserved
4. short demonstr. pron. *ava/ala; uva/ula*
5. 'all' *serfā*

Again, it should be held in mind that the data for the Iranian dialects is incomplete.

Maps 10 and 11 show exceptions from (presumably) older common traits of the dialects, picturing the divergency of individual dialects from the overall group behaviour; 10 lists the more specific ones, 11 the unspecific ones, i. e. traits occurring in other dialect groups as well. As far as the specific traits are concerned Arli turns out to be most typical for the group and Ursaritiko most divergent, but in regard to the unspecific traits it is Arli which is highly marked within the group.

All we can state, then, is that the Iranian dialects form an undoubted unity, but that other groupings cannot be taken for granted. The reason for the confusing overall picture must be sought in the history of the dialects: conservatism as to some important traits, partial mixtures with subsequent separations of groups, individual innovations, influences from contact languages as well as other factors that may have contributed to produce this loose conglomeration of dialects. Even a geographical rearrangement of these dialects according to a reconstructed situation say 500 years ago would not help to understand how these peculiar relations have come about.³ Thus the group of Balkanic or South-Balkanic

3 It should be added here that subdialects of Arli and Erli seem to share features with dialects outside this group, and that some of the dialects must have undergone influence on the part of Vlach to varying degrees.

dialects can be defined rather negatively than by giving positive characteristics: it is not Vlach and it is not Bugurdži/Drindari/Kalajdži (Southbalkan Dialects II) – the two other major groups spoken in the South. One might prefer another solution assigning to each dialect the status of a major group, f. i. positing Erli on the same level as Vlach, but this would not do justice to what has been observed, viz. the existence of a loose network of traits holding these dialects together in some way.

Up to this point we have treated all dialects of the Balkanic group as being insular (or spot-like) by their nature. This is not sure, however, for Arli and Erli since they do cover wide regions. Most of the people are sedentary living for centuries in these regions (other than the southern Vlach): cf. their denomination *Erli/Arli* derived from Turkish *yerli* 'local, resident'. Much more fieldwork will have to be done, especially in the border area between Bulgaria and Macedonia (and southern Serbia) to clarify the details. When comparing our data with those for German or French, the quantitative and qualitative differences concerning description leap to the eye at once. The language material normally available for Romani dialects are descriptions of individual dialects, every dialect being treated as homogeneous. This is more or less legitimate for true insular dialects, but not for those of the Erli type. What we need are inquiries made in all localities where a given group is known to live in order to be able to get together all the relevant data. Only then we would be in a position to state whether a given dialect is of the insular type or not. I can only conjecture that, in the case of Erli, at some places transitional phenomena and zones can be found but that such transitions are not characteristic for the whole Erli area. We cannot even be sure that there is something like a dialect center, a focal area. Moreover, I am very doubtful if the situation 70 or 100 years ago has been much different. Sedentary way of life would not warrant that all towns and market places were inhabited by Erli without gaps and for an equally long time; and if this is true it means that slight dialectal boundaries should have existed even in former times.

In our time the situation has become complicated not only by extensive migrations of groups, but by individual mobility as well. The suburbs of Sofia and of other centers house intricate conglomerations of groups and individuals, which do not lend themselves for reconstructing the original situation. In Skopje, seven subgroups of Arlije are said to co-exist, but little is known about the linguistic differences. It is possible that most of these groups did not originate in Skopje, but somewhere in Macedonia and adjacent regions once forming a real dialect continuum. We only know for certain that an Arli-group of Gnjilane speaks a variety clearly distinct from the Baruči variety of Skopje. When comparing the two varieties just mentioned with Erli from Sofia and from the Rhodope area similarities do show up but not, as might be expected, between Northern Arli and Northern Erli on the one hand and between Southern Arli and Southern Erli on the other hand, but conversely:

of the form for 'they', which is *on* in Northern Arli and Southern Erli, but *ola* in Southern Arli and *ol* in Northern Erli (innovative *l*-forms). The morpheme of the genitive, which should be *-koro* throughout, varies with short *-ko* in Northern Arli and in Southern Erli, but not in the other two varieties (influence of Vlach?). In summarizing we can state that however the situation in former times may have been, the recent dialects are of an insular type, apparently because of the reasons given above.

Thus, we can take for granted that the Southbalkan Dialects are of another type than average dialects of other European languages, that means of the insular one, but does this hold for other Romani dialect groups as well? Much linguistic evidence has been collected for the so-called Central dialects spoken in Moravia, Slovakia, Southern Poland, Hungary, and the adjacent regions of Burgenland (Austria) and Northern Slovenia (Prekmurje). As can be gathered from map 12, there is a clear split-up of the dialects into two groups:

- I. Northern Central dialects in Southern Poland and Eastern Slovakia, then in Western Slovakia and Moravia;
- II. Southern Central dialects in Southern Slovakia (called Ungriko; roughly the area inhabited by Hungarians), Romungro in Hungary (now solely spoken in three small isolated areas, but formerly perhaps over all of Hungary), and the Vend subgroup consisting of Vend itself south of the Balaton lake, Roman in the Burgenland, and the Prekmurje dialect in northern Slovenia.

What this dialect group has in common with the Balkanic but distinguishes it from, say, German dialects is the existence of some boundaries without transitional zones/phenomena, first between Northern and Southern Central Dialects, second between Romungro and Vend, and third between Vend, Roman and Prekmurje (cf. Boretzky 1999 for the details). Whether the Romungro dialect of Hungary once constituted a continuum including the Ungriko of Southern Slovakia as well, is not known but rather unlikely in view of the many distinctive traits to be found in the recent dialects. There is a slight possibility for the dialects of Poland, Eastern and Western Slovakia to form (or to have formed) if not a true continuum a linguistically homogeneous area characterized by isoglosses structuring this area in a reasonable way, much like f. i. Slovakian (Slavic) dialects are related to one another. The task linguists are faced with is rendered more difficult by post-war migrations from Slovakia westward, which possibly disintegrated a once nearly cohesive area.

The following maps clearly demonstrate that the situation is different from that of the Southern Balkans. Map 13 shows the Central Dialect's idiosyncratic traits which are extremely few in number compared with those of the Balkanic, constituting in many cases slight variants of the prevailing forms; the details:

1. Moravian: 3 (obl. article *e/a* instead of *le/la* or *ole/ola*; strong "rr" [r] in *marro*; *hum te* for 'must' as in Sinti – reliable?);
2. West-Slovakian: 1 (demonstr. *ada* 'this' uninflected);
3. East-Slovakian: 2 (past of *d*-verbs *trad-nj-om* instead of *trad-inj-om*);
4. South-Polish: 2-3 (comparative marker *nok-*, similar to East-Slov. *nek-* !; past of *d*-verbs *trad-lj-om*; possess.1.Sg. *mindro* instead of *mro*);
5. Ungriko: 1 ('so much' *ajti* instead of *aici/kajci* – reliable?);
6. Romungro: 0
7. Vend: 0
8. Roman: 2 (gerund in *-indar*; word order in 'I have' *man hi*);
9. Prekmurje: 2 (prepositions *z-u* instead of *uz-o* and *zar* instead of *uzar*, *maš* instead of *vaš* – late sound changes).

Map 14 contains the traits common to pairs of neighbouring dialects which, contrary to the idiosyncratic ones, are very numerous. The data of both maps points to the same fact, i. e. that homogeneity and cohesion are very high. A sharp break stands out between Western Slovakian and Ungriko, a less sharp one between Romungro and Vend. According to the incomplete data available to us, a strict separation of the Moravian dialect from the West-slovakian is perhaps not justified.

Map 15 shows the traits exclusive for pairs of neighbouring dialects, which are few in number and often of low importance, again an indicator of homogeneity and of the lack of sharp dialect boundaries (except for the ones named before); the details:

1./2. Moravian/West-Slovakian: 4

1. *har/sar, har* (*s- > h-*)
2. comparative marker Slavic *naj-* only
3. 'such' *adeso* (instead of *aso, asavo*)
4. 'must' *musi te* (instead of vb. *musin-* or *musaj*)

2./3. West-Slovakian/East-Slovakian: 1-2

1. conditional 'would have' both *avljahas* and *uljahas*
2. copula 3rd pers. *hin-o* (uncertain for South-Polish)

3./4. East-Slovakian/South-Polish: 7

1. reflexes of *nd*: *maro* but *kandro*
2. *cikno* 'little' (instead of *tikno*)
3. comparative marker *nek-/nok-* (instead of *lek-*)
4. reflex.pron. *pes*, pl. *pen*; *peskero*, pl. *pengero*
5. 'such' *ajso* (instead of *aso, adeso*)

6. 'so much' *ajci* and *kajci*
7. copula 3rd pers. *hin* (instead of *hi*, *si*)

5./6. Ungriko/Romungro: 4-5

1. obl. article *ole*, *ola* (instead of *le*, *la*)
2. short form of 'my' *mo* (uncertain for Ungriko)
3. 'such' *as(s)o* (instead of *asavo*, *asaj*)
4. 'must' *kampol* (instead of *kampel*, *pekal*)
5. personal construction 'I was born' *ujom/ujum* (perhaps in other dialects as well)

8./9. Roman/Prekmurje: 3

1. word-internal *lj* > *č* (*ć*) in *dikča*
2. demonstr. *ada*, *oda* only
3. inflected participle of loanverbs *-im-o/-i/-e*

Map 16 contains the divergencies obtaining between pairs of neighbouring dialects which, unlike those of the Southbalkanic dialects, are not well-balanced but differently numerous precisely reflecting the dialect classification suggested for this group; the details:

1./2. Moravian/West-Slovakian: 5

1. obl. article *e*, *a/le*, *la*
2. copula 3rd pers. *hi/hi*, *hin-o* etc.
3. demonstr. *ada*, *aka*, *---/ada*, *---*, *akada*
4. 'so much' *adeci/aci*
5. past form of *lel*: *liljom/iljom*

2./3. West-Slovakian/East-Slovakian: 12

1. reflexes of *ṛd*: *karo/kandro*
2. *s-* < *h-* *havo/savo*
3. 'little' *tikno/cikno*
4. comparative marker *naj-/nek-*, *jek-*
5. demonstr. *ada*, *---*, *akada/ada*, *aka*, *kada*
6. 'such' *aso/ajso*
7. 'so much' *aci/ajci*
8. 'nothing' *ništ/nič*
9. copula 3rd pers. *hi/hin*
10. past of *d*-verbs *trad-inj-om/trad-nj-om*
11. iterative (*-inger*)/*-ker*, *-av-ker* etc. (productive)
12. 'must' *musi te/vb. mušin-*

3./4. East-Slovakian/South-Polish: 4

1. comparative marker *nek-*, *jek-/nok-*
2. possess. *mro/mro*, *mindro*
3. copula 3rd pers. *hin/(je)hin*
4. past of *d*-verbs *trad-nj-om/trad-lj-om*

2./5. West-Slovakian/Ungriko are different in nearly all traits considered here.5./6. Ungriko/Romungro: 5

1. preposition *ke/ke*, *kia*
2. abstracta formation in *-ipe/-ipe(n)*
3. 'such' *aso/aso*, *asavo*
4. 'so much' *ajti/attji*
5. participle of loan-verbs *-ime/-ime(n)* (cf. 2)

6./7. Romungro/Vend: 15

1. elision of *-v-* *tavel/tal*
2. *j-* > *dj-* *jaro/djaro*
3. preposition *ke*, *kia/ke*
4. 'for, because of' *---/miste*
5. abstracta formation *-ipe(n)/-ipe*
6. obl. article *ole*, *ola/le*, *la*
7. short form of possess. pron. *mo/---*
8. 'when?' *kana/kada*
9. copula 3rd past neg. *na-sja* etc./*nana*
10. past 3rd sg. *uja*, *geja/ulo*, *gelo*
11. past of *lel*: *linjom/lijom*
12. *-ker* (productive)/(*-inger*)
13. participle of loanverbs *-ime(n)/-ime* (cf. 5)
14. 'must' *kampol/pekal*
15. infinitive *te ker-en/te ker-el*

7./8. Vend/Roman: 4

1. *-j-* > *ć* *dikhja/dikča*
2. demonstr. *ada*, *aka/ada*, *---*
3. participle of loanverbs *-ime/-imo,-i,-e* (inflected)
4. 'must' *musaj te/vb. mujsin-*

7./9. Vend/Prekmurje: 6

1. *-j-* > *ć* *dikhja/dikča*

2. preposition *uz-o/z-u*
3. preposition *vaš/maš*
4. demonstr. *ada, aka/ada, ---*
5. past of *lel: lijom/linjum*
6. participle of loanverbs *-ime/-imo,-i,-e* (inflected)

8./9. Roman/Prekmurje: 2

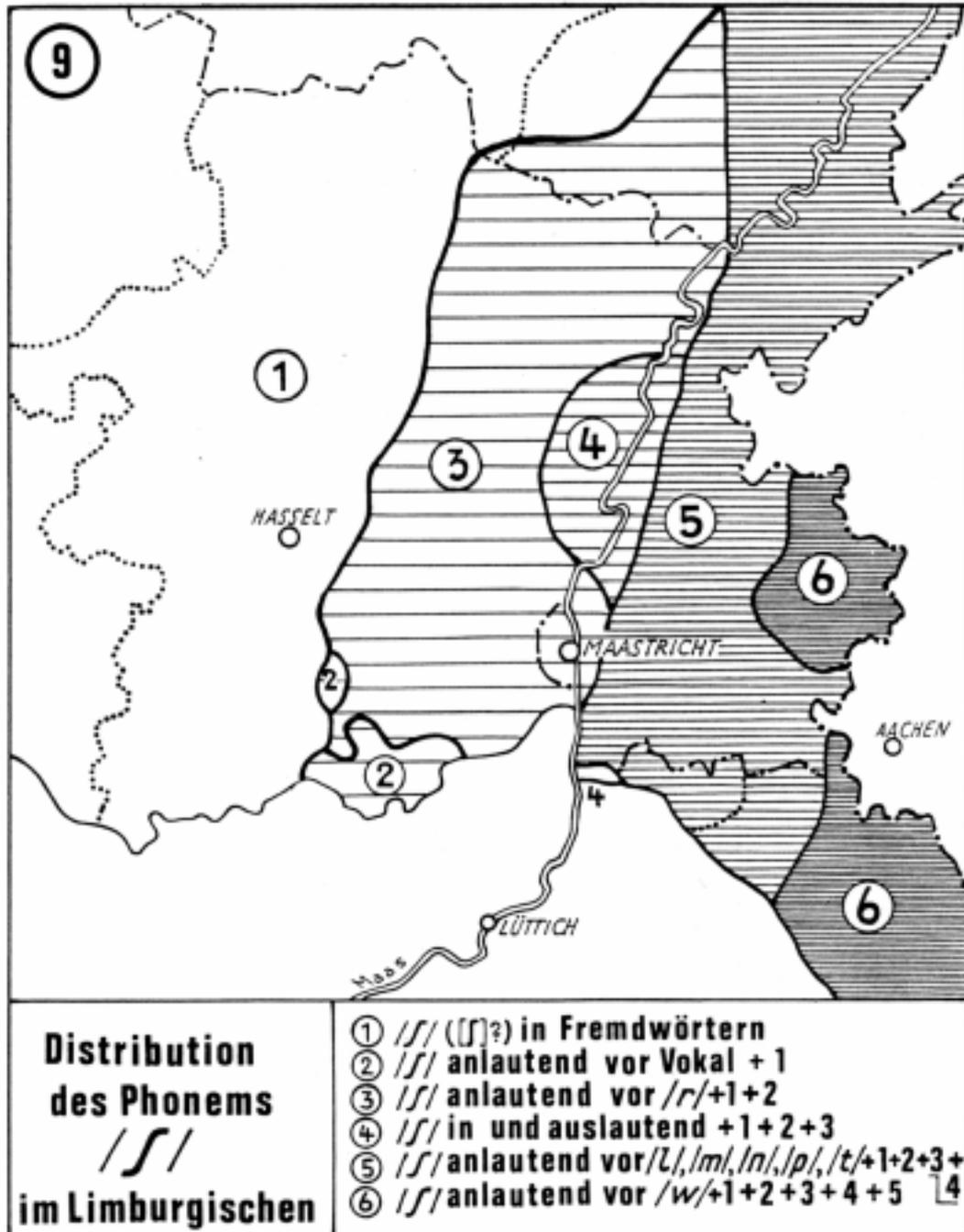
1. preposition *uz-o/z-u*
2. preposition *vaš/maš*

Within the Northern subgroup, there are considerable differences between West- and East-Slovakian, but it cannot be excluded that intermediate sub-dialects once existed. The actual state is a bipartition: Moravian and West-Slovakian on the one hand, and East-Slovakian and South-Polish on the other hand. Within the Southern subgroup, the differences between Romungro and the Vend group are even more important, which points to an older break between the two (5./6. against 7./8./9.).

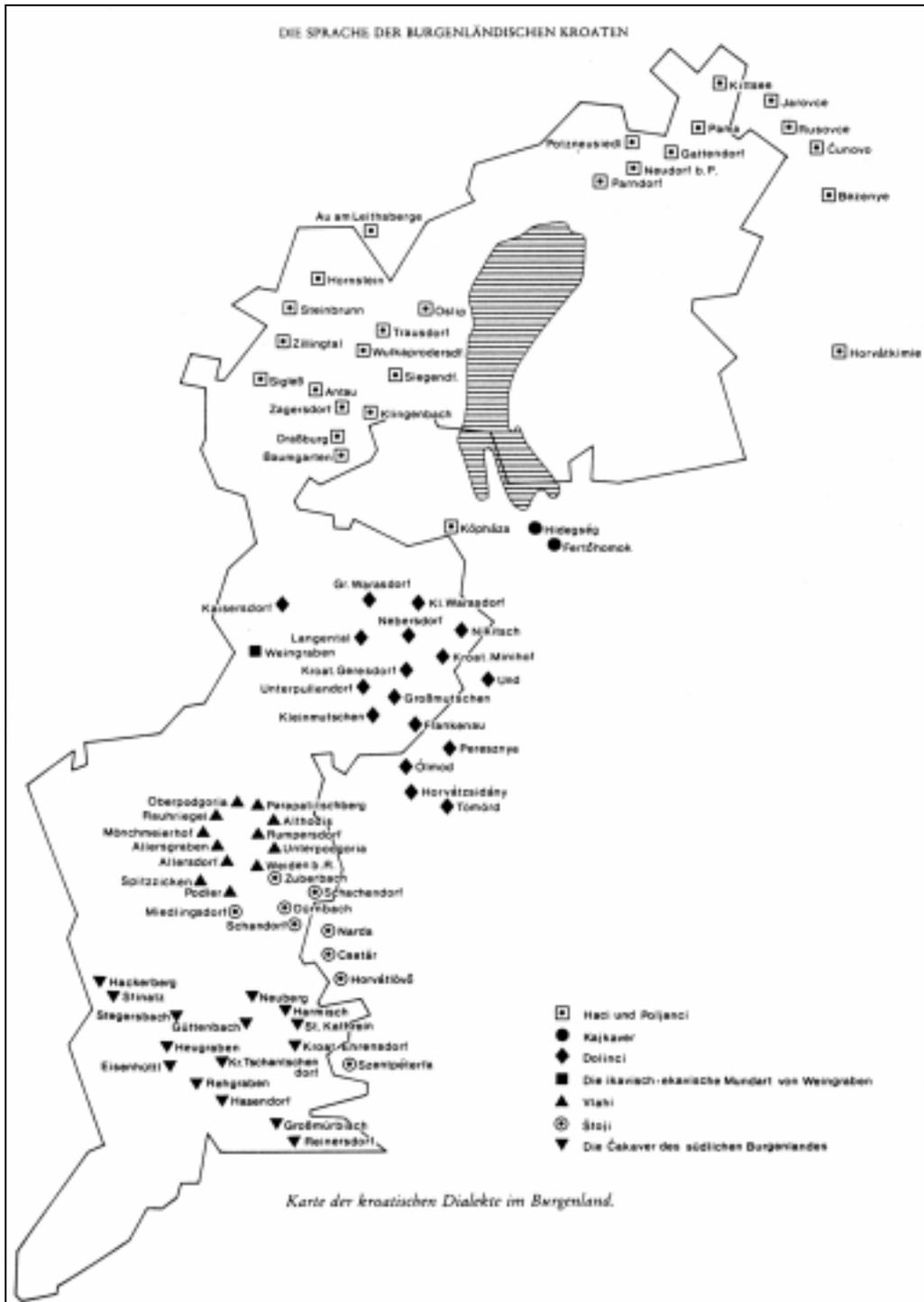
This investigation of the two dialect groups has shown that there are considerable differences in behaviour: whereas the Balkanic dialects constitute true insular units that are quite different from one another, at least each of the two subgroups of the CDs is more homogeneous, held together by more common traits, and with an internal structure similar to that of other languages' dialects. But nevertheless it has not been proved that true gradual transitions, that is such from village to village, do occur, and there is no indication as to the existence of dialect centers. It cannot be excluded, then, that even within Eastern Slovakian, which seems to be the most homogeneous, slight breaks will be found, and local dialects more distant from one another may be more similar than neighbouring local dialects.

The reasons for the different behaviour of the two dialect groups are not known, since their history has not been documented; nevertheless, there are reasons to assume that the following factors have been decisive:

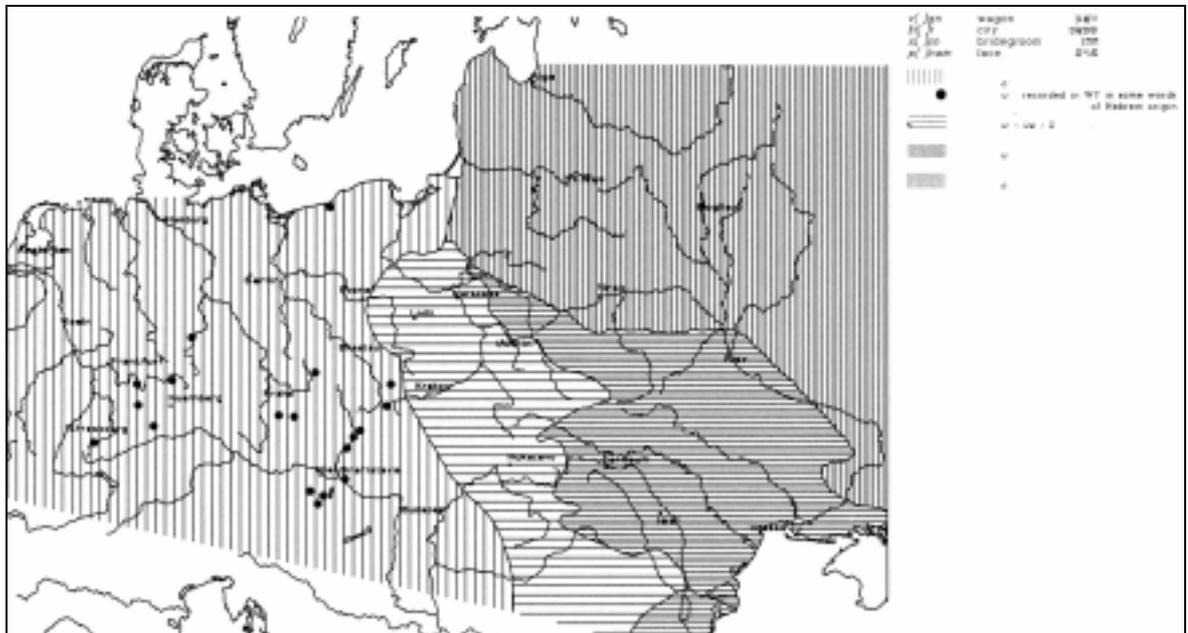
- i. the SBDs are old formations, they evolved in early times, they were in only loose contact with one another and did not undergo overall common innovations;
- ii. the CDs are of more recent formation, they go back to fewer groups of immigrants speaking more similar dialects. After their arrival they spread over the Southeast European area developing an internal structure similar to but not identical with that of areal dialects. The Roma did not settle everywhere, in each village, they displayed a greater mobility than other people, and they preserved some kind of tribal organisation. In this way, two tendencies counteracted, one of dialect levelling and one of dialect dissociation, resulting in the picture presented to us.



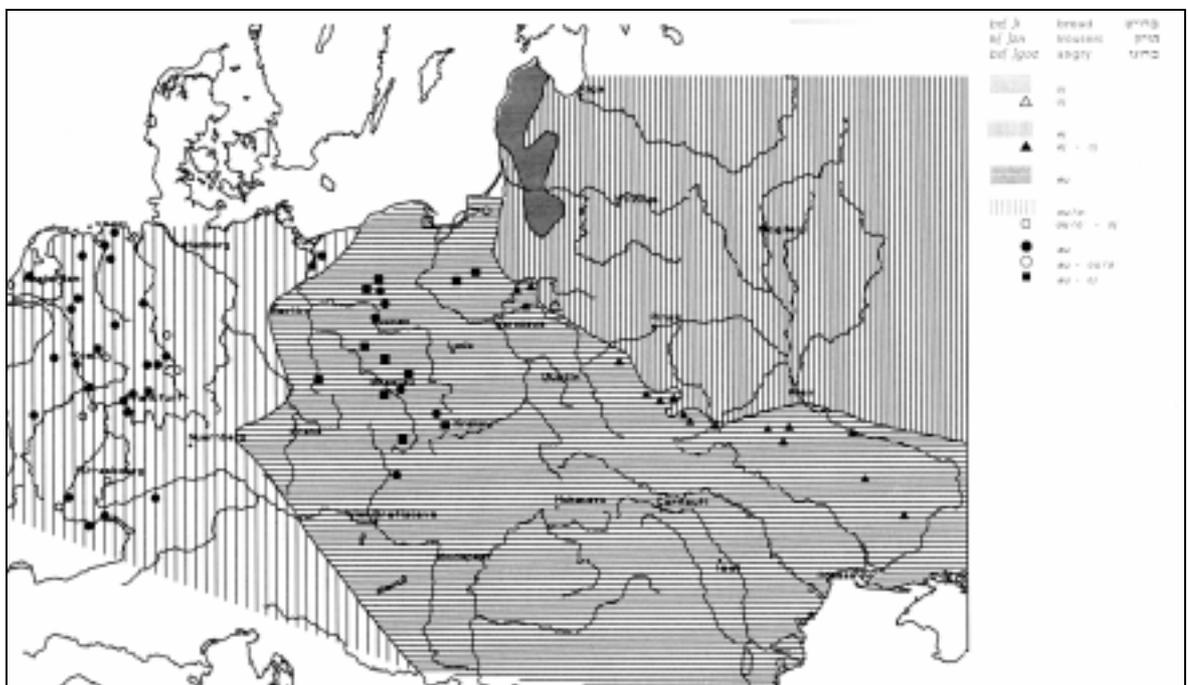
map 1



map 2



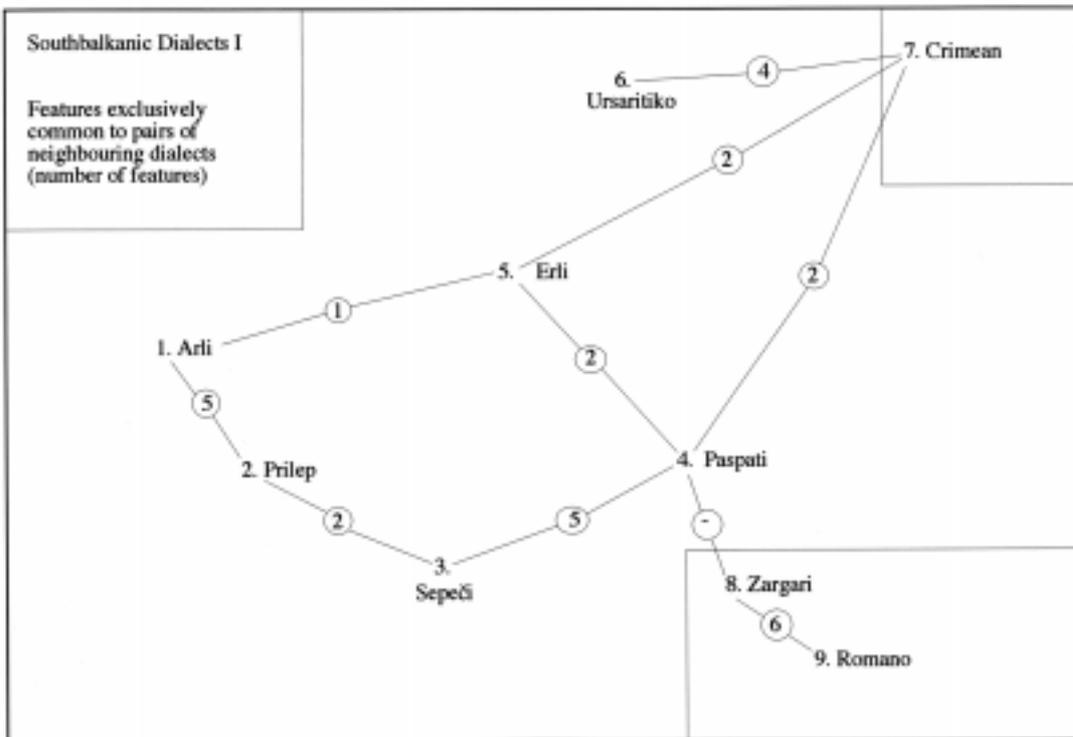
map 3



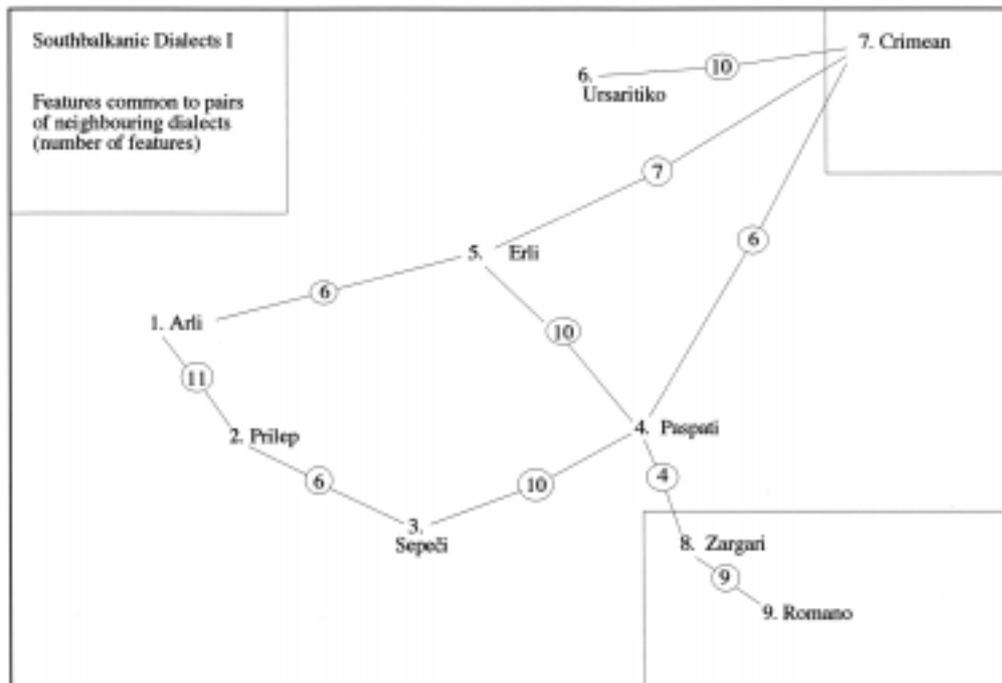
map 4



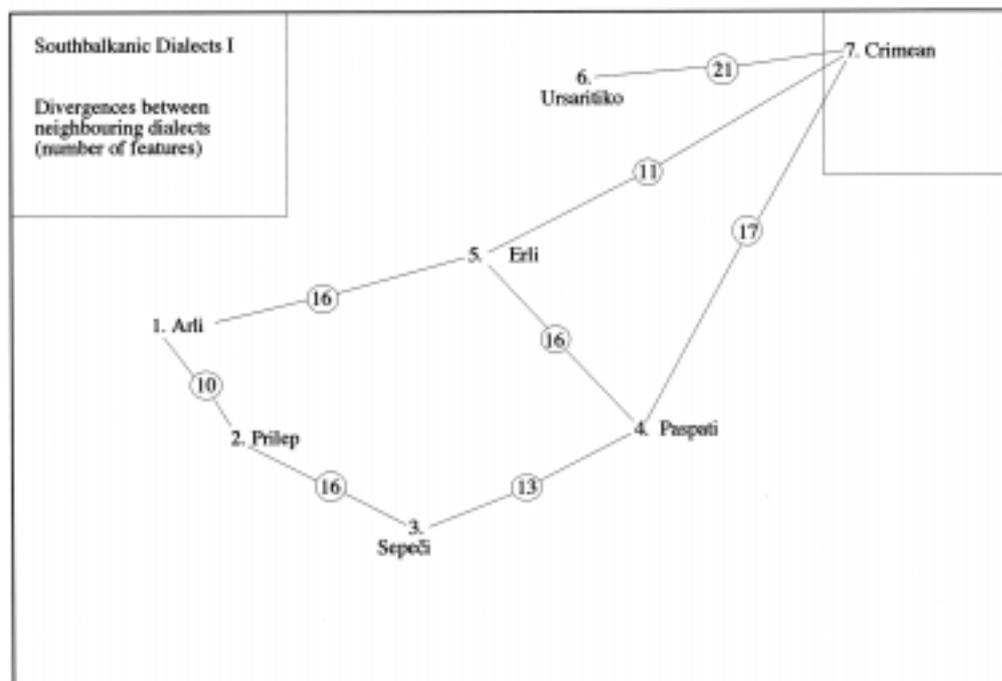
map 5



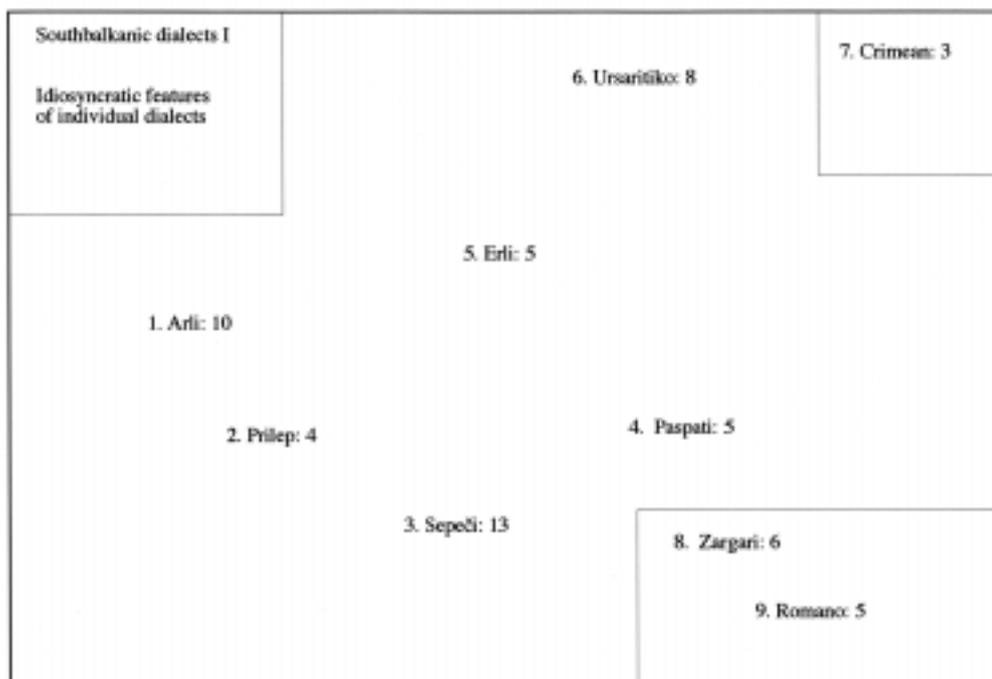
map 6



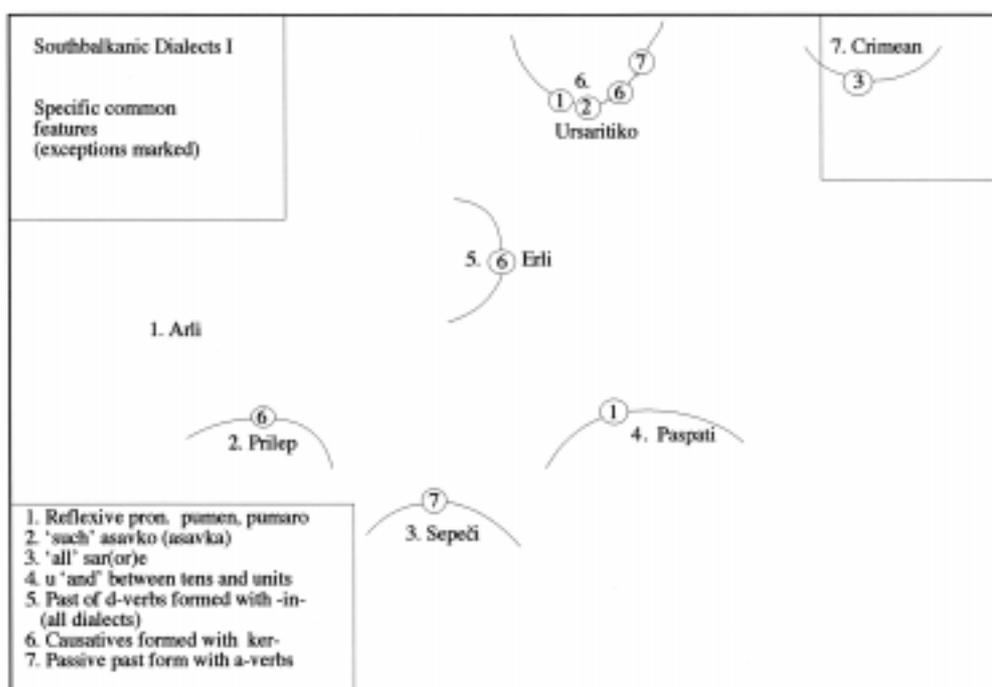
map 7



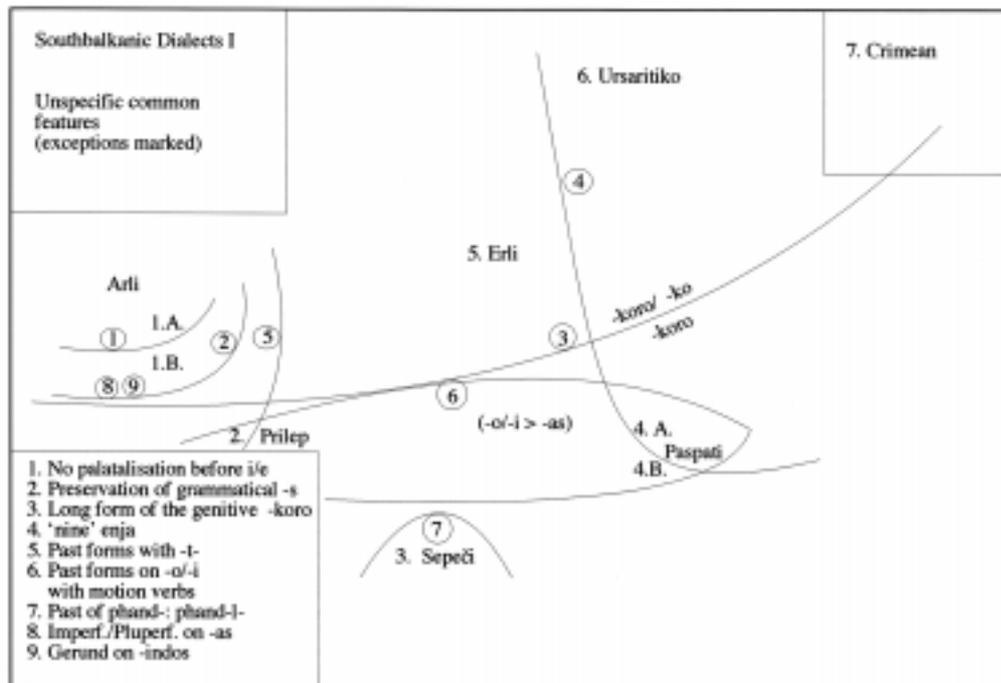
map 8



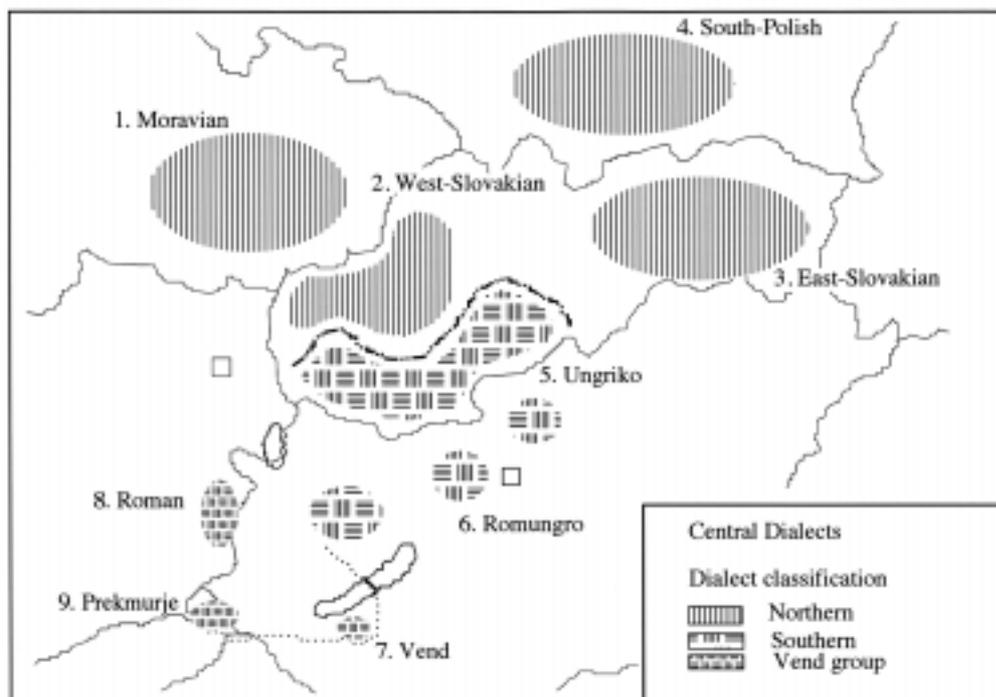
map 9



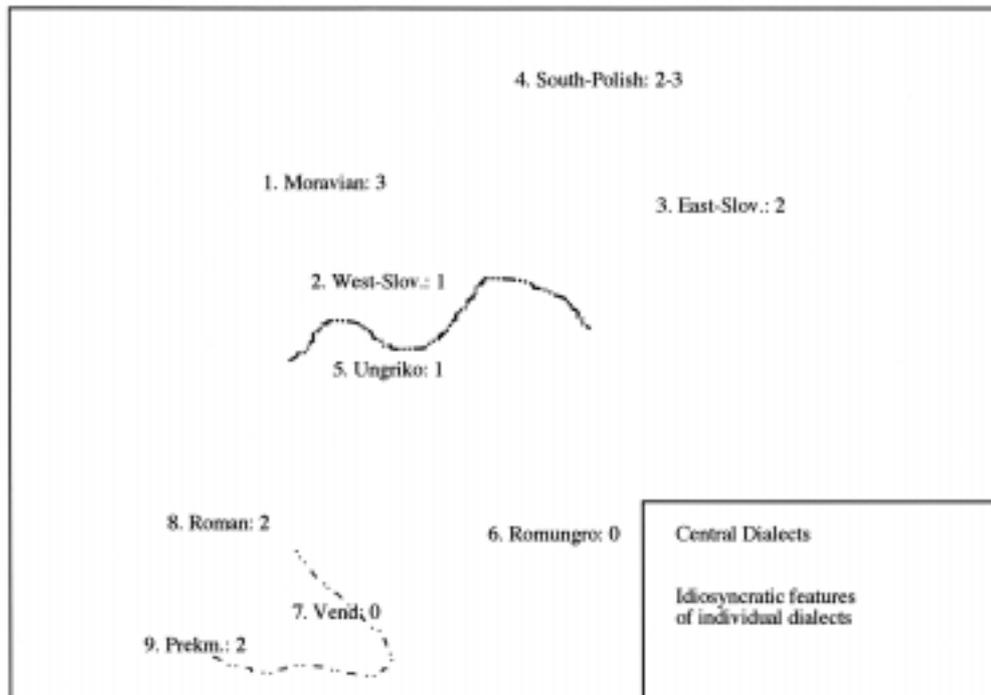
map 10



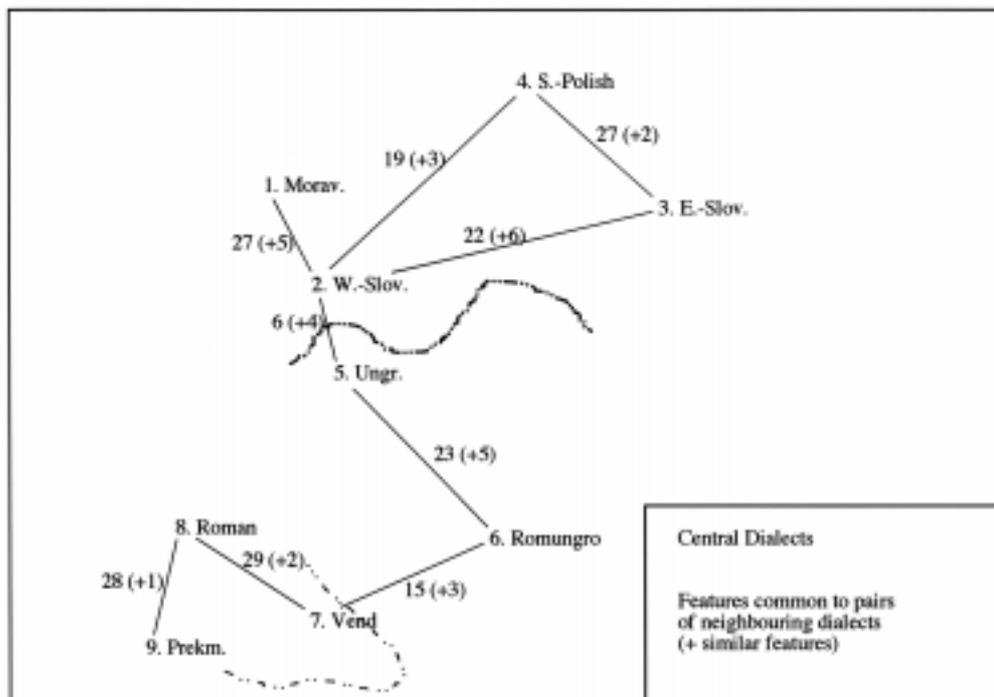
map 11



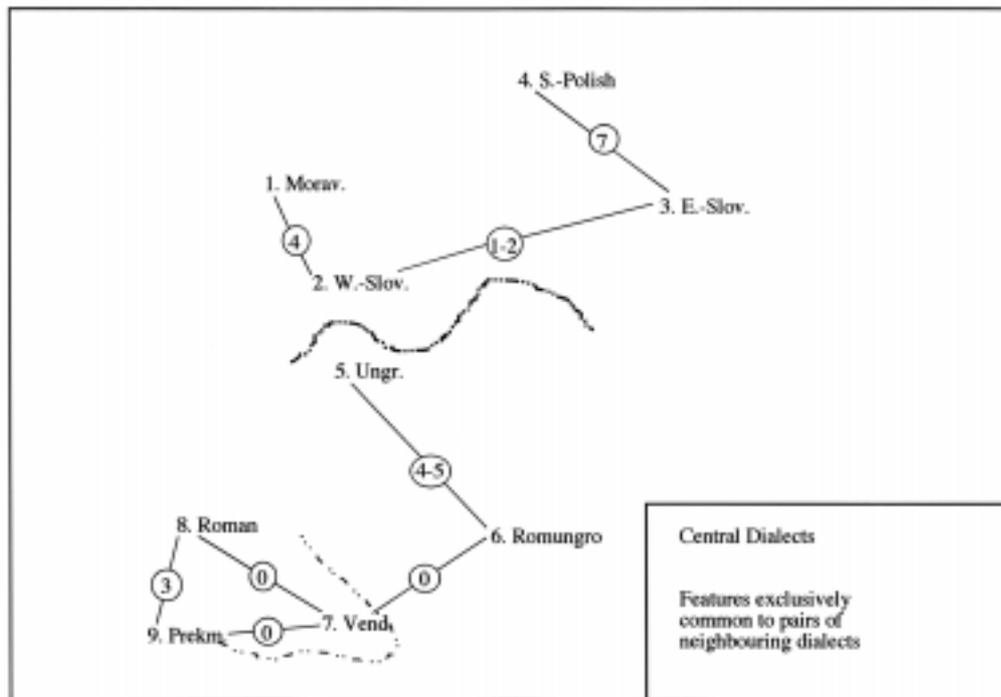
map 12



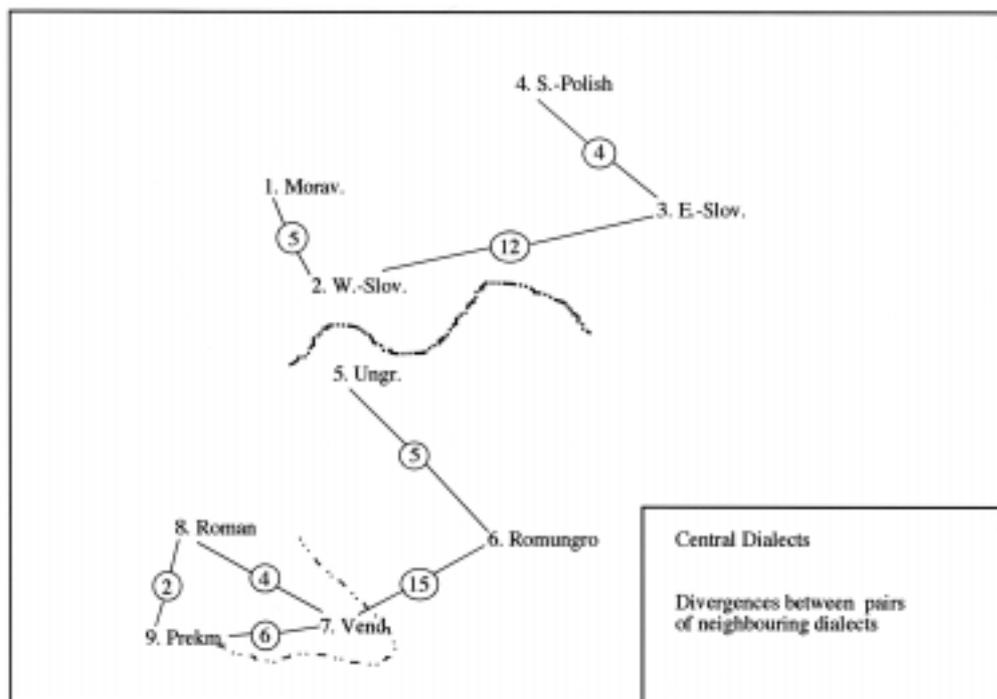
map 13



map 14



map 15



map 16

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For other references see Boretzky (1999a).

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