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HISTORY/ARCHAEOLOGY

*Papers held in the activity for the 550th anniversary
of the death of Gjergj Kastrioti – Skanderbeg*

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**THE BATTLE OF FUSHË-KOSOVA AS A PROLOGUE TO
THE ORGANIZED ANTI-OTTOMAN PAN-BALKAN
RESISTANCE IN LEF NOSI'S COLLECTION**

The historiographic point of view evaluates the process of the creation and action of an event closely related to the corresponding conjuncture, which was created and delineated in a specific way. First of all, this concept originates not only from the fact that the historical event is the product of a certain conjuncture, but also from the reflection it makes on the advantages or shortcomings that the latter offers. No event, no matter how big or small, is exempt from such historical legality. Seen in this context, we affirm that the clash between the Balkan coalition and the Ottoman coalition on the day of San Vito on June 28, 1389, according to the Gregorian calendar, cannot be perceived and understood without evaluating the created conjuncture, in the Balkan plane and beyond, along XIV century. Evaluating carefully and objectively all the specific research for the battle of Fushë-Kosova, it results that the Balkan and European conjunctures of that period were not at all favorable or supportive for this event. Thus, the Byzantine Empire was in utter agony, which was leading it step by step to disintegration. The Serbian state of Tsar Stefan Dushan, after his death in 1355, was fragmented into several principalities. The Bulgarian state, which no longer existed as a united state, suffered the same fate as the Serbian state. The struggle between feudal princes to secure supremacy was also evident in Albania, Montenegro and the Romanian Principalities. As can be seen, political cohesion in the Balkan region, in the middle of the 14th century, was

almost non-existent. Moreover, such a reality was noticed by a researcher who stated that “the Bulgarians surrendered to the Ottomans in 1366. After them, there were the Serbs, whose united state had collapsed and broke into a number of quarreling principalities after the death of Stefan Dushan in 1355”.¹ In addition, the lack of cohesion in the political plane was completed with the religious one. As it is known, the rivalry between the Orthodox and the Catholic churches had appeared in the Balkan environment since the 11th century. Moreover, the presence of the paternal church in Bosnia was added to this rivalry. Aware of the spiritual influence of religion, as well as its mission in terms of social value regulation, we emphasize the fact that the deep disagreements on a religious level made it extremely difficult to adapt a climate of cooperation and solidarity between the peoples of the Balkans. Internal weaknesses and the disagreements between the Balkan rulers fully affected the battle of Černomen (Marica), which took place on September 26, 1371. Consequently, this battle against the ottomans, with the participation of Serb and Hungarian troops, reinforced by Neapolitan and Vlach contingents, was a complete defeat.² Despite the fact that it did not manage to reach the level of the battle that took place a few years later in the field of Mëllenja (Fushë-Kosova), that defeat made cohesion, cooperation and solidarity in the entire Balkan area even more imperative.

On the other hand, during the 14th century, the old continent was experiencing a series of problems which had created an atmosphere of division and anarchy. Since 1337, the 100-year war between England and France had begun and its vortex involved other countries of Europe. Moreover, this period also marks the beginning of the open conflict between the Republic of Venice and that of Genoa. It is a fact that both these republics represented the two most powerful commercial powers in the Mediterranean region at the time. Therefore, the origin of this conflict must be sought mainly in the collision of commercial interests coveted and defended by them. Under such circumstances, it was almost impossible to initiate a union of military forces in the form of crusades in Europe to give the much-requested and long-awaited help to the Christian Balkans. But the truth is that the movement for the creation of

¹ Andrew Baruch Wachtel, *The Balkans in world history*, Toena, Tirana, 2012, p. 69.

² Georges Castellan, *History of the Balkans*, Çabej, Tirana, 1996, p. 65.

a Christian coalition in the Balkan region dates back earlier. In this context, the well-known researcher Aurel Plasari in the monograph "*Skanderbeg, a political history*", states that the first Christian alliance between the princes of South-Eastern Europe, specifically between Uros of Serbia, King Ludovig of Hungary, the Ban of Bosnia, the Voivode of Wallachia was established in 1364. In the battle with the troops of the Beylerbey of Rumelia, Lalë Shahini, the Christians were badly defeated on the banks of the Marica River. The second Christian alliance in the Balkan region dates in 1371. This alliance was established among Tsar Shishman of Bulgaria, Serbian despot Uglesha of Macedonia, Prince Vukashin of Serbia, Prince Constantine of Velbuzhdi and a contingent of Byzantine troops.

On September 26, 1371, the second battle which took place between the Christian coalition and the Ottomans near the Marica River ended again with the defeat of the Christians.³ In this historical background, it was paved the way of the process of creating and delineating the Balkan coalition and the fight of the battle that marked the decision of the further fate of the countries of the peninsula. As can be seen, such a background could not but influence the entire process of the creation and operation of this coalition.

Meanwhile, the path followed for the process of creating and delineating the Balkan coalition, the way it was organized and operated at the time of the clash with the Ottoman military force, could not but arouse the study interest of historians. Moreover, historical science of the study of an event highly evaluates the impact it has on the subsequent historical developments. In fact, this was one of the main motives that made the battle of Fushë-Kosova a favorite topic for many researchers in the field of history. The point of view, the interpretation of the few primary sources that exist, as well as the methodology used, allowed the creation and circulation of many viewpoints on the battle of Fushë-Kosova. Based on a comparative perspective, it results that these views, considered in the conceptualization and treatment process of this battle, maintain the same line of study and almost show the same evaluations for all its complex issues. Based on the role they played and the impact they had, we consider the listing of these evaluations significant.

³ Aurel Plasari, *Skanderbeg, a political history*, Tirana 2018, p. 193-194.

First, almost all the historiographic schools in which these views are categorized treat the emergence and development of the battle of Fushë-Kosova as a direct product of the historical process that includes the time span from the beginning of the threat of the Ottoman occupation of the Balkans to the moment of its development on June 28, 1389. Throughout this time span, a series of episodes occurred, the action of which a well-known researcher does not consider as a decisive turning point for the subsequent historical developments. According to him, this came as a result of the fact that all opposing parties continued to arm themselves for the final clash.⁴

Secondly, different historians converge in their evaluation, when they affirm that the initiative of the process of creating the Balkan coalition was taken by the Serbian prince Lazar Hrebeljanovic. In this context, Prince Lazar's refusal to accept the Ottoman offer to become their vassal led to his move to seek help from his neighbors, Tvrtko and Vuk Brankovic. According to the known medievalist John V.A. Fine, this movement made possible the creation of the Serbian army consisting of three parts under the leadership of these three leaders, none of whom was at that time a vassal of the Ottomans.⁵ However, the Balkan coalition created on the eve of the battle turned out to be wider, because in addition to the Serbs, part of it were Hungarians, Bulgarians, Bosnians and Albanians.

Thirdly, different historians follow almost the same line of reasoning for the evaluation of the development and the end of the battle of Fushë-Kosova. Regarding this problem, they emphasize that the apparent lack of documentary sources has left considerable room for the legends that circulate about this battle, which in one form or another play with the numbers of the participating fighters and leave considerable room for stories about individual feats. According to a well-known scholar, expert of the problems of the medieval history of the Balkans, it is likely that the battle took place in two phases. The first phase turned out in favor of the Christians, so that Tvrtko was quick to announce the victory. Believing this information, in honor of the achieved victory, a "Te Deum" was sung in Notre-Dame in Paris. While the second phase, according to the same researcher, changed as a result of the immediate

⁴ Edgar Hösch, *Storia dei paesi ballkanici*, Einaudi, Torino, 2005, p. 73.

⁵ Miranda Vickers, *Between Serb and Albanian*, Toena, Tirana, 2004, p. 36.

intervention of the heir to the Ottoman throne, Bayezid, known by the epithet “lightning”.⁶ The latter's intervention created chaos in the Serbian camp and Lazar was captured and beheaded. On the other hand, the head of the Ottomans, Murat, had been killed earlier by the hand of the mythical warrior Milosh Obiliqi.

Fourthly, we find it interesting that all historians, in terms of their evaluations of the battle of Fushë-Kosova and especially its defeat, claim that a real epic poem was created which served as a source of inspiration for Serbian patriotism throughout the centuries. Thus, according to them, the epic cycle of Kosova became the longest, the most beautiful and the most important in the Serbian epic. In this context, the subsequent loss of Serbian citizenship was mourned more than the defeat of the battle of Fushë-Kosova. In view of the longevity of this epic cycle, the well-known researcher Miranda Vickers, in her paper on the relationship between Serbs and Albanians, presents a very significant conclusion of a couple of British guidebooks that “Every Serb between the Danube and the Adriatic is as familiar with the names of all those mentioned here as he is with his brother's name”.⁷ And to justify such a finding, we remember that every June 28 the Serbs still celebrate the anniversary of the battle of Fushë-Kosova.

We emphasize that the above views belong to the most authoritative historiographic schools, such as the Anglo-Saxon, German, French, etc. But, in contrast to them, old and new Serbian historiography conceives and treats the battle of Fushë-Dardania as a war between Orthodoxy and Islam. Based on the evaluation of many studies carried out, we notice that such a definition does not correspond to the historical truth, because many Christians of the Balkans were engaged to fight on the side of the Ottomans. Thus, a researcher states that “Murat's army was reinforced with the contingents of his Christian vassals. Constantine, the Bulgarian prince of Velbuzhd, the Serbian Marko Krajlevic, Lazar's enemy” lined up in this battle alongside the Ottoman army.⁸

Furthermore, Serbian historians rush to consider the battle of Fushë-Kosova as a predominantly Serbian action, or more or less as a Serbian-Bosnian-Croatian alliance, ignoring the contribution of other peoples

⁶ Georges Castellan, Work Cited, p. 68.

⁷ Miranda Vickers, Work Cited, p. 39.

⁸ Georges Castellan, Work cited, p. 68.

who did not belong to Slavic ethnicity. Even this definition does not correspond to historical truths. In a paper written specifically for the battle of Fushë-Kosova and the Albanians, one of our researchers, in view of the very ethnic composition of the Balkan coalition, brings numerous evaluations from well-known researchers of the history of the Ottoman Empire and the medieval history of the peoples of the Balkans. In this context, he quotes T.W. Zinkeisen, who, among other things, emphasized that Serbs, Bosnians, Albanians, Hungarians, Bulgarians, Vlachs, Herzegovinians, etc. participated in the Balkan coalition. The prominent researcher J. Hammer has made the same evaluation for the event of Fushë-Kosova, when he claims that the army of the Balkan forces consisted of Serbs, Bulgarians, Bosniaks, Albanians, Vlachs, Poles and Hungarians.

In fact, this researcher describes the Balkan coalition as a “league of peoples”. While the authoritative researcher of the medieval history of the Balkans K. Jireček christens the battle of Fushë-Kosova with the epithet “battle of peoples” and states that in addition to Serbs and Bosniaks, Bulgarians, Romanians from Vojvoda Mircea and many men from Albania took part in it.⁹ As can be seen, this data clearly confirms not only the anti-Ottoman character of the Balkan coalition, but also its multi-ethnic composition. Considering the circumstances of the danger of the Ottoman invasion, the Balkan countries were equally exposed and interested to thwart it successfully. From this point of view, we affirm that the interpretation of Serbian historiography in giving the battle of Fushë-Kosova the character of a confrontation of a religious and ethnic nature does not correspond to the historical truth.

The attempt to minimize or deny the participation and contribution of Albanians in the battle of the Mëllenja field is another indicator of the deformation of historical truths by Serbian historiography. In fact, such claims have been increased since the creation of the Albanian state in 1912 and the inclusion of Kosova as an integral part of the Serbian state in 1913. In one of his papers, Professor Kristo Frashëri states that two of the most ardent protagonists of this claim are V. Djuric and D. Bogdanovic. According to him, without any argument, they say that the

⁹ Luan Maltezi, *The Battle of Fushë-Kosovo/Kosova and Albanians 1389*, Eurorilindja, Tirana, 1998, p. 14-15.

Albanians were vassals of the Sultan in the battle of 1389.¹⁰ Above, we have quoted some researchers who affirm the opposite of the claim of Serbian historiography. Moreover, the presence of Albanians in the battle of Fushë-Kosova is also confirmed by authoritative researchers of our days, such as the Bulgarian B. Cvetkova and the French A. Dyselie. Above all, Ottoman chronicles prove the falsity of this view. We would like to stress that there exists a generally accepted opinion that in the circumstances of the apparent lack of documentary sources, the Ottoman chronicles maintain the status of the main sources for the event in question. This is due to the fact that these sources, characterized by a wide range of information, provide information on the composition of the coalition, the alignment of the armies in the military clash of 1389, the concrete progress of the military actions, as well as the weaponry used.

Professor Frashëri, in his monographic study, states that Shukrullah is the first Ottoman chronicler who mentions the participation of Albanians in the battle of Fushë-Kosova. He then mentions another chronicler, named Enveriu, who, mentions the Albanians immediately after the Serbs when listing the armies that gathered under the leadership of Lazarus. The same researcher presents information from Mehmet Neshriu and Idriz Bitlisi, who state the significant contribution to the battle of Gjergj Balsha II and Dhimitër Jonima. As can be seen from the data provided by these chroniclers, the participation of Albanians in the battle of Fushë-Kosova in 1389 was quite evident. Such participation in our judgment should be sought in the overall alignment of the interests of the Albanians with those of the other people of the Balkans in defense of freedom, independence, language, culture, territories and everything else achieved up to that period of their historical development.

It is understandable that the attempt of Serbian historiography to obscure and deny the presence and role of Albanians in the battle of Fushë-Kosova directly affects the Albanians of Kosova. Without considering the motive that leads them, we emphasize that their presence and role in this battle is confirmed by many historians, who are identified from the Byzantine period onwards. Moreover, the participation of Kosova Albanians in the battle of Fushë-Kosova it is clearly proved by the existence of the Albanian song about this battle. Researchers think

¹⁰ Kristo Frashëri, *Shqiptarët në betejën e Kosovës*, Rilindja Javore, 9-15 korrik 1995.

that, above all, this song is essentially a song of the Albanian people of Kosova. All the publishers of the versions of this song state that the people from whom these songs were collected are identified from the point of view of origin as Albanians from Kosova. It is an indisputable fact that the first version of this song was published by Lef Nosi in "Literary Garden" journal that was published in Elbasan in 1918, 1; 3 page 1; 4 page 10, with the initiative and under direct supervision of Lef Nosi, in which it was published the first version titled "The Song of the Battle that Took Place in Fushë- Kosova in 1389". The second version was published in Belgrade, in 1923, by Gligoriije Elezovich.

Meanwhile, the third and fourth versions were published in Belgrade, in 1924 and 1934, whereas the fifth version of the song about the battle of Fushë-Kosova was published in London, in 1936, by the well-known British albanologist Margaret Hasluck. Furthermore, a version of the Albanian folk song about the Kosova war was published in Prishtina in 1962, in Prizren in 1968, and again in Prishtina in 1973. Two versions of this song were also published in Tirana: in 1983, and in 1986 - the version republished by Fatos Arapi in his compilation titled "Old Albanian songs".¹¹

Following the process of presenting the versions of this song, we note that the latest and shortest version was collected in Shkodra in 1998, with 32 verses in total. In these verses, only the tragic end of "Mirosh from Drenica" is described, which the singer calls "the vandal arbanian"¹², whereas its longest version was collected by the researcher Anton Çetta in 1954 in the village of Vllahi of Zveçan (Kosova), with 565 verses, compared to the 495 verses which are part of the version published by G. Elezovich.¹³ We highlight that in the process of collecting these versions, Lef Nosi stands out, as he was able to collect three of them, two of which were not published. All three of these versions are cited by Margaret Hasluck as "Nosi I", sung by dervish Ahmet Gjakova, partially published in "Literary Garden" (1918), "Nosi II", sung by Bislim Smajli from the district of Prishtina, and "Nosi III", sung by Idriz Selmani from the district of Kaçanik. Compared to the published version of G. Elezovich, at least one of the three versions collected by Nosi is thought

¹¹ Luan Malltezi, Work cited, p. 41.

¹² *Historical folk songs*, v.I, no. 6, Prishtina: 2007, p.76-77.

¹³ *Albanological traces*, no. 1, 1962, p. 263-275.

to be earlier. However, in all the versions known through the publication, researchers think that the one presented by G. Elezovich chronologically is considered to be the most complete.

Referring to the versions collected and published so far, we emphasize that Lef Nosi has the merit of being the first to publish one of them and to make them known to the entire Albanian public. Based on this fact, we think that, in this case, the effect of the sentence: “it’s good to be the first” is clearly reflected. In this context, we believe that it is important to identify the factors that determined such a patriotic as well as intellectual undertaking of Lef Nosi.

We think that a number of factors have played their role in this aspect, but we would single out exactly those that result as primary.

First, Lef Nosi is a direct product of the emancipated environment of a city like Elbasan. The profile that this city had created in the course of history had not gone unnoticed by foreign chroniclers and scholars. Thus, as early as 1670, Evliya Çelebi did not hesitate to describe it as the “Bride of the World”, when he visited the city, and considered it “the location of scholars and virtuous men, poets and mystics”.¹⁴ Likewise, the well-known British traveller and writer Edith Durham, during her trip to Albania, when she arrived in Elbasan, said that “patriotism in this province is fervent and stands above all religious doctrines.... In Elbasan, you are touched by the efforts made for knowledge and culture. You find people who make efforts to learn French and even German grammar without any help. There is quite a large number of educated and knowledgeable people”.¹⁵ Following this patriotic, intellectual and cultural background created and outlined historically, Aleksandër Xhuvani, at the preface of the temporary journal “Literary Garden”, which was first published in August 1918, would write that “In this temporary journal only writings of the literary art, and not of politics will be published..... And we will ask for the help of every proficient person to publish writings of knowledge, aimed at the mental education of our people”.¹⁶ As a direct product of this environment, without exaggeration, we affirm that Lef Nosi turned out to be the most authentic carrier of the

¹⁴ Robert Elsie, *Historical Dictionary of Albania*, Uegen, Tirana, 2011. p. 182.

¹⁵ Edith Durham, *The Burden of the Balkans*, Tirana, 1990, p. 81.

¹⁶ Journal, *Literary Garden*, First Year, August 1918, No. 1.

civilization indicators that this environment had created throughout the history of its rise and development.

Secondly, his initiative to publish the first version of the Albanian song for the battle of Fushë-Kosova cannot be separated from his intellectual profile. As it is known, Lef Nosi was not only known as an activist of a political-patriotic profile. He created and outlined step by step the profile of a full-fledged intellectual. Thus, he turned himself into the founder of the Albanian national archives, and at the same time the greatest collector in their history. He is a polyhedral activist and encyclopaedist in several fields: history, linguistics, religion, numismatics, philately, etc. It is enough to state here that the documentary collection of Lef Nosi in the state archive has a total of 13 thousand sheets. His library counted not less than 10,000 volumes with prominent albanological and balkanological values. His initiative to enable the realization of several translations in order to shed light on our national history has taken on a proverbial tone. One such was translated from the Ottoman language, for which he paid, at his own expense, thrice the royalty for the same translation. Part of his avant-garde undertakings was the first publication in his hometown, in 1910, of the newspaper entitled "Tomorri". Similarly, Lef Nosi deserves the credit of publishing "Historical Documents to Serve our National Issue". At the same time, he adapted a functional collaboration in the field of folklore and ethnography with the well-known British researcher Margaret Hasluck. It is natural that the intellectual dimension of such a personality could not leave out of his research, tracking, and collecting product such an important problem as the presence and contribution of Albanians in the battle of Fushë-Kosova.

Thirdly, the intellectual undertaking of Lef Nosi to publish the Albanian song about the battle of Fushë-Kosova in the journal "Literary Garden" cannot be conceived outside the delicate historical context in which Albania found itself in the second decade of the 20th century. In the above lines, we emphasized that the process of minimizing and denying the presence and role of Albanians in the battle of Fushë-Kosova reached a high intensity after the formalization of Kosova as an integral part of the Serbian state in 1913. Likewise, it is a well known fact that the Albanian national issue was complicated at the end of the First World War in 1918, the same year of publication of the temporary journal

“Literary Garden”. Therefore, in this delicate historical circumstance, it was necessary to highlight some of the most characteristic features of the Albanian nation, such as aspirations for freedom, independence, cooperation, and solidarity. We think that Nosi’s initiative for the publication of the Albanian song of the battle of Fushë-Kosova served the fulfillment of this sacred mission. Moreover, we are on the eve of the Peace Conference, which would solve the problems evidenced during the First War. He also was member of the Albanian delegation participating in the Paris Peace Conference, which took place in 1919-1920. From this point of view, we emphasize that the intellectual initiative of Lef Nosi takes obvious patriotic hues.

As a result, the intellectual activity of Lef Nosi, in its entirety, is coherent, and generally resonates with Albanian national interests. In this sense, it serves as an important source of reference not only for the knowledge and study of issues related to the history of Albanians, but also for those at the Balkan level.

Our work would be incomplete if we did not also address the motive that pushed the well-known British albanologist Margaret Hasluck to publish the fifth version of the song about the battle of Fushë-Kosova in London, in 1936. We judge and evaluate that the origin of this motive must be sought in Hasluck’s collaboration with Lef Nosi in the field of folklore and ethnography. This functional collaboration had well-known products, and they are an integral part of the documentary collection of 13 thousand sheets located in the “Nosi” fund at the Central State Archive. We think that the clue that the British albanologist received for the publication of the above version of the song about the battle of Fushë-Mullenja, should be sought within this context.

The defeat suffered by the Balkan coalition in the battle of Fushë-Kosova in 1389 should by no means be conceived as the final defeat of the peoples of the peninsula in their fight against the Ottoman invaders. The message conveyed by this battle consists in the reassessment of internal Balkan cohesion, as well as maintaining the spirit of cooperation and solidarity that should exist and function between peoples. The correct observance of these principles would enable the resistance with a more organized status. The theoretical concept of this resistance tells us that when power becomes arbitrary and oppressive, quite naturally the reaction to it turns into necessity. Consequently, on such a premise,

collective action is generally accompanied by violence, whereby peoples reject the existing political power, the established social order, and launch an attack to liquidate it.¹⁷ Seen from this perspective, we affirm that the peoples of the Balkans reacted after this battle with the belief that they possessed the potential for organizing armed resistance against the Ottoman invaders. Moreover, they harboured the hope that one day they would overthrow it. Thus, after the battle of Fushë-Kosova for the Albanians would come Kruja, the heroic wars for the defence of Shkodra, etc. The scrupulous poet and researcher Fatos Arapi asserts that through these wars Albanian history would mark a climax with a glorious epic inspired and led by Gjergj Kastrioti Scanderbeg.¹⁸ It is a fact that under the leadership of Scanderbeg, the Albanians not only appear prominently on the scene of the 15th century history, but take the first ranks in the war that the peoples of the Balkans waged at that time for the defense of their freedom and existence. We estimate that, among other things, the key to the success of Gjergj Kastrioti Scanderbeg lies in the consideration he gave to indicators such as internal political cohesion, cooperation and solidarity.

Aware that the destinies of peoples cannot be equated, we emphasize that after the defeat of the battle of Fushë-Kosova, the Serbs also reacted. Thus, in 1456, Sultan Mehmet leading the Ottoman military forces began the siege of Belgrade. Through the data provided by a researcher, we are informed that the reacting energy and piety of Christians was higher than that of Muslims. Janosh Hunyadi, helped by a crusading army led by the Franciscan priest, John of Capistrano, managed to triumph. Consequently, Sultan Mehmet was forced to retreat, and his army was destroyed.¹⁹ As can be seen, even in this case, success must be sought in the adaptation and functionality of the spirit of inter-Balkan cooperation and solidarity.

The same reaction was shown at this time by the other peoples of the Balkans, such as the Montenegrins, Bosnians, etc. But, in the literal sense of the historiographic concept, the anti-Ottoman resistance is evident there from the second half of the 16th century and the beginning of the

¹⁷ Petit Robert de Paul Robert, Josette Rey Debove, Alain Rey, Dicorobert, Montreal, Canada, 1993, p. 1284.

¹⁸ Fatos Arapi, *Old Albanian songs*, Studies, Naim Frashëri, Tirana, 1986, p. 227.

¹⁹ Ferdinand Schevill, *Balkans, history and civilization*, Uegen, Tirana, 2002, p. 168.

17th century, to which time also belongs the beginning of the Ottoman Empire decline process. The centuries that followed emphasize a resistance with a more organized status and more complete indicators. The continuous expansion and deepening of this resistance led to the 19th century, which has rightly been described as the era of the Balkan peoples national revolutions. Through these revolutions, the Balkan countries not only gained their lost freedom, but also created their own independent national states. It is important to emphasize that in this long process of resistance, the peoples of the Balkans reflected a visible spirit of cooperation and solidarity and, at the same time, clearly confirmed that they have more indicators that bring them closer than divide them. Consequently, all the events that took place during this time span essentially constitute links of a single chain of historical development through which all the countries of the peninsula passed. Seen from this point of view, we affirm that the battle of Fushë-Kosova is also an integral part of this historical chain.

Within this context, we consider it appropriate to refer to Professor Buda, who, when dealing with Albanian-Greek relations under the spirit of the Enlightenment, brings a very significant determination by A. Gudha that “the peoples of the Balkans will achieve their freedom only when they act relying on their own forces for their rights and interests; when every kind of pan disappears: pan-Hellenism, pan-Slavism, pan-Romanianism, pan-Muhammadanism, etc.”²⁰ We emphasize that Gudha made such a prophetic determination as early as 1877, in the work entitled “The Balkans of the Balkans’ People”. It is natural to think that this determination could be a direct result of the knowledge and experience he gained as a result of research conducted in many parts of the Balkan space. Following this line of reasoning, we affirm that the Balkans will belong to the Balkans’ people, only when they remove even the smallest trace of chauvinism and function as a community of identities. Therefore, Gudha’s determination sounds prophetic, because it preserves coherence and contemporary spirit. We think that such a reality necessarily requires the triumph of the future over the past. It is understandable that this triumph is entirely possible, because the future is based on the rationality offered by the past and the present. Consequently, created in such a circumstance, it avoids the factors that

²⁰Aleks Buda, *Historical studies*, Prishtina, 2006, p. 446-447.

generate conflicts and paves the way for factors that guarantee and affirm peace, security, harmony and cooperation between the peoples of the Balkans. Only a Balkan built on the basis of these principles and organized as a community of identities will make it possible to adapt a natural process of its European integration. Closely related to this trend, we find it interesting to present in this work a message that comes from a Latin sentence, which the well-known historian of the contemporary problems of the history of the Balkans, B. Lory, brings in his study. In this context, he emphasizes: “*we have the deep conviction that the historian who works sine ira et studio (without prejudice and partiality), no matter how serious the facts he brings out, contributes to a work of understanding, that is, of peace.*”²¹

Starting from such a determination, we affirm that the studies undertaken for the history of the Balkans in general, and that of Albania in particular, must be freed from any kind of passion. In this way, not only the tendency towards the unfolding of historical truths is enabled, but there will also be a contribution to the expansion and consolidation of the spaces necessary for establishing the long-sought peace. Therefore, in this particular case, the study of Gjergj Kastrioti Scanderbeg and his era aims at the historical evidence of the existence and functioning of the fraternal reality between the peoples of the Balkans. Currently, the existence and functioning of such a reality constitutes the fundamental factor of the progressive development of the entire Balkan space.

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Irakli KOÇOLLARI

**THE INFORMATION AND THE SCANDERBEG
INFORMATION NETWORK**

A long waiting closed within Silence

The Middle Ages was the era of great and bloody matches, clashes and terrible social consequences, of crusades, violence, iron and fire, but also of resistance, endurance, human mind and intuition, of people's hope in the face of fatal challenges, of survival and crescendo.

And it seems clear that our people and its national hero, Gjergj Kastrioti Skënderbeu, gave worthy proof both in the great fields of violent clashes and in those of the human mind and genius.

In the evaluations of this complex and multidimensional figure one should not judge that his apotheosis was achieved only through the power of the sword or his famous army. They were the product and embodiment of the mastery and art of war that he applied, as well as of his abilities to create alliances and allies, of brilliant optics to apply an active and multidimensional diplomacy, regional Balkan and wider European; of the re-evaluation of the political situations in the country, of the legal and fiscal changes and reforms, of the evaluation of the institutions and the religious world of the arboretum population, of the establishment of informational structures and the network that would prevent the fatal traps and infidelities of the time¹.

Referring to this very issue, through the archival or editorial documentation, it is sometimes clearly established and sometimes in the sub-lines of the archival document of the time that from the first attempts towards the challenge for the abandonment of the Ottoman Imperial Court, and its return to the land of the ancestors, the hero has had to avoid

¹ Felice Clinimberti: "Shqiptarët dhe princi Skanderbeg", Botime "Reklama", Tiranë 20018), (Sir William Temple: "Essai sur les vertus heroïque", Vol III.)

a whole ordeal of dangers and apply with perfect intuition the challenging ways out through conspiratorial projects.

Thus, from what Barleti makes known to us, we learn that during the years that Skenderbeu was held hostage and served in the Ottoman Imperial Court, he was faced with permanent threats, with dangers that he seemed to observe very carefully, to avoid any consequence. Referring to the lines that Barleti conveys to us quite concisely, we learn these facts about the threats that the hero faced:

"Since these pits and traps of Tiran, (the Sultan) against Skanderbeg, were being discovered little by little, and it seemed that it would be difficult to escape from them, staying near Tiran, he finally decided to put his plan into effect – to liberate the paternal kingdom with manliness and ingenuity, a plan that his clever mind had once devised and sought to find the opportunity to leave Murat and return to the Motherland².

Reading the above statements, the question arises, - Did Skënderbeu have a secret plan for the liberation of the paternal principalities? - Had the Sultan really set up wells and traps against Skanderbeg, as our great humanist claims? Finally, the question arises, - Why did the Sultan have to follow him and set up traps against Skanderbeg, if he was a loyal man of the court? Logically, it must be accepted that Skanderbeg would have to be pursued and traps set up only if he had taken suspicious, conspiratorial actions that questioned his loyalty against the Sultan. But, - Did the High Gate have such suspicious facts about the Hero?

One of the Ottoman chroniclers of the time, like Idrisi Bitlisi, brings us interesting news and surprisingly informs us about this secret plan, the fact that - Skënderbeu had secret and conspiratorial communication with unknown Albanians, who had constantly worked to filled his mind to come to the lands of his own. Bitlisi states the following:

"... The matter was that one of the Sultan's old servants, the Albanian Iskander, who had grown up as a child with the blessings of the Padishah and who had enjoyed all the care, magnanimity and unlimited caress, was run over and taken by the neck by some devil people, from the misbehaving infidels, driven by greed to become king over the infidels of Albania, claiming an unknown aristocratic origin, suddenly came out with the claim that the rule and the right to govern this country belonged to him, taken as true facts the

² Barleti Marin: "Historia e Skënderbeut", Infobotues, Tiranë 2005, faqe 15-16; ² Kemal Pashazade; Instituti i Historisë dhe Gjuhësisë, "Lufta Shqiptaro-Turke në shekullin e XV", Burime Osmane, faqe 169-70)

*deceptions concocted by some infidel intriguers. ... So in a very bitter way he fled from the high seat of the caliphate and left for Albania. After consulting with each other, this crowd of troublemakers with tricks and lies pretended to take control of several fortresses of this country*³.

As can be seen from this document of the Ottoman chronicler, Bitlisi, it seems clear that the Turks had information about Skenderbeu and his periodic contacts with some "infidels and troublemakers"!!! Having said that, the Ottomans had information about Skenderbeu's contacts with unknown Christian Albanians and elements who begged him to return to his father's homeland... Exactly, this announcement by the Ottoman chronicler Bitlisi fully supports and confirms the assertions of Marin Barleti, who informs that while Skënderbeu was a hostage near the Sultan's court, *he kept in contact with Albanians who urged him to return to his homeland and take the throne of of yours... that the right to govern this country belongs to him....*

And as long as the Turks had this information about suspicious movements and contacts of Skanderbeg, they must have carefully monitored and observed him, they must have set up traps and wells against him!... In these circumstances, Barleti's announcement that *"Skanderbeg tried to find the opportunity to leave Murat and return to the Motherland"*, takes on convincing value and authenticity.

Under these circumstances, the assertions that Barleti adds below seem to be even more convincing and believable:

*"He did not show these plans to anyone and his desires remained hidden and were not made known either by word or by any other means... (so he did not speak or make demonstrative actions....) ... although there were many of the Epirote race there, whom he could trust as very close friends.... Although after his father's death some of the princes of Epirus were sent to him, incited by his name... he knew human frivolity and well weighed the great danger, so he wisely pretended that he did not want them to do such a thing... He was in doubt as to the possibility of taking Kruja, as the Tyrant had stationed there a very strong garrison, so that he could not be freed either by force of arms or by any other force than by some cunning and ingenuity. special."*⁴

From these paragraphs of Barlett, although very brief, we learn about Hero's admirable conspiratorial maturity, about the profound silence, the

³ Idrisi Bitlisi, Instituti i Historisë dhe Gjuhësisë, "Lufta Shqiptaro-Turke në shekullin e XV". Burime Osmane, faqe 159-160.

⁴ Barleti, Marin: "Historia e Skënderbeut", "Infobotues", Tiranë 2005, faqe 15-16.

prudence in maintaining secrecy, (secrecy is the key to success in conspiratorial activity) as well as the detailed information he had about the situation military in the fortress of Kruja. Fanatically respecting the conspiracy, the secrecy of his secret plans, as Barleti tells us, *"With the greatest wisdom and attention, he took care of his compatriots and himself, he waited every day and prepared the opportunity to explode"*⁵.

The conspiracy Plan for the marriage of Kruja

Restrained, careful and silent in his intentions, the date November 3, 1443 found the hero with his 300 knights, while *"Skenderbeu, seeing that the time had come, when he could complete what he had thought, i.e. the Plan of drawn up long before, with the greatest zeal he was preparing for the defeat of the Turks. First, together with his own legions, he slowly gave way to the enemy and turned his back on the front, then with his example he instilled fear in others and filled his mind to abandon the front"*⁶.

But it was not only the escape from the fighting front that was the goal and essence of Skanderbeg's planned conspiracy. Another phase of this secret Plan would have to be realized by him, perhaps the most subtle of all the steps taken up to that point. Those moments of anarchy at the front, while the Ottoman troops received the devastating blows, the biographers of the Hero such as the Albanians Barleti, Noli, and Frang Bardhi and the latin Biemmi, but also the Ottoman chroniclers⁷, let us know that:

"In those moments, Skenderbeu found the moment and the courage of a strategist to confess the plan he had thought of before to his friends. Among the others there was his nephew, Hamzai... When he saw that the fate of the Turks in this battle was going down, he was placed after the Pasha's advisory secretary, whom he observed more attentively and examined carefully for this purpose.

"After he caught him, he put him in handcuffs and quickly tore out a letter to the governor of Kruja, by which he was ordered, in the name of Sultan Murat, to hand over the governance and all the care of the city of Kruja. Many other

⁵ Barleti, Marin: "Historia e Skënderbeut", "Infobotues", Tiranë 2005, faqe 15-16.

⁶ Barleti, Marin: "Historia e Skënderbeut", "Infobotues", Tiranë 2005, faqe 17.

⁷ Biemmi, Gian Maria: "Historia di Giorgio Castrioto detto Scanderbeg" Breshia 1742); Nishanxhiu, Instituti i Historisë dhe Gjuhësisë, "Lufta Shqiptaro-Turke në shekullin e XV", Burime Osmane, faqe faqe 258)

*things were written in the letter in order to create greater security and trust in the Turkish governor of Kruja. (since he did not make any objection for fear of death)''*⁸.

As soon as the letter was written, the secretary was killed on the spot with his friends, in order to keep this matter from being known for as long as possible by Sultan Murat⁹.

Of course, this was a well-thought-out act, first - so that the news did not spread that Skenderbeu had a forged document in his hands by means of which he would illegally take Kruja; and secondly - to have at his disposal sufficient time to mobilize the troops and the populations of the arboreal provinces for the imminent military confrontations that awaited him, - until the High Porte learned of *"the treachery of Skanderbeg and mobilized the troops for revenge..."*

Arriving in Kruja with his three hundred trusted knights is another challenge and a scenario skillfully prepared by the leadership. The sources tell us that Skenderbeu gave the (falsified) imperial decree to his nephew Hamzai, to deliver it to the Turkish commander of the Kruja garrison. In all his appearance he was characterized as a typical Turkish profile and not only that, but he spoke Ottoman perfectly. There was a real reason Hamza enjoyed these qualities. His father, Reposhi (Skënderbeu's brother) was married to a Turkish woman, which seems to have passed on to her son quite a few characteristics of her gene, of course also her language - Ottoman.¹⁰

After the capture of Kruja, Skenderbeu turned to work to face the great challenges that awaited him. On March 2, 1444, as G. Biemmi makes known, he organized the Assembly of Lezha, the capital of the Dukagjins, which at that time was in the possession of the Venetians¹¹.

One of the decisions of this Assembly was the establishment of a network of informants on all the roads and paths that led the caravans or horsemen from Edrene to the territories of Arberia. This important

⁸ Barleti, Marin: *"Historia e Skënderbeut"*, *"Infobotues"*, Tiranë 2005, faqe 15-18; Kristo Frashëri: *"Skënderbeu jeta dhe vepra"*, Botime Toena, Tiranë 2002., Faqe 130-.1

⁹ Barleti, Marin: *"Historia e Skënderbeut"*, *"Infobotues"*, Tiranë 2005, faqe 18.

¹⁰ Barleti, Marin: *"Historia e Skënderbeut"*, *"Infobotues"*, Tiranë 2005, faqe 44-45; Kemal Pashazade, Instituti i Historisë dhe Gjuhësisë, *"Lufta Shqiptaro-Turke në shekullin e XV"*, Burime Osmane faqe 198.

¹¹ Biemmi Gian Maria: *"Historia di Giorgio Castrioto detto Scanderbeg"* Breshia 1742) (Barleti, Marin: *"Historia e Skënderbeut"*, *"Infobotues"*, Tiranë 2005, faqe 44) (Kristo Frashëri: *"Skënderbeu jeta dhe vepra"*, Botime Toena, Tiranë 2002., faqe 135-7

structure would be the eye and ear that would announce or warn the approach of Ottoman dangers and threats at the right time. And to put this structure into practice, *"Immediately after the end of the Assembly, he went personally from village to village and registered the soldiers, - he explained to the villagers the importance of mobilization, - he built and strengthened the forts in which he placed strong guards, - he decided observers of the paths, gorges, valleys in which he placed informers whose task was to announce as soon as possible, through secret messengers, or through signs such as fire, smoke, etc., the approach of the enemy"*¹².

The establishment of a permanent agents' network in all the arteries and roads that brought the movements of the Ottoman armies from east to west, i.e. to the territories of Arberia, was really efficient and it seems to have worked so precisely, because in all the military campaigns undertaken by the Ottoman Empire against Skenderbe, actually all were preempted before they entered the territories of Arberia. None of them could reach the walls of Kruja or at the battlefield designated destination without going through severe punishments before arriving there. And all this happened due to the precise information that the leader received from his information network.

Only three months after the Assembly of Lezha, in June 1444, Skenderbeu would experience the first bloody battle with the Ottoman forces. The Sultan sent an army consisting of 25,000 troops under the command of Ali Pasha. Skenderbeu had already received some information about the preparation of the Ottoman campaign against him. In his speech held in the Assembly of Albanian princes, not only to encourage them, but also to convince them for the accuracy of the information he had about the strength of the opponent and their movements, he clearly said: *"...We have no reason to be afraid and we should not be afraid of his (Sultan Murat's) arrival. My people have informed me about this... a few days ago... and those are the people who have chosen to work for us, due to the willingness and our fair cause."*¹³

So, it is more than clear that Skanderbeg once again emphasizes the fact that he had sources of information in the heart of the Ottoman

¹² Kristo Frashëri: "Skënderbeu jeta dhe vepra", Botime Toena, Tiranë 2002., faqe faqe 138.

¹³ Barleti Marin: "Historia e Skënderbeut", Infobotues, Tiranë 2005, faqe 55)

Empire. Surprisingly, in a very mature way, he never identified them, but he conveyed the brief message "*and those are the people who have chosen to work for us, due to the willingness and our fair cause.*"-clarifying which was the reason of these sources secrets, what motivated those unknown people, to secretly cooperate and inform Skenderbe about such data of a military nature. (In its essence, this statement is nothing more than the principle that today's Secret Services apply in their recruitments and which, in professional terminology, is called "the motive and basis of secret cooperation")

Benefiting precisely by such accurate information, after the intensive preparations, Skenderbeg, on June 29, 1444, attacked by surprise the Ottoman troops, in the territory of the Lower Dibra... After the first battle, the Albanian army cunningly pulled back as if it had been broken, driving the opponent into the narrow field of Torviolli. Just when Ali Pasha thought that he had put in trap the Albanian army in that narrow path, he suddenly noticed that was surrounded from all four sides by the Albanian forces, which were hidden, perfectly camouflaged in the surrounding forests. By the attack command, the Albanians advanced quickly, completely destroying the Ottoman troops, killing over 7,000 people and capturing over 500 others¹⁴.

Almost all the military operations that Skanderbeg undertook against the Ottoman armies that were marching to the Arber territories, were completed without being able to reach the target territory, and all this because of the precise information of the agents network.

It is to be mentioned the fact that only once Skanderbeg was uninformed and consequently he was attacked by surprise, following a painful defeat. This was the battle for the settlement of Berat. Skanderbeg's armies in this case found themselves unprepared, because the Ottoman army had not approached thought the roads they had planned, where Skanderbeg's information network was located and operated. The renegade Moisi, who knew well how these structures operates, led the Ottoman army on unknown paths, away from the urban arteries. They followed the paths Edesa - Follorina - Korçë - Vithkuq -

¹⁴ (Biemmi Gian Maria: "Historia di Giorgio Castrioto detto Scanderbeg", Breshia 1742) (Kristo Frashëri faqe 139)

Trebickë - Berat and came from the back side of the armies, which were surrounding the city, and attacked them by surprise¹⁵.

Referring to another case, which shows us how efficient the informations given by such structures and at the same time the Skanderbag's authority were, we would like to mention the last events of 1447, when Skanderbeg decided to take military action against the Venetian forces. He besieged Danja and Durrës, which were under their control. Their siege lasted several months and several attacks were made against the fortress walls. To get out from such critical situation, the Secret Council of Mercenaries of the Venetian Republic, on May 4, 1448, approved a decision to undertake two actions that actually are to be considered typical Venetian of that time:

- **The first** was based on a notification that had come from an anonymous citizen (his name is not mentioned, not even in the Venetian document), who promised to kill Skanderbeg, if him was promised an annual reward of 100 ducats a year.

The council agreed to give this citizen the reward in case he committed the act of murder (the document says "L'ignoble prommese")

In the document, "Secret Decision of the Council" it is stated: "If he himself kills the above-mentioned Skanderbeg or engages someone else, we are ready to pay the salary of 100 ducats a year for the rest of his life." (*se ipse dabit vel dori faciet mortem Scqanderbego predicto, summus contenti dare sibi in vita sua provisionem ducatorum C in anno*)¹⁶.

*The two special people, or delegates, who were in charge, from the Venetian Senate, to contact the assassin Skandarbeg, were Polo Loredano and Andrea Venieri.*¹⁷.

The second was a proposal to the Turkish side from the Venetians - to intervene with its army against Skanderbeg. Such action should monetary rewarded, and had to be paid from the Republic of Venice, with the aim to punish the Albanians who were fighting against the possessions of Venice (in this case, Skanderbeg's units, who were keeping Danja besieged).

¹⁵ Fan Noli: "Historia e Skënderbeut", "Reklama", Tiranë 2007, faqe 79)

¹⁶ Athanas Gegaj: "L' Albanie et Invasion Turqueau XV siècle", Universite de Louvain, Paris 1937

¹⁷ Fan S. Noli: "Historia e Skënderbeut", Tiranë, "Reklama", 2016., f.54, 55, 65.

As above, on July 1, 1448, Venice commissioned its temporary appointed person in Albania, Andrea Venerion, to contact the Turkish commander, with the aim to make possible *"that the Turkish to reach as soon as possible Albania, to defeat the evil Skanderbeg, proposal that they themselves requested in writing that by their means (the Turks) the above-mentioned Skanderbeg could be expelled from Albania and possibly even from the world."*¹⁸.

Going even further into the conspiratorial intrigues of the Secret Council of Venice, against Skanderbeg, in their decision was stated:

*"If Skanderbeg would not be persuaded to withdraw from Danja, even by using the above mentioned methods of the promises and large rewards, the Venetian permanent appointed person, was ordered to enter into secret talks with Pal Dukagjini and Nikoll Dukagjini to finally remove these two Albanian princes from the alliance with Skanderbeg, by rewarding them with money, villages, properties and other family privileges..."*¹⁹.

Most probably Skanderbeg was fully aware of these decisions and conspiratorial attempts of the Venetians. Of course, we are not able to verify who was the source of information for such confidential data. As it is also known, the Pope himself was informed about these dangerous plans of the Council of Venice. The Pope had evaluated such act, the possible assassination of Skanderbeg, with serious consequences. To prevent this action and such disruption, the Pope charged Pal Engjëllin with an urgent mission to communicate with the Venetians²⁰. (Pal Angel, who remained one of the most loyal friends of our Hero until the end of his life...)

Except the above, it is quite clear that Skanderbeg was informed about the exchange of letters and the secret agreement between Veneto and Turkey. What convinces us of this is the fact that since the end of July 1448 - Skanderbeg had placed to the eastern borders of his territories, in the province of Dibra, selected military units, consisting of 4,000 people, under the command of Count Uran. The mission of this formation was to wait for an Ottoman army which would come to attack from behind his back Skanderbeg, who kept besieged two Venetian possessions, Danja and Durrës. (page 155)

¹⁸ Frashëri, Krishëri, "Skënderbeu – Jeta dhe Vepra", Botime Toena, Tiranë 2002, faqe 152.

¹⁹ Farlati, D.; "Iliricum sacrum", Venetia 1817, f. 240.

²⁰ (D. Farlati "Iliricum sacrum", Venetia 1817, f. 240

And actually, the information that Skanderbeg had received was confirmed. On the 14th of August 1448, "the Turks, who had agreed with the Venetians, launched the offensive. Vrana Konti, trapped in the roads of that province, called also Skanderbeg for support, who directly ran to Dibër...

The Turkish army, under the command of Mustafa Pasha, with 15,000 troops had entered Oranik of the Upper Dibra from the Ohrid side, when Skanderbeg, whom he thought was in Danja, came forward with an army of 6,000 troops. A Homeric duel began, in which Pal Manesi put to death a kabadai Anadollak, and the entire battle ended with the complete defeat of the Turkish army. Mustafa Pasha left approximately 5,000 dead, 15 flags and others in the camp. The Turkish Pasha himself with 12 senior officers was captured by Moisiu of Dibra, the next day, in the field of Retha, two miles from Oranik.

From the control that was carried out on the materials that the captive officers (the officers who were war prisoners) had and on other documents that were seized by the Turkish command, was found correspondence proving the fact that Venice had offered to the Turks to attack Skanderbeg, behind the back, while he was busy in Danja. ...²¹ .

It is obvious that Skanderbeg was well aware of the practice followed by the Ottoman military staffs when they started military operations, he knew the fact that what material and documentation they carried with them. The assessment and review of the documents that the high-ranking Ottoman military officers carried with them served as a source of information for him, which he will encounter in other military operations that he carried out.

.... As a sign of revenge, upon his return, Skanderbeg marched to Danja and Durrës, which were occupied by the Venetians, and began to attack them with artillery. But, surprisingly, as we learn from the Venetian archives, both of these fortresses were in the process of surrendered, when the Senate of the Venetian Republic, frightened, urgently asked for peace to Skanderbeg. If the Peace was not signed, Venice would lose Durrës, Danja and after them the other castles they had in Albania.

Nevertheless, as it was known, even after the signing of the Peace Treaty between Skanderbeg and Venice, there was no genuine peace. An undeclared war continued between them and on several occasions, in the years 1450, 1452, 1457 and 1462 this war almost became official.

²¹ Fan S. Noli: "Historia e Skënderbeut", Tiranë, "Reklama", 2016., f.54, 55, 65)

The wonder was that in all cases, Venice fell to Skanderbeg's knees, when he showed that was not afraid of them²². In the archival documentation, but also in other historical writings about the life and feats of the hero, another rare ability, quality or mastery of his becomes evident, it is about the use of disinformation, disguise and the surprise of the attack. The event when these features of Skanderbeg appeared in the most impressive way were the long and exhausting operations that led to the Battle of Albulena. For these camouflage military scenarios that lasted around three to four months, we would say that many chronicles of the time were written and the battle or the terrible defeat that the Ottomans suffered was mentioned by almost all the Ottoman chroniclers of the time and then, like Oruçi, Idrisi Bitlisi, Ashik Pashazade, Hoxha Sadedin, for the western ones as well, Biemmi, Xiovi, Frangu, Barleti, etj. ²³.

We are talking for the major military operations undertaken by the Turks in the summer of 1457, when Hamza Kastrioti, under the command of Isak Evrenoz Pasha, with a force of 50,000 Ottomans, went to the territories of Arberia. Precisely, at this time, Venice thought that this was a good opportunity to put Skanderbeg between two fires and began to create provocations on the borders of Skanderbeg's territories. In these critical situations, he sent a strict note to the Venetian Senate saying:

"I don't want war, but if you want it, go on, because I'm ready." The Senate's response, dated July 8, 1457, was mild and conciliatory. All the inquiries that Skanderbeg had written in his note were accepted and the unpaid pensions were immediately refunded²⁴.

After being ensured by the wings (Venetians), Skanderbeg headed with the regular forces of his army, immediately to the eastern borders of Arberia, from where he had information about the rapid approach of an Ottoman army.

Knowing that at the head of this army was Isak Evrenoz Pascha and Hamza Kastrioti, who knew all the ways of fight and disguise of Skanderbeg, the latter was forced to use a new tactic and strategy of

²² Fan S. Noli: *"Historia e Skënderbeut"*, Tiranë, "Reklama", 2016., f.54, 55, 65.

²³ Oruçi, Idrisi Bitlisi, Ashik Pashazade, Hoxha Sadedin; Instituti i Historisë dhe Gjuhësisë: "Lufta Shqiptaro Turko në Shekullin e XV.", Burime Osmane, Tiranë 1968).

²⁴ Noli, Fan: "Histori e Skënderbeut", "Reklama", Tiranë, faqe 87-8)

camouflage and military disinformation. Thus, after the first military clash with the formations of the Turkish army, Skanderbeg acted as if he was scared and retreated fast with all his troops, until near the territories under Venetian possession, near Lezha. The traces he left and the demonstrative movements created the impression that he entered into those pledges scared, but this was only a military disinformation, “*as Skanderbeg’s leaving to Lisos was not really done as the enemy thought.*” - says Barleti and adds, “*it was only a fraud, because after he had gone a few thousand steps away from the eyes of the Turks, in fact he and his troops hid in the border territories of his kingdom*”²⁵.

Of course, Hamza thought that this retreat was a well-known maneuver of Skanderbeg, and he was careful in all his movements to follow, identify and discover where he was hiding and from which side the opponent would appear unpredictably, as he had habit, so that he would then hit all of a sudden. But, surprisingly, the Turkish forces, which were put in full control of the territories, did not see and did not encounter anywhere the presence of Skanderbeg's wards or warriors. For more than two months, the Turkish units that were in pursuit and control of the forests and steep mountains, had left no untrodden place and ground, but to their surprise they did not encounter any movement, not even any partisan resistance.

*Not only that, but from the conversations and information collected with the desperate residents, they had the conviction that Isak Evrenoz Pasha and Hamza Kastrioti that Skanderbeg had really fled with fear to Lezha, or perhaps somewhere else further away, across the Adriatic.*²⁶

Even the information that the Venetian soldiers had collected as their possessions in the territories of Arberia, such as those in Shkodra, Danje and Baili, Marco Diego in Durrës, informed the Venetian Senate that “Skanderbeg was badly defeated”, that “Kastrioti was scared, had left and was hiding from the fear of punishment”, even other reports that reached the Papacy with the information that “Skanderbeg with his relatives had crossed the Adriatic in boats and took refuge on the shores of Puglia...”, that “.. his army was dispersed...” (Diego’s report sent to the Senate at that time, says: “*...notificato a la perfeta Serenita V-ra,*

²⁵ Barleti, Marin: “*Historia e Skënderbeut*”, “*Infobotues*”, Tiranë 2005, faqe 353-360)

²⁶ Schmitt, Oliver Jens: “Skënderbeu”, “Fjala”, Tiranë 2014, faqe 297-300.

*come la mazor parte del paese e andato cum al turcho. Et Magnifico Segnor Scanderbego va per le montagne fuzendo la sua testa....)*²⁷..

In the punitive operation and in search of traces of Skanderbeg's army, the Ottoman forces under the command of Isak Evrenosi and Hamza continued throughout the month of August of 1457, but nowhere did they come across any forces or units of Skanderbeg's army, even detached ones.

At the beginning of the month of September, the Turkish army, physically exhausted and psychologically crushed by an endless ordeal of searches and journeys without result, convinced that Skanderbeg had escaped together with his family, had landed and settled in Albulena, near Mat river, west of Tumenishti Mountain²⁸.

Careless, with the discipline now depraved, the Turkish formations that had lost their patience, were released to the four sides of the territory to loot and take wealth from the villages and the local population. It seems clear that the information that both the Turks and the Venetians had received about the "escape of Skanderbeg" had been disinformation spread by the Hero's own people.

Meanwhile, Skanderbeg had suddenly appeared with the regular formations of his army and under a perfect conspiracy had taken over Tumenishti. Carefully and without noise, in the darkness of the night he had divided his army into three formations, he stayed himself in the first, while he left the other two formations under the command of Moisi of Dibra and in the third Gjergj Stres Balsha with Pjetër Emanuel²⁹.

In silence and in a disguise that had left no trace anywhere, the Albanian troops, on 7 September 1457, in the middle of a scorching hot day, when the Ottoman army was completely debauched, after having captured the Turkish peripheral guards, under the sound of trumpets and the crackling of weapons, the Albanian fighters organized in formations and under the command of Skanderbeg himself were unleashed on the Ottoman troops, wreaking havoc.... It was a dreadful battle - says Barleti. An appalling shock. About 20,000 were killed, 1,500 were taken as captive (war prisoner), from the ranks of the Turkish

²⁷ Senato Mar: Dispatchcio, Relazione di Marco Dario a Durazzo

²⁸ Frangu, Dhimitër: "Veprat e lavdishme të Skënderbeut", "Arbëria", Tiranë 2007, faqe 124-5)

²⁹ Barleti, Marin: "Historia e Skënderbeut", "Infobotues", Tiranë 2005, faqe 353-360.

*army, while the rest of the troops escaped. Among the captives was Sanjak bey Mesidi and Hamza Kastrioti himself.*³⁰

- Seen carefully, the battle of Albulena or Ujbardha, near today's Mamurras, is a rare example of Skanderbeg's perfect operations, where he successfully applied;
- convincing scenarios of imaginary military defeat,
- deceptive retreat of the vanquished in battle,
- disguising an entire army for almost three months as a war tactic (which is almost impossible for an army under any circumstances),
- the spread of perfect and convincing disinformation that the commander of the Albanians had escaped -
- psychological fatigue of the opponent, -
- and lastly - the sudden strike and moments of surprise of the opponent.

Trap for the assassination of Skanderbeg

The well-known anti-Ottoman resistance of the Albanians in the 15th century was inextricably linked to the name and determining role of Skanderbeg. Therefore from the beginning to the end of his life, the national hero of the Albanians remained the focus and the main object of targeted attacks of the Ottoman Empire. For the Turks, it was clear that his physical elimination would mean a mortal blow to the Albanian resistance itself. It is for this reason that the Ottoman Empire and other powers, such as the Venetians, but also Albanian Princes connected by invisible strings to the Sultan, opponents of the Hero and who were interested in eliminating this knight of Christianity, not only designed but also raised and implemented a number of traps to physically eliminate it.

One such case was a trap prepared very carefully and in complete secrecy, in the year 1451. In his work, Fan Noli informs us that... One day (it is **about the year 1451**) while Skanderbeg was leaving the gate of Kruja, an unknown man approached and advised him to be careful, because in the forest of Kraba, where he was about to go, they had seized lurk and were going to kill him. He immediately sent Captain Balsha of

³⁰ Barleti, Marin: "Historia e Skënderbeut", "Infobotues", Tiranë 2005, faqe 353-360)

the Praetorian Guard with a scout (koshadhe), who went all around the forest and found eight armed men hiding inside a cave.

He tried his best to capture them alive, but as they resisted and attacked Balsha's ward to break the siege and escape, Balsha's men managed to kill five of them and take three captives. He brought the captives to Kruja, and after being tortured, they confessed that they were Turks, sent on purpose by the Sultan to kill Skanderbeg. They also explained that they had gone to that forest as led by two Albanians, who were killed (during the siege) along with their three friends. The Turkish captives also explained that these guides had sent some Albanian captains to the Sultan, yet they did not know their names, because they themselves had not told them as well. These were the only explanations - clarifications - that could be extracted from the Turkish captives...

The hostility of the Dukagjins, which flared up worse and worse day by day against Skanderbeg, as well as the bad name of Lek Dukagjin, who was known and judged by everyone to be a traitor and for such murders behind ones back, was the reason that in this time was judged by all that he was the author of this failed plot, conspiracy.

After that, Skanderbeg got ready to start a fierce battle against Dukagjin, but only the intervention of the Bishop of Tivar, the Bishop of Drishti and his father-in-law Gjergj Arianiti calmed him down to avoid entering a civil war³¹.

Psychological processing – a tool used effectively

In the years 1450-1452, the approach of the Arianites to the Venetians; the betrayal of Berat that caused painful confusion in the ranks of Skanderbeg; the hero's own insecurity in his relationship with the Venetians; the permanent Ottoman threat, - had put Skanderbeg in extremely difficult positions, but also the local population towards a shaky trust and the ranks of the army itself before a dilemma and almost a crisis of determination and courage.

In order to recover the climate of trust that was severely shaken, to cure the wounded morale, to prevent the emigration and escape of the inhabitants frightened by the war dreadfulness and the created situation, as well as to recover the aggravated situation, Skanderbeg had to find the effective ways and means to restore trust in him and the strength of the fighting resistance of the Albanians. From the documentary statements,

³¹ Fan S. Noli: "Historia e Skënderbeut", Tiranë, "Reklama", 2016., f. 73, 74)

as well as from a series of actions that he took at that time, it seems clear that Skanderbeg knew well what would be the instruments that he would have to use to restore the shaken morale, and which reliable authority he should use to restore the belief of his warriors to victory.

As **Biemmi** informs us - (1452) Skanderbeg mobilized the Bishops, who in gatherings tried to convince the villagers and believers by means of typical medieval stories (filled with mysticism and superstition, hallucinations, divine signs), according to which those all warned the severe defeat of the Sultan³².

Again according to **Biemmi**, during these times, Skanderbeg himself spread the news that Saint George, who in the Middle Ages was worshiped as the patron saint of Albania, had appeared to him at night in his sleep and had given him a sword, a sign according to the bishop of Drishti, that it was a guarantee of the victory that the Hero would reap against the Ottoman army.

Another bishop had told the believers in large public masses that he had seen in a dream the Sultan kneeling before Skanderbeg - which, according to him, explained a glorious and unprecedented victory of Skanderbeg and the Albanians.

It is understandable that these were the means of propaganda and morale of the time which our Hero knew how to use and used efficiently, knowing quite well the morale, mentality, culture and religious beliefs of the Albanian population of that time; the thing that sophisticated propaganda machines use even today in case of war but also peace in the modern world.

Of course, an attentive and careful study under this point of view, of the documentary and archival material dedicated to the work and life of Skanderbeg would reveal and make evident this unknown but very important side of the work and dimensions of the strategist, many cases of special interest for Hero's masterful work with information and the information network would come to light, the application of unique and surprising methods and tools, which left a mark and influenced the destiny of the battles of this master of frontal and partisan warfare, which thus made him one of the most famous generals in the history of medieval

³² Giammaria Biemmi; "Istoria di Georggio Castrioto Scabder – begh", Brescia, Giam Batista Bossino, 1742.

wars and subject of study in many military academies, of the western and eastern world, until modern times.

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Gjon BERISHA

THE RELATIONS OF GJERGJ II STRAZIMIR BALSHA WITH THE REPUBLIC OF RAGUSA

Trade, customs and insurance of commercial activity, are key in the history of relations among the Albanian Balsha family, in particular Gjergj II Strazimir, and the commercial Republic of Ragusa from the end of the XIV century to the beginning of the XV century. On the Dalmatian coast of the Adriatic Sea, Ragusa, the city of Dubrovnik today, was the most important neighbor bordering the holdings of the Balshaj families. Both had mutual substantial interests in mutual cooperation.

On the other hand, for the Republic of Ragusa the Principality of Balshaj represented the closest area of activities, its most important commercial interests and the potential of expanding commercial activity on the Albanian coast. Our aim in this study is to present the determining role of trade on the diplomatic relations in the region, focusing in particular on its role on the communication between Gjergj II Strazimir Balsha and Ragusa from the time he came to power in 1385, until his death in 1403.

Less than half a year after coming to power as head of the principality, to aid these relations, Gjergj II issued a charter in favor of the Ragusans, which confirmed the friendship and commercial freedoms. The structure of trade is not the purpose of this paper, so it will not be the subject of our discussion. A special research is needed on this subject.

The political events in the Southern Adriatic that took place from the end of the 14th century to the beginning of the 15th century, provide the context for the historical relations among the Balshaj Family and Ragusa. With some minor fluctuations, these relations, always under the influence of commercial interests, were characterized as quite good, as evidenced by numerous documents.

Historiographical data on the political relations between the Balshaj Principality, specifically the Albanian Balsha family, and Ragusa during the given period have not been sufficiently treated on separate studies.

On this topic there are numerous published¹ or unpublished materials by the State Archives in Dubrovnik (*Reformationes, Lettere e commissioni di Levante dhe Diversa Cancellariae*).² So far some synthetic works and articles have been published which have dealt with only some of the general issues targeting more the economic relations of the Balsha family³, but not specifically the economic relations among Gjergj II Strazimir and the city of Ragusa. In general, in the Albanian historiography, the relations of medieval Albania and the Balsha princes with the Republic of Venice have a special place.⁴

¹Published: Mihailo J. Dinić, *Odluke veća Dubrovačke republike II*, Beograd: SANU, 1964; Nella Lonza & Zdravko Šundrica, *Odluke dubrovačkih vijeća 1390-1392*, Zagreb-Dubrovnik: 2005; Nella Lonza, *Odluke dubrovačkih vijeća 1395-1397*, Zagreb-Dubrovnik: HAZU 2011; *Burime të zgjedhura për historinë e Shqipërisë*, vol. II (VIII-XV centuries), prepared by A. Buda, I. Zamputi, K. Frashëri, P. Pepo, Tirana State University, Institute of History and Linguistics, Tirana: 1962.

²Not published, in: *Hrvatska-Državni arhiv u Dubrovniku (HR-DADU), Reformationes*, vol. XXIV-XXXI; HR-DADU, *Lettere e commissioni di Levante*, vol.I-IV; HR-DADU, *Diversa Cancellariae*, vol. XXVI-XXXIV; and the *charters of Balshajs* in: HR-DADU, Vienna inventory (*fondi Beč*).

³One of the most fundamental works on the history of the great Arberian Balsha family of princes, is the work of the scholar from Kotor: Giuseppe Gelcich, *La Zedda e la dinastia dei Balšidi: studi storici documentati*, Spalato: Tip. Sociale Spalatina G.Laghi, 1899. This work was also published in Albanian a few years by the title: Giuseppe Gelcich, *Zeta dhe Dinastia e Balshajve*, translated by Laura Leka, Tiranë: SHB "55", 2009. Some other studies that have indirectly dealt with this issue have been made by Serbian and Croatian authors, such as: Jorjo Tadić, *Promet putnika u starom Dubrovniku*, Dubrovnik: Turističkog saveza u Dubrovniku, 1939; *Istorija Crne Gore II/2* (red. Ćirković, S., Božić, I., Bogdanović, D. & V. Đurić), Titograd: 1970; Ivan Božić, *Nemirno Pomorje XV veka*, Beograd: Srpska književna zadruga, 1979; Vinko Foretić, *Povijest Dubrovnika do 1808. Deo I, Od osnutka do 1526*, Zagreb: Nakladni zavod MH, 1980; Dušanka Dinić-Knežević, "Zetski primorski gradovi u svetlu dubrovačkih izvora", në *Srednjovjekovna istorija Crne Gore kao polje istraživanja: bornik radova sa okruglog stola Istorijeskog Instituta*, vol. 3, Podgorica: Istorijiski Institut Crne Gore, 1999; Marijan Premović, "Trgovački odnosi Zete i Dubrovnika od 1385. do 1403. godine", në *Acta Histriae* Vol. 26, Issue 3, Koper: 2018, p. 889-890.

⁴Luan Malltezi, *Qytetet e bregdetit shqiptar gjatë sundimit venedikas: 1392-1478 (aspekte të jetës së tyre)*, Akademia e Shkencave e RPS të Shqipërisë, Instituti i Historisë, Tirana: 1988; Luan Malltezi, "Shkaqet e luftës së Balshës III kundër Republikës së Venedikut në 20 vjetët e parë të shek. XV", in *Studime Historike*, no. 2, Tirana: 1980; Injac Zamputi, "Autonomia e qyteteve shqiptare të principatës së Balshajve dhe pasojat negative të pushtimit venedikas: fundi i shek. XIV- fillimi i shek.XV", in *Studime Historike*, no. 3, Tirana: 1980; and the more in-depth research monograph: Pranvera Bogdani, *Balshajt: Lufta e principatës së Balshajve dhe sundimetarëve të tjerë shqiptarë kundër Venedikut në 20 vjetët e parë të shekullit XV*, The Academy of Albanian Studies, Institute of History, Tirana: 2018.

Therefore, this study is an attempt to analyze and expand the existing data based on the resources of the Dubrovnik State Archive and relevant literature.

At the beginning of the 1470s, upon its expansion, the Balshaj Principality became one of the most powerful feudal states in the Albanian territories. After the conquest of Ulcinj, Bar, Shkodra, and Shirgji pier, and the eventual capture of Budva in 1367, the Balshajs began to control the activity of foreign traders across the Adriatic, including the activity of the Ragusans.⁵

The empowerment of the Balshajs and their foreign policy with Venice, and with Nikola Altomanovic in the north and other neighbors, in time attracted the attention of the Ragusans, who were closely following these developments. After making sure that this empowerment was not going against the interests of the Ragusa people⁶, Ragusa tried to attract and have the Balshajs defend its commercial interests, by giving to the three ruling brothers the Ragusa citizenship in 1361⁷. Ragusa became even more interested in the Balshajs, especially after Nikola Altomanovic was defeated by a new alliance, formed in the meantime by the Bosnian feudal lord Tvrtko I and Serbian ruler Lazar Hrebeljanović. They managed to drive Nikolla out of the coastal lands and reach the borders of Ragusa and Balshaj Principality. Under those circumstances Ragusa hastened to take advantage of the friendship with the Balshajs. In 1373, Gjergj I Balsha, who had now become head of the family after the death of Strazimir (1372), went to Ragusa and there he was granted rule over three Dalmatian provinces: Trebinje, Konavlje and Dračevica, which lay to the north of Kotor and very close to Ragusa.⁸ Gjergj I assured the people of Ragusa of his friendship and alliance with a solemn act signed in the cathedral of Ragusa, Santa Maria Maggiore, on November 30, 1374.⁹

⁵P. Bogdani, *Balshajt: Lufta e principatës së Balshajve ...*, p. 48.

⁶G. Gelcich, *La Zedda e la dinastia dei Balšidi ...*, p. 104.

⁷Historia e Popullit Shqiptar, vol. I, Akademia e Shkencave të Shqipërisë, Instituti i Historisë, Tiranë: Toena, 2002, p. 301.

⁸Konstantin Jireček, *Die Handelsstrassen und Bergwerke von Serbien und Bosnien während des Mittelalters*, Prag: Verlag, 1879, p. 22-23; *Acta et diplomata res Albaniae mediae aetatis illustrantia*, college Tholloczy, L.- Jiriček, C. - Sufflay, E., vol.II, Vindobonae MCMXVIII, doc. no. 372. (*Acta Albaniae II*); G. Gelcich, *La Zedda e la dinastia dei Balšidi ...*, p. 99, 105; P. Bogdani, *Balshajt: Lufta e principatës së Balshajve ...*, p. 49.

⁹G. Gelcich, *La Zedda e la dinastia dei Balšidi ...*, p. 105.

In the charter issued in 1373, Gjergj Balsha I had promised to help and protect the Ragusans with all his might. This was an indication of the extent of the assistance he could give them. If his friendship were to suffice to provide Ragusa with protection against the attacks or strikes from Nikola Altomanovic, then the common enemies to be guarded against were Venice, the municipality of Kotor and Tvrtko, the Ban of Bosnia. By this agreement, Gjergj Balsha I saw the possibility of extending his principality in the given circumstances, himself driven not so much by economic interests, which were reduced to an annual tribute, but from the strategic opportunity to provide the northern borders of the principality with a more thorough protection from the Bosnian Serbian threat.¹⁰

The rivalry between Ragusa and Venice, which had been dominant in Dalmatia since the beginning of the 13th century, ended in 1358 with the triumph of the Hungarian armies. The peace treaty with Venice was signed in Zadar, in May 1358. This treaty made a positive turn in the history of the Republic of Ragusa. Since all the cities of Dalmatia had recognized the Hungarian crown, Venice renounced its claims to "all of Dalmatia from the middle of the Kvarner to the borders of Durrës" ("... toti Dalmacie a medietate scilicet Quarnarii usque ad confines Duracii...").

By this time, the Venetians had lost Dalmatia and Ragusa. Although the Dalmatian cities and the coast were occupied by the Hungarians, Ragusa was able to maintain its independence under the protection of Hungary. This agreement confirmed Ragusa as part of the Hungarian-Croatian Kingdom. With this status, Ragusa managed to strengthen its position and develop maritime trade. Another important change that ensued from the events of 1358 was the number of city ports in Ragusa. As soon as the last Venetian navigation element left Ragusa, the government ordered the four ports to merge into a single port. This eventually gave the city a greater status, which had slowly grown from a medieval municipality (Municipality of Ragusa) to a sovereign republic

¹⁰P. Bogdani, *Balshajt: Lufta e principatës së Balshajve ...*, p. 50.

(Republic of Ragusa) and had started to build independently relations of foreign policy with regional rulers,¹¹ including the Balshajs.¹²

The Senate, composed of thirty to forty prominent nobles, was undoubtedly more important than the city councils with regard to politics in Ragusa and its international relations.

The Republic of St. Blaise was now free from the Venetian navigation restrictions. Although this did not bring a great momentum to Ragusa maritime trade, the removal of the barriers imposed by Venice undoubtedly opened up new opportunities. One such opportunity came in 1373, when the Ragusans received from the Pope a limited license to trade with "infidels" in Egypt and Syria.

Obtaining the papal permit, with all its limitations, was a considerable success for Ragusa traders due to the wealth of the foreign market and high value of goods that could be imported from there. This also evidenced the greatly increased ability of Ragusa to navigate distant lands, a fact further confirmed by the numerous permits given to individual Ragusa merchants from the Holy See during 1370-1380 to sail in the lands of the "infidels".¹³

It is important to underline the coincidence of this new access of Ragusa to the sea with the beginning of the problems in the Balkan Peninsula. The situation in this area began to change rapidly for two main reasons: the sudden death of Stefan Dusan in 1355 and the beginning of the penetration of the Ottoman Turks into Europe. At this time, the Balsha family was on good terms with the citizens of Ragusa, as evidenced by the numerous charters of the Balsha brothers¹⁴: the charters of Strazimir, Gjergj I and Balsha II, on January 17 and June 27, 1368; the charter of Gjergj I Balsha on November 30, 1373¹⁵ and May 30 (considered to originate during 1374-1376)¹⁶ the charter of Balsh II on

¹¹Bariša Krekić, *Dubrovnik in the 14th and 15th centuries: A City Between East and West*, Oklahoma: University of Oklahoma Press, 1972, p. 39, 72-73; Zdenka Janeković-Römer, *Višegradski ugovor temelj Dubrovačke Republike*, Zagreb: Golden marketing, 2003, p. 67.

¹²V. Foretić, *Povijest Dubrovnika...*, p. 152-158.

¹³B. Krekić, *Dubrovnik in the 14th and 15th centuries...*, p. 42-43.

¹⁴HR-DADU, fondi *Beč*, no.1018; DAD, *Prilozi arhivskim serijama* IVa, 50; DAD, *Diversa Cancellariae*, vol.XXI, fol.57r.

¹⁵HR-DADU, fondi *Beč*, no.1022.

¹⁶*Ibid*, no.1042.

November 20, 1379¹⁷ and April 24, 1385,¹⁸ the charter of Gjergj II on January 27, 1386,¹⁹ issued for the city of Saint Blaise.

At the time of its greatest empowerment and expansion, the Balshaj state had to face with the increasing attacks of the Ottoman invaders. In the autumn of 1385, an Ottoman army, under the command of Hajredin Pasha, managed to penetrate the southern borders of Balshajs while heading to Vlora. In the battle that took place in Savër, the forces of Balsha II suffered a loss, and he himself fell on the battlefield. Balsha II's grandson, Gjergj II Strazimir Balsha, managed to save from the former state a part of the possessions of Zeta. The efforts of Gjergj II, at the beginning of his reign, to strengthen ties with the Republic of Venice met with the indifference of the latter. Consequently, the Albanian prince drew closer to the neighboring Republic of Ragusa.²⁰

From the beginning of his rise to power, Gjergj II Strazimir Balsha, in order to strengthen his rule and to continue the policy of his predecessors, as a young and diligent gentleman contacted the Republic of Ragusa asking for financial assistance in the form of a loan. On December 5, 1385, Ragusa decided not to approve the loan, perhaps not to risk his own capital.²¹ But since it was the first gesture of honor and to make the rejection easier for the new lord of Zeta, they decided to send him a gift of 500 ducats. The gift in question consisted of a bright red cloth, four pieces of fine cloth from Florence and other pieces of common cloth.

¹⁷*Ibid*, no.1025.

¹⁸*Ibid*, no.1027; Franc Miklosich, *Monumenta Serbica spectantiam historiam Serbice, Bosiae, Regusii*, Vienne: Apud Guilelmum Braumülle, 1858, p. 177, 183-186, 193, 202-203; Stojan Novaković, *Zakonski spomenici srpskih država srednjega veka*, Beograd: Štampano u Državnoj štampariji kraljevine Srbije, 1912, p. 189-190, 192, 196-198; Tadija Smičiklas, *Diplomatički zbornik Kraljevine Hrvatske, Dalmacije i Slavonije*, sv. XIV, *Listine godina 1367-1373, Codex diplomaticus Regni Croatiae, Dalmatiae et Slavoniae*, Zagreb: JAZU, 1916, p. 110, 554; Ljubomir Stojanović, *Stare srpske povelje i pisma*. Knj. I, Dubrovnik i susedi njegovi. Deo 1, Beograd: SKA, 1929, p. 104-107, 109-110; Božidar Šekularac, *Dukljansko-zetske povelje*, Titograd: 1987, p. 159-173.

¹⁹HR-DADU, *Beč fund*, no.1028.

²⁰*Historia e Popullit Shqiptar ...*, vol. I, p. 304.

²¹“*Die V decembris 1385 - Prima pars est de excusando nos ambassiatoribus d. Georgii de Balsa de imprestito pro sui parte postulato. Secunda pars de respondendo per nostros ambassiatores ellectos ad dictum dominum*”, HR-DADU, *Reformationes*, vol. XXVI (1384-1386), fol.52r; G. Gelcich, *La Zedda e la dinastia dei Balšidi ...*, p.151.

They would have to go to Ragusa as a family in a well-equipped war brigantine (brighintino).²² The Ragusa authorities decided to give these gifts during a state ceremony, which was usually reserved only for crowned rulers. Gifts as a diplomatic message showed respect, trust, love, friendship and peace.²³ The Florentine cloth was of a very high quality and very much demanded in the market of that time. These fabrics matched the needs of Mr. Zeta, his interests and tendencies. The type of gift, its value, and the manner of delivery are very important to understand Ragusa's diplomatic nonverbal communication, and such a gift is in fact a meaningful symbol.²⁴ By the end of May 1388, the Senate of Ragusa decided to send to the Bosnian ruler, Tvërtko I, a gift of fabrics (2 glowing fabrics and 2 thin fabrics from Florence).²⁵ If we compare this gift with the value of the fabrics given to Gjergj II, we see that the value of the gift for Tvërtko was much smaller, which means that Ragusa tailored the gifts according to its own interests and political mission.²⁶

The gift was to be delivered by the representatives who would facilitate the negotiations and enable the achievement of the mission goals. The change of the leadership of Zeta required the confirmation of previous engagements. Ragusa was seeking a new charter as soon as possible, which would reconfirm all of the free trade privileges and guarantees previously obtained from the predecessors of Gjergj II Strazimiri.²⁷

²²“*Die VII mensis decembris 1385 - Prima Prima pars est de emendo pro dictis VC duc. pro presentando dicto d. Georgio unam pecciam iscarleti de grana fini et ipeccias IIII panni fini de Cumis vel de Florencia et totum residuum de aliis pannis bonis circha duc. XXX pro peccia. [...]* Prima pars est quod nostri ambassiatores ituri ad d. Georgium predictum mittantur cum una barcha bona in bandis et cum alia sine bandis. Secunda pars quod mittantur cum brighintino armato cum I remo pro quolibet bancho. Captum per XI.”, HR-DADU, *Reformationes*, vol. XXVI (1384-1386), fol.52v; 55r.

²³Zdravko Šundrica, *Tajna kutija Dubrovačkog arhiva I. dio*, Zagreb-Dubrovnik: HAZU, 2008, p. 143.

²⁴Dušanika Dinić-Knežević, *Tkanine u privredi srednjovekovnog Dubrovnika*, Beograd: SANU, 1982, p. 63.

²⁵“*Die XXVII maii 1388 ... de donando d. regi Bosne per nostrum ambassiatores pecias II pani de grana et II de panno fino florentino*”, HR-DADU, *Reformationes*, vol. XXVII (1386-1388), fol.126v-127r.

²⁶Valentina Zovko, “Diplomatski ceremonijal – Važan oblik komunikacije u pregovorima oko proširenja dubrovačkih granica”, nê *Radovi za povijesne znanosti HAZU u Zadru*, sv. 55, Zadar: 2013, p. 20.

²⁷HR-DADU, *Reformationes*, vol. XXVI (1384-1386), fol.55r; G. Gelcich, *La Zedda e la dinastia dei Balšidi ...*, p. 151-152.

In this context, on January 13, 1386, Ambassadors Symon de Bona and Jacomo de Gondola departed from the port of Ragusa. The Ragusa delegation stayed for a month in the court of Gjergj II Strazimir Balsha, and returned to Ragusa on February 11 of the same year,²⁸ only after securing rights to tax exemptions: such as full exemption from customs duties in Danja, free export of cereals against a completely insignificant tax, including all rights they had enjoyed until then. The length of stay and the results of the mission were considered by the Ragusans to be the most fortunate of events, also evidenced in the document. In appreciation, the official of the Senate of Ragusa recorded this event as special news on the first page of the Book of the Council (Reformationes), even though the book was almost complete.²⁹

Given that the stay of the delegation in the Balshaj court was relatively long, the protocol of the Ragusa diplomats was specified in detail. All details were discussed in advance and if there was any change by chance, the delegates could not act at their discretion but had to seek new instructions. However, the policy of the diplomats of the Republic of Saint Blaise, during their visits, was in the service of their commercial interests. The available documents do not fully inform us of the content and talks between the ruler of Zeta, Gjergji II, and the envoys of Ragusa. In addition to gifts, the representatives of Ragusa had the task of choosing words of kindness for the interlocutor. During the talks, the envoys had to make efforts to win and create a favorable atmosphere that would stimulate negotiations. They knew well what they would say and the manner they would express themselves at the first public meeting. They were obliged to ask him about his health only if he was ill.

One of the most important things during the talks was to highlight the good relations and friendships with the other predecessors and relatives.³⁰

Based on the memorable impressions of the ambassadors it can be thought that they too were subjects of a magnificent hospitality by the

²⁸“*Die 14 Januari Ser Symon de Bona, ser Jacomus de Gondola fuerunt ad D[ominum] Georgii de Balsa et optinuerunt poveglias quas portaverunt cum bullis eiusdem. Redierunt die XI feb[ruarii] eiusdem anni*”, HR-DADU, *Reformationes*, vol.XXVI (1384-1386), fol.1r; 58r; G. Gelcich, *La Zedda e la dinastia dei Balšidi ...*, p. 152.

²⁹Cfr.: HR-DADU, *Reformationes*, vol.XXVI (1384-1386), fol.1r.

³⁰Zdenka Janeković Römer, “O poslaničkoj službi i diplomatskom protokolu Dubrovačke Republike u XV. Stoljeću”, në *Zbornik Diplomatske akademije*, br.4, Zagreb: 1999, p. 196-199.

new lord of Zeta. In the charter of January 27, 1386, unlike his predecessors, who held the simple title Lord of Zeta or similar titles, and despite not managing well the territories, Gjergj II assigned himself more solemnly a more important title: "The believer in Christ and the absolute lord of all Zeta and coastal lands." In Ragusa, he was simply called the lord of Ulcinj, and the honorary ceremony organized by the ambassadors of Ragusa was a diplomatic protocol aimed at securing commercial rights, which they obtained in the end.³¹

As such, the diplomatic mission of the Ragusan ambassadors in the court of Gjergj II Strazimir Balsha went well and ended successfully. As a result, on January 27, 1386, in Shkodra, Gjergj II issued a charter³² for the citizens of Ragusa, through which he confirmed the friendship and freedom of free trade. This charter provided the Ragusans with benefits that were much broader and even more favorable than the previous ones. In token of good relations between him and Ragusa, Gjergj II did not receive only gifts. Fabrics were one of Ragusa's important export products. Several times expensive fabrics were sent to Zeta as a gift to Gjergj II Strazimir. The Small Council of Ragusa (July 8, 1389)³³, decided to give Gjergj II a bright red cloth and 2 pieces of fine cloth. The Grand Council in Dubrovnik decided on November 31 and December 1, 1395, to send to lord of Zeta a gift of various fabrics, on the occasion of the wedding of his niece.³⁴

The charters of 1385 and 1386 settled also the issue of the Ragusan ships which could be damaged in the territory controlled by the Balshajs. The first charter stated briefly that no one in the territory should take anything or disturb in any way the damaged [wrecked] ships of Ragusa.³⁵ Unlike the previous charters of the Balshajs, the charter of 1386 has two

³¹ G. Gelcich, *La Zedda e la dinastia dei Balšidi* ..., p. 153.

³²HR-DADU, fondi *Beč*, no.1028. This charter was published several times: P. Miklosich, *Monumenta Serbica*..., p. 203-204; S. Novaković, *Zakonski spomenici*..., p. 198-200; LJ. Stojanović, *Stare srpske povelje i pisma*..., p. 110-111; B. Šekularac, *Dukljansko*..., p. 173-177.

³³Dinić-Knežević, *Tkanine u privredi*..., p. 63.

³⁴ "Die ultimo octobris. In ultrascripto maiori consilio, ballote ... est de faciendo dona domino Iure Strazimerii pro sponsallibus que est facturus de quadam nepte sua et de mittendo dicto Iure eius filium per brigantium nostrum minorem", "... est de faciendo dona domino Georgio Strazimerii pro sponsalibus neptis quam modo maritat, videlicet de media peççia panni de schirlato, de media peccia panni de grana et de duabus fodris martirum vel fuinarum", HR-DADU, *Reformationes*, vol.XXX (1395-1397), fol. 116r.

³⁵HR-DADU, fondi *Beč*, no.1027; S. Novaković, *Zakonski spomenici*..., p. 197-198.

new provisions expanding Ragusa's freedoms of trade. The first provided that the authorities of the Lord of Zeta would not cause any harm both to them or to the goods of the Ragusan ships sailing along the Zeta coast, and provided guarantees for the safety of goods. If someone happened to take or damage the goods, the damages would be compensated by the treasury of Gjergj II. The second provision applied to salt trade.

Salt was an extremely important product for the trade of the Republic of Saint Blaise. It was essential for feeding people, animals, preserving meat, fish and processing meat products. As an essential product, it generated considerable incomes for the citizens of Ragusa. Zeta was mainly a livestock country and the saltworks on the coast provided the salt that it needed. In the territories between Neretva and Buna salt trade was mainly concentrated in four markets (Drijevo, Dubrovnik, Kotor and St. Sergius). The Ragusans disagreed with the existence of numerous salt markets, maintaining a monopoly on this product. Under this provision, Gjergj II vowed to favor the salt market by not allowing salt to be sold in any other area except for the ones mentioned.³⁶ Thus, the "old love" between the citizens of Balshajs and Ragusa pledged in the charter of 1385 by Balsha II, was reasserted by Gjergj II in the charter of 1386.

A considerable amount of trade among Ragusa, Kosovo and other regions deeper in the territory took place in the territories owned by the Balshajs. In this regard, the customs in Danja was an important landmark.³⁷

It was located near the end of the Drini River, an intersection of roads from Shkodra and Lezha leading to Prizren, and further to Kosovo and Skopje. Therefore, the issue of the customs in Danja was a very important point for the relations between the Balshajs and Ragusa. The charter of January 17, 1368 was precisely because of the customs the Balshajs had established in Danja. Other sources show that the Balshajs, in addition to the existing obligations for goods transported by sea, tried to impose customs duties on goods transported by land.³⁸

³⁶HR-DADU, fondi *Beč*, no.1028; S. Novaković, *Zakonski spomenici...*, p. 198; L. Stojanović, *Stare srpske povelje i pisma ...*, p. 63, 95.

³⁷The Market of Danja was under the rule of the Balshajs until the end of 1392, and then passed under Ottoman rule from 1393 to 1395. George II Strazimir Balsha managed to liberate St. Shirgj from the Ottomans, but he did not have the strength to hold it and handed it over to the Venetians.

³⁸In 1377, the Ragusans claimed that customs duties paid in Danja in the past applied only to goods transported by ship. "*Primieramente sovra lo fatto delle usance antiche, chi vol saver, il*

In the charter of 1373, Gjergj I promised the Ragusans that he would not impose customs duties which did not exist during the time of Stefan Dušan, in exchange for a traditional annual tribute (tribute for the Day of St. Demetrius) as long as he would rule over the coastal region near Ragusa.³⁹ The city of Kotor did also give such a tribute to the Balshajs. In the charter of November 20, 1379, Balsha II, among others, regulated the payment of custom duties and confirmed the status they enjoyed under his brother, Gjergj I. This act stipulated that traders in Ragusa could export cereals, but at the same time, they had to pay a customs tax which previously was in the amount of two dinars per bag, and “pay in Danja and Kriva Reka as much as they paid when My brother, Lord Gjergj, was alive.”⁴⁰ The charter of 1385 stipulated that the Ragusan merchants pay nothing in Danja, neither custom duties, nor taxes for ships, as they did not pay in the time of Stefan Dušan and Gjergj I. This exemption from customs duties was reconfirmed in the charter of 1386, in which Gjergj II ordered that “customs duties be paid nor in Danja, neither in any other area of my territories. They should continue to be as they were in the time of Dusan⁴¹”.

The very geographical position of the Balshaj state and the importance of the customs in Danja, and of the other customs, forced the Ragusan authorities to constantly seek confirmation of the privileges they had in association with them.

It appears that the exemption from customs duties was regulated in reciprocity. By agreement, the Balsha Lords and their associates did not pay customs in Ragusa. Although trade and diplomatic relations were good and successful, nevertheless, at certain periods of time these relations diminished and fluctuated. Due to regional conflicts and war, the epidemic of plague, the establishment of new customs and attacks on Ragusa traders, small trade disruptions occurred especially in 1395, 1396, 1397 and 1403. According to the records, robbery of traders and their goods was the most common phenomenon. In 1386, the Ragusans

debi dir che al Dangno, quando se parecava cum ladia, se pagava grosso uno per zascuna salma, et quando se trasia senca ladia non se pagava nienti”, *Istorija Crne Gore* II/2..., p. 46.

³⁹HR-DADU, fondi *Beč*, no.1022; S. Novaković, *Zakonski spomenici...*, p. 192.

⁴⁰HR-DADU, fondi *Beč*, no.1025; S. Novaković, *Zakonski spomenici...*, p. 196.

⁴¹HR-DADU, fondi *Beč*, no.1028; S. Novaković, *Zakonski spomenici...*, p. 198; L. Stojanović, *Stare srpske povelje i pisma...*, p. 63, 95.

complained to Gjergj II that his merchants robbed the grain from their ship.⁴² A clash took place again sometime before April 1396. The merchants of Ragusa were concerned, as they had been robbed by the men of Gjergj II. Immediately after this event, misunderstandings arose regarding some customs duties on butter which was being sold in Ragusa and which was owned by the Lord Zeta. In their letter on April 7, 1396, the Ragusans tried to convince Gjergj II that they had never charged any taxes on him or his citizens. In response to the customs duties on butter, the associates of Gjergj, on 12 May 1396, confiscated again the goods of the Ragusan merchants on the grounds of customs duties.⁴³ On November 28 of the same year, the Ragusa Senate discussed the case.⁴⁴

In February 1397, the Ragusa authorities again asked Gjergj II to abolish the illegal collection of customs duties.⁴⁵ One month later, they again protested to the lord of Zeta over the payment of customs duties for oil.⁴⁶ The dispute ended only in December 1398, when Ragusa merchants were allowed to sell their goods in the markets of Zeta. The customs were active in 1403. After the death of Gjergj II, on April 18, the representatives of Ragusa, who visited to give condolences, took the opportunity to ask Helena to abolish the newly established customs in Ulcinj.⁴⁷

As mentioned above, the spread of epidemics, especially plague, stagnated the commercial activities and the relations between the Balshajs and Ragusa. In times of epidemics, the surveillance of foreigners visiting the Republic of St. Blaise became more pronounced. To prevent the spread of the plague, the Republic of Ragusa banned several times its traders from going to Zeta. The Small Council, on April 1, 1391, decided not to allow ship owners and their crew, citizens,

⁴²“*Die ultimo martii...de conquerendo comuni Dulcinii et domino Georgio de ingrato (?) modo servato per Dulcinatos in accipiendo frumentum nostro navigio quod ibi fuit frumento honusto.*”, HR-DADU, *Reformationes*, vol.XXVI (1384-1386), fol.64r; *Acta Albaniae II*, doc. no.394.

⁴³ *Ibid*, no. 554.

⁴⁴ “*In minori consilio more sollito congregato captum fuit quod omnes illi qui habuerunt mercancias et res in garavano, cui garavano fuit ablata per vim gabella contra ordines et pacta etc. per dominum Georgium Strazimerii, et de qua gabella facta est querella et eorum propinqui non possint interesse un iudicio determinationibus fiendis super dicta querella*”, HR-DADU, *Reformationes*, vol.XXX (1395-1397), fol.45r.

⁴⁵L. Stojanović, *Stare srpske povelje i pisma ...*, p. 112-114.

⁴⁶*Acta Albaniae II...*, doc. no. 584.

⁴⁷HR-DADU, *Lettere e commissioni di Levante*, vol. IV (1403-1410), fol.12r.

believers or anyone else, to go to Budva or Ulcinj because of the plague, which was said to have spread in those places. The ordinance also prohibited entry into Ragusa, for all those wishing to come to the city from the areas of Budva and Ulcinj. The document also stated that violators of this ordinance would be fined up to 100 ducats.⁴⁸

On June 7, 1392, the Republic forbade entry of traders from Ulcinj and other places where the plague had spread.⁴⁹ Again, on June 11, the Small Council issued a decision which stipulated that all persons coming from Ulcinj or other countries affected by the deadly plague, must be sent to the island of Malonto (port and settlement south of Cavtat), and be warned that they cannot reside for at least one month and at a distance closer than 1 mile in any part of the Ragusa district, except for Melita (Mljet).⁵⁰ In the first half of September of the same year, Matheus de Georgio and his brother Nalchus, with the guidance of the City Council, went to Ulcinj, with the mission of informing the Senate of the city of Saint Blaise on the presence of the plague.⁵¹ Upon their return on

⁴⁸ “*Kalendis aprilis MCCCCLXXXI... Ser Nicolao de Mençe, ser Petro de Saracha et ser Marino Martoli de Bucignolo, officialibus ad procedendum et providendum contra venientes de locis pestiferis in minori consilio more solito ad sonum campane congregato, ex auctoritate hodie habita a maiori consilio, datum fuit arbitrium et libera auctoritas vetandi quibuscumque de districtu Ragusii patronis, marinariis barcharum et aliis quibuscumque hominibus et personis, cuiusvis condicionis existant, quod non vadant nec adhere presummant modo aliquo ad loca aliqua vel contratas positas a Budva usque Dulcinium propter pestem que dicitur esse in illis locis et partibus, et similiter vetandi quibuscumque et undecumque sint venientibus de dictis partibus et locis, quod non intrent in Ragusio, et pro dicto eorum officio exercendo ponendi penam et penas quibuscumque eis videbitur pro observatione predictorum a ducatis centum infra pro singulo cui aliquid preceperint occaxione dicti officii et singulla vice.*”, HR-DADU, *Reformationes*, vol. XXIX (1390- 1392), fol.13v; Lonza & Šundrica, *Odluke dubrovačkih vijeća 1390-1392...*, p. 153.

⁴⁹ “*...Ulcinj et ad alia loca ubi sit pestis...*”, HR-DADU, *Diversa Cancellariae*, vol. XXX (1392-1394.), fol.112r.

⁵⁰ “*Die XI iunii in minori consilio additum fuit quod ubi supra datur terminus XV dierum, quod sit terminus unius mensis standi extra, et quod venientes de Dulcinio vel de aliis locis pestiferis non possint stare a Malonto citra I milliario versus ponentem in aliquo loco per totum districtum Ragusii, includendo etiam Melitam in districtu predicto.*”, HR-DADU, *Reformationes*, vol. XXIX (1390-1392), fol.29v.

⁵¹ “*Ser Matheo de Georgio in dicto minori consilio facta et data fuit gracia et licencia quod possit ire Dolzignum, ita tamen quod ibidem non vigeat pestis, et quod si intrabit Dolzignum et ibidem esset pestis ... Ser Matheo de Georgio seu ser Nalcho eius fratri facta fuit gracia quod possint ire Dolzignum et ibidem in terram descendere, verum si mortalitas ibi non sit, et si pur vellet descendere in terram et esset mortalitas ibidem, quod possit descendere, sed stet ille qui ex ipsis fratribus iverit per unum mensem extra Ragusium et districtum. Et in eius reversione defferatur sacramento ipsi ser Matheo vel ipsi ser Nalcho, videlicet quis eorum iverit, an pestis*

September 26, 1392, they informed that the city of Ulcinj was in a death grip because of the plague.⁵²

During 1386 and 1388 the Ottoman armies commanded by Shahin Bey, undertook several military campaigns against Bosnia. Citizens of Gjergj II Strazimir participated also in these expeditions supporting the Ottomans, because of the hostilities they had with the Bosnian king Tvërtko. The news given in October 1386 of this expedition of the Turkish armies, caused fear in Ragusa as well. The Grand Council instructed the Senate and the Small Council to collect money from debtors or to sell some common goods in order to stop the Ottoman threat and send representatives to all countries. Immediately, Ragusa sent representatives to Tvërtko and Gjergj II. The Small Council elected two special officers to look after the defense of the city "provisores pro facto Turchorum" and two others to oversee the defense of the city of Stagno (near the city of Ragusa).⁵³

The Ragusa authorities wanted at all costs to avoid armed war by using diplomacy, negotiating with Gjergj II in order to eliminate the Ottoman threat. Within a short time, the Ragusans gathered a great deal of information from their merchants and envoys, so that they were convinced that Gjergj II had influence over the Ottomans, since he, at this time, was in alliance with them. On August 10, 1388, the Senate appointed priest Marino Bucignolo, resident of Ragusa, ambassador to Ulcinj.⁵⁴ For his part, Gjergj II Strazimir appointed Çani, son of Philip Barelli, ambassador to Ragusa. However, while the talks were being held, the Bosnians managed to defeat the Ottoman army near Trebinje and capture a considerable number of Albanians, citizens of Gjergj. They were not sold as slaves due to the intervention of the representative of

fuert in Dolzigno vel non, et de hoc stetur sacramento illius qui iverit ex ipsis fratribus. Et si non descenderet ibidem in terram, quod possit venire libere in Ragusium.", HR-DADU, *Reformationes*, vol.XXIX (1390-1392), fol.52v.

⁵² "Die XXVI septembris 1392. Suprascriptus ser Matheus fuit reversus a Dulzigno et se presentavit et iuravit ad sancta Dei evangelia corporaliter, tactis scripturis, quod in ipsa terra Dulzigni hodie non viget mortalitas". *Ibid.*

⁵³M. J. Dinić, *Odluke veća Dubrovačke ...*, II, p. 480; Ivan Božić, *Dubrovnik i Turska u XIV i XV veku*, Beograd: Naučna knjiga, 1952, p. 9.

⁵⁴"*Prima pars est de mittendo unum nuncium domini Georgio de Balsa pro facto Turchorum... est de mittendo dominum Marinum ad dictum dominum Georgium... est de dando arbitrim consilio minori faciendi commissionem domini Marini et expediendi ambaxiatam...*", HR-DADU, *Reformationes*, vol.XXVII (1386-1388), fol.85v.

Gjergj II in Ragusa.⁵⁵ On 22 August 1388, Chanino di Filippo Barelli advised the Ragusans, for their own good, to release the war refugees from Albania as soon as possible.⁵⁶ Apparently the mission of Çani had good results since on August 26, Ragusa influenced their release and decreed a ban on the sale of Albanians as slaves in its own country.⁵⁷ On the other hand, the mission of the representatives of Ragusa and Gjergj II, Marini and Çani, was also successful, which was a good opportunity to restore very good and special relations between the two countries. We notice that as early as September 5, 1388, the Ragusa authorities asked Gjergj II Strazimir to send to Ragusa a trusted representative to discuss about the movements of the Ottoman armies⁵⁸. Even though we do not have records as to what information the Ragusans received about the movements of the Ottoman armies, we can assume that the service of Gjergj II in favor of Ragusa was useful. We base this assumption on the fact that very soon we notice unexpected close relations between Gjergj II and the Ragusans. The ambassador of Gjergj II Strazimir, Çani Barelli, appeared in the Senate of Ragusa on October 12 of the same year, and was received with all honors reserved for high personalities. Upon his return to Ulcinj, he conveyed to his master the deep gratitude that the Ragusans had for the Balsha family for the endless honors they had enjoyed from them until then. The Republic of Saint Blaise was grateful to lord of Zeta for preventing the Ottoman commander Shahin from attacking Ragusa in 1388. As a token of gratitude, they granted him the highest right, the Ragusa citizenship. Gjergj II Strazimir Balsha received

⁵⁵ G. Gelcich, *La Zedda e la dinastia dei Balšidi ...*, p. 166.

⁵⁶ “*Die XXII augusti. Rogatorum ballota XIII. Prima pars est de presentando Çaninum filium Philippi Barelli, qui venit in ambaxiatorem pro bono et utilitare nostra tractanda super facto Turchorum, usque ad summam ducatorum XX*”, HR-DADU, *Reformationes*, vol.XXXVII (1386-1388), fol.87v; M. J. Dinić, *Odluke veća Dubrovačke ...*, II, p. 440; P. Bogdani, *Balshajt: Lufta e principatës së Balshajve ...*, p. 55. More on the mission and activity of Filippo Barelli in the court of Balsha family, refer to: Gjon Berisha, “Agjenti dhe tregtari Filip Barelli në oborrin e Balshajve: influenza e tij në gjysmën e dytë të shek.XIV”, in *Studime Historike*, no.1- 2, Tirana: 2018, p.35-54.

⁵⁷ “*Die XXVI augusti. Rogatorum ballota XV. Prima pars est de faciendi libere relaxari omnes Albanenses fugientes captos per nostros Ragusinos...quod non possint vendi Albanenses in ragusio vel district per alios*”, HR-DADU, *Reformationes*, vol.XXXVII (1386-1388), 87v-88r; G. Gelcich, *La Zedda e la dinastia dei Balšidi ...*, p. 168.

⁵⁸ HR-DADU, *Reformationes*, vol.XXXVII (1386-1388), fol.88v.

the Ragusan citizenship rights on October 15, 1388.⁵⁹ The citizenship that the Ragusa senate had given to Gjergj II, for special merits, was completely different from the citizenship given to some wealthy merchants or craftsmen. From its honorable citizens, in this case including Gjergj II Strazimiri, the government expected friendly support whenever needed, and in return, it provided housing as well as other services. With this act, Gjergj II and his descendants were given the opportunity to stay in the city whenever they wished. In case of danger he had to leave Zeta, he was also given a house equipped with all amenities, with the right to stay there at Ragusa's expense.⁶⁰

Indeed, since the middle of the XIV century, Ragusa, thanks to its development as a commercial republic, was having significant economic growth. As such it became attractive not only to vulnerable citizens inside its territories but also to people who wanted to achieve success. On the other hand, the city of Kotor was then affected by wars, changes of leadership (Hungary, Venice, Bosnia), blockades and internal disasters. For of these reasons, the people of Kotor were not in control of commercial activities, which were mainly conducted by the Ragusans. As a result, citizens from different parts of Albania and the coast of Zeta went to Ragusa.⁶¹ Citizens from Zeta and other parts of medieval Albania could gain the citizenship of Ragusa if they stayed for a certain period of time. In that case, they had to contribute to the well-being and prosperity of the city. Those who wanted to gain citizenship had the obligations to

⁵⁹ *“Magnificus dominus d. Georgius filius q. Stracimerii de Balsa dominus Gente etc. per d. rectorem ser Nicolaum de Gondula et suum Minus (sic) fuit acceptus et receptatus in honorabilem civem civitatis Ragusii, pro se et suis, infrascriptis conditionibus et pactis: primo, quod dictus magnificus dominus sit et esse debeat obligatus omnibus legibus, statutis, ordinibus tam factis quam fiendis in posterum ac consuetudinibus, honoribus et honoribus ac prerogativis quibus utuntur et sunt obligati alii cives Ragusia ... prefatus dominus et sui heredes possint et valeant venire Ragusium cum suis familiis, eorum bonis et rebus et eorum famulis et ibidem tute stare et immorari et inde discedere et reverti ad omne suum beneplacitum voluntatis et suorum heredum totiens quociens eis placuerit et venire, stare, redire et recedere voluerint, semper procurando et intendendo et vacando bono statui dicte civitatis Ragusii.”*, HR-DADU, *Reformationes*, vol.XXVIII (1388-1390), fol.4r-5r; G. Gelcich, *La Zedda e la dinastia dei Balšidi ...*, p. 168-169; I. Božić, *Dubrovnik i Turska ...*, p. 9.

⁶⁰ G. Gelcich, *La Zedda e la dinastia dei Balšidi ...*, p. 169; Jovanka Mijušković, “Dodjeljivanje dubrovačkog građanstva u srednjem veku”, në *Glas SANU*, br.9, Beograd: 1961, p. 90-102; Zdenka Janeković-Römer, “Stranac u srednjovjekovnom Dubrovniku: između prihvaćenosti i odbačenosti”, në *Radovi Zavoda za hrvatsku povijest*, vol.26, no.1, Zagreb: 1993, p. 29-34.

⁶¹ Sima Ćirković, “Dubrovnik i zaleđe u srednjem veku”, në *Rabotnici, vojnici, duhovnici: društva srednjovjekovnog Balkana*, Beograd: Equilibrium, 1997, p. 50-51.

take their families with them, buy real estate and perform all the duties and obligations like all other citizens.

Based on numerous documents issued by the Small Council, we find that this right was acquired by business people who were apparently from arber Zeta. During 1385-1403, three groups of successful merchants received the Ragusa citizenship. The first group consisted of wealthy merchants, characterized by the fact that they had no more than one generation living and working in Ragusa. The second group consisted of wealthy families, some of whom owned property. This group of merchants was engaged in trade and was present in the social life of the Republic for generations. The third group was represented by merchants of very wealthy families who were part of the associations and corporations of wealthy merchants, ship owners, financiers/bankers, respected public servants (teachers, doctors and chancellors). In the first group that gained citizenship there were many Albanian citizens from Drishti, Tivari, Ulcinj, Shtoji, Rataci etc., such as Pjetër Suma from Drishti, Shtjefën Marini from Ulcinj, Niksha, Piero Cagn and Stano from Tivar, members of the Tani family from Ulcinj⁶² and many others.

The authorities of Ragusa, due to their friendship, tried to be close to Gjergj II even in the last moments of his life. As of December 1402 his health condition had deteriorated. A mortal weakness slowly gripped him, and in the second half of March 1403 Gjergj II Strazimir Balsha remained in bed. The Primate of Ulcinj⁶³ sought the help of Ragusa doctors (March 21, 1403), who, as usual, offered him their service immediately.⁶⁴ However, his condition did not give hope for life and the treatments given to him were in vain. Gjergj II Strazimir Balsha died in

⁶²Dušanka Dinić-Knežević, *Migracije stanovništva iz južnoslovenskih zemalja u Dubrovnik tokom srednjeg veka*, Novi Sad: SANU, Ogranak u Novom Sadu, Filozofski fakultet u Novom Sadu, Odsek za istoriju, 1995, p. 201; Zrinka Pešorda Vardić, *U predvorju vlasti. Dubrovački antunini u kasnom srednjem vijeku*, Zagreb-Dubrovnik: Zavod za povijesne znanosti HAZU u Dubrovniku i Hrvatski institut za povijest, 2012, p. 86-87; M. Premović, "Trgovački odnosi Zete"..., p. 889- 890.

⁶³HR-DADU, *Reformationes*, vol.XXXII (1402-1404), fol.21r.

⁶⁴ Similar help had been sought before: Balsha II had been ill for a full year, but had recovered completely at the beginning of 1383. He fell ill, with his wife, again in October and November 1383. The Ragusans, who had always been cordial with their dear friend, sent their doctor. (G. Gelcich, *La Zedda e la dinastia dei Balšidi ...*, 237). In January 1390, George II Strazimir Balsha had health problems and so he addressed Ragusa with a request to send him a doctor. The Small City Council decided to send him doctor Albert. (Lonza & Šundrica, *Odluke 1390-1392...*, p. 103.)

the first half of April 1403. His death was announced in Ragusa on April 18. On the same day, the Small Council issued an instruction and through its representatives, Nalko and Marin de Giorgi, who left for Ulcinj, sent a letter to the wife of the deceased, Helena. The envoys of the Republic of Ragusa expressed their condolences on behalf of the people of Ragusa to the widow on the death of Gjergj II Strazimir Balsha, stating that he was loved by all people and neighbors, and that the people of Ragusa had felt very sorry for the death of "their good and special friend" (*bono et special amigo*).⁶⁵

From the representatives of Ragusa, who were visiting to offer their condolences, we learn that the issue of customs was still present even in 1403. Once in Ulcinj on April 18, the delegation was given the opportunity to seek clarification on the issue of some taxes that Gjergj II Strazimir Balsha had just imposed on Ulcinj. Ragusa's envoys to Helena reminded her of the existence of those taxes, complained about their consequences and asked her to remove them as soon as possible.⁶⁶

In the end, we might conclude that the relations between the Principality of Balshaj and Ragusa in the period of the rule of Gjergj II Strazimir Balsha, despite some small disruptions, were intensified and were relatively good. Territorial proximity and trade relations contributed to mutual economic development and influenced the gradual development of political relations. In foreign policy, the Ragusan authorities were guided by the principle of seeking the previous privileges whenever a new ruler took office. They were interested in the Ragusa with a request to send him a doctor. The Small City Council decided to send him doctor Albert. (Lonza & Šundrica, *Odluke 1390-1392...*, p. 103.)

⁶⁵ "...*rectore di Ragusa cum lo nostro minor consiglio cometemo a vui Nalcho et Marino di Giorgii nobili citadini nostri, che in lo nome di dio siando vui ziunti a Dulcigno ala presentia dela magnifica dompna madopna Helena, relicta de la bona memoria de misser Georgii di Stracimiro presentade ad ella la letera di credenca che portade cum vui, quella salutadi per parte del regimento et zintili homini de Ragusio, cum quello saludo parera ala vostra descripcione (!) convegnesse et di poy seguiti como qui apreso se contene...a misser domene dio a clamare a sy la bona memoria de misser Gorgy signore vostro et nostro bono et speciale amigo, dela morte del quale condole et rincresse, quante dire se po...*" HR-DADU, *Reformationes*, vol.XXXII (1402-1404), fol.34v; *Acta Albaniae II...*, no.722; G. Gelcich, *La Zedda e la dinastia dei Balšidi ...*, 240.

⁶⁶HR-DADU, *Lettere e commissioni di Levante*, vol. IV (1403-1410), fol.12r-v; Gelcich, *Zeta...*, p. 242-243.

Ragusa with a request to send him a doctor. The Small City Council decided to send him doctor Albert. (Lonza & Šundrica, Odluke 1390-1392..., p. 103.) stability of mutual relations with the Balsha family and in the continuation of the previously acquired privileges under the goal of protecting their own trade. The main trade routes on the coast and further mainland passed only through the territories of the Balshaj Principality. Therefore, the Republic of Saint Blaise concluded with the Balsha family a series of agreements, which regulated the legal status of its citizens.

On the other hand, the Balshajs were interested to cooperate with Ragusa because of many reasons, such as the friendly treatment and support that the lord of the Balshaj Principality had received, both Gjergj II and his family, the shelter provided to his family when threatened by the expeditions of the Ottoman armies, the provision and repair of weapons, the citizenship status (in 1388) given by Ragusa, the provision of doctors and health care, loans, diplomatic assistance, mediation of conflicts with the Bosnian lord, Tvërtko I, the Lords of Kotor, Gjurash family, etc. Gifts were important during the diplomatic missions between Ragusa and Gjergj II. As diplomatic messages, they were acts of non-verbal communication, and expressed mutual respect, trust and friendship. All these aimed not only at building good neighborly relations at certain moments, but also achieving tangible and long-term commercial and political benefits.

Luigi GALANTE

**LO STEMMA DEI CASTRIOTA SCANDERBEG IN
FRAMMENTI PERGAMENACEI DI GALATINA E SOLETO.**

Durante una ricerca, in archivi pubblici e privati, capita, a volte, e con un pizzico di fortuna, di scoprire frammenti in pergamena e fogli di altri codici inseriti come “rinforzo” nelle legature di libri. Nel corso di uno studio nell’archivio della Basilica di S. Caterina d’Alessandria in Galatina¹, sono appunto emersi alcuni fogli e frammenti inediti in pergamena; essi appartenevano a vecchi manoscritti oggi perduti, e per nostra fortuna, sono stati riutilizzati come coperta di altri libri a stampa del XVI - XVIII secolo². Da un attento esame, i documenti che verrò a descrivere in questo breve saggio³, si sono rivelati di un certo interesse storiografico e servono a testimoniare la forte presenza dei Castriota Scanderbeg in Terra d’Otranto, conservando sia diversi esempi del loro stemma sia alcuni stemmi di famiglie patrizie dei feudi dei Castriota.

1. Il primo frammento ritrovato consiste in un unico foglio vergato sia al *recto* che al *verso* (riproduco il *recto* nella tav. 1), ed è conservato, come ho detto, presso l’archivio della Basilica di Santa Caterina in

¹ L’archivio mi è stato accessibile grazie alla generosa disponibilità e profonda amicizia di padre Corrado Morciano che ringrazio.

² Sulla conservazione dei frammenti riutilizzati, si veda per un quadro d’insieme C. Prosperi, *Pergamene di riuso nelle legature antiche; smontare o lasciare in situ?*, in (Memoria fidei). *Archivi ecclesiastici Nuova Evangelizzazione. Atti del Convegno Roma, 23-25 ottobre 2013*, a cura di A. Cifres, (Roma 2016), pp. 179-183. Per alcuni casi in Terra d’Otranto si legga R. Durante, *Nuove testimonianze dal Salento ellenofono: personaggi, testi e disegni in copertina tra Tardo Medioevo ed Età Moderna*, in *Manoscritti italogreci: nuove tessere di un mosaico frammentario* (Quaderni di Νέα Πόλη, 7), a cura di S. Lucà, con la collaborazione di D. Bucca e F. D’Aiuto, Università degli Studi di Roma «Tor Vergata», pp. 253-270; EAD., *Disegno e mimesis. sulle tracce del copista Gabriele e di Matteo Tafuri: nuove segnalazioni ed excerpta dal paterikon Neapol. II C 27*, in (Rivista di studi bizantini e neellenici), 57 (2020) [2021], pp. 257-276.

³ Ringrazio vivamente l’Amico Pëllumb Xhufi per avermi invitato a collaborare a questa rivista con il presente saggio.

Galatina. Il foglio di pergamena misura mm. 310 x 221 e presenta i margini irregolari; è rigido, di colore giallo oca e marrone scuro, e mostra segni di corrosione dai parassiti della carta. Utilizzato come coperta di un volume a stampa degli inizi del XVIII secolo⁴, il libro è catalogato con la segnatura A/9-16. Fortunatamente la pergamena si è preservata piuttosto bene consentendo di leggere in larga misura i testi vergati sul *recto* del foglio. Invece al *verso* del foglio si legge con estrema difficoltà, per l'inchiostro sbiadito, un atto notarile redatto in latino e sarà stata probabilmente l'esigenza di trascriverlo a conservarci la pergamena. Nell'atto si riesce a leggere, tuttavia, il nome del matematico e filosofo Matteo Tafuri (Soletto 1492-Soletto 1584)⁵ e questo lascia supporre che il documento originale da cui deriva la trascrizione sia pienamente cinquecentesco, ma rinvio questo studio ad una prossima pubblicazione. Veniamo ora alla descrizione del *recto* di questa pergamena: sulla parte sinistra del foglio *recto*, in uno spazio di mm. 100 x 95, vi è un curioso componimento in versi ad inchiostro marrone, che potrebbe forse rivelarci il possessore del libro avvolto un tempo nel nostro foglio sopravvissuto.

Il testo, disposto su otto righe, è il seguente:

Questo libro et di pezza | questa pezza et di lino | questo lino et di sermensa | questa sermensa et di Terra | questa Terra et di Dio | Dunque questo libro è mio.

Di seguito, compare quella che probabilmente è la firma dell'autore della scrittura e possessore del libro:

Adi 20 aprile 1538. Clericus Franc(iscus) Cavoti⁶.

⁴ *Catechismus Romanus*, edito a Padova nel 1711 per i tipi 'Felicis Caroli Mosca'.

⁵ Nacque a Soletto, uno dei paesi della Grecia salentina, nel 1492. Fu filosofo e astrologo, insigne cultore delle lettere greche e latine, medico e matematico, profondo conoscitore della scienza di Claudio Tolomeo, raffinato interprete della fisiognomia e famoso nell'arte del predire. Dopo alcuni anni trascorsi lontano dalla sua terra natia (viaggia per motivi di studio e per altri motivi in Italia, a Napoli, Padova, Venezia, e fuori), Tafuri fece ritorno a Soletto, dove morì il 18 novembre 1584. Per maggiori dettagli, L. Galante, *Nuove indagini su Matteo Tafuri da Soletto*, in, *EYAOΓIA. Sulle orme di André Jacob*, a cura di R. Durante, Edizioni Grifo, (2021), pp. 313-336.

⁶ Francesco Cavoti, nacque a Soletto agli albori del XVI sec. Fu sacerdote di rito greco, ed Arcidiacono di Soletto. Copiò a Napoli nel 1537 per volontà del suo maestro Matteo Tafuri il commento agli *Imi Orfici* in lingua greca. Morì a Castellaneta nel 1581. A. Jacob, *Un nouveau manuscrit des hymnes orphiques et son copiste. François Cavoti de Soletto*, in *Antiquité classique* 1983; G. Vallone, 'Restauri salentini' in, (Bollettino Storico di Terra d'Otranto), d'ora in poi (BSTO), 1/1991, pp. 143-178; G. Vallone, *Individuato "l'Arcidiacono di Soletto" Francesco*

Infine nel margine inferiore di questa parte sinistra è stilato un testo in caratteri greci disposto su quattro linee e in parte cancellato sul lato destro. Si tratta molto probabilmente di un testo di geometria (euclidea?): Εαν ευθεια γραμμη [...] ⁷.

A seguire, nell'estremo margine inferiore, compare il nome di un personaggio, di differente grafia, del quale si leggono ben distintamente solo gli ultimi due grafemi: Φραγκίσκος(?) Ἀρκουδιος Σολεντους. Nel caso si accetti la lettura Φραγκίσκος, si farà riferimento a Francesco Arcudi ⁸, il figlio di Antonio Arcudi (1554-1612), il quale ultime fu arciprete di Soletto e autore del Νέον Ἀνθολόγιον, stampato a Roma nel 1598 ⁹.

Al centro, tra la parte destra e la sinistra di questo foglio *recto*, lì dove era originariamente il dorso del volume andato perduto, si legge un titolo e questo basta a farci capire che quel volume conteneva in realtà un'opera manoscritta dato che non c'è alcuna notizia di una sua eventuale pubblicazione. Il titolo, disposto orizzontalmente, riporta:

HISTORIA Genealogica della Terra di Solito et di S(an)to Pietro in Galatina.

Tutto lascia presupporre che il manoscritto fosse una raccolta antica di memorie storiche delle due Terre ¹⁰; doveva trattarsi, in particolare, di

Cavoti, in (Il Galatino). 13 novembre 1992, p. 3; G. L. Di Mitri, *Il periodo napoletano dell'arcidiacono di Soletto*, in *Il Galatino*, 13 novembre 1992, p.3; A. Jacob, *La tradizione scrittoria a Galatina dal XIII al XIV secolo*, in (BSTO), 3/1993, p. 51; G. L. Di Mitri, 'Contributi per la biografia di Francesco Cavoti, Arcidiacono di Soletto', (BSTO), 3/1993, 221-241; V. Ligorì, 'Per quanto concerne Francesco Cavoti', (Nuova Messapia), n.u., (Soletto, 1997); M. Berger-A. Jacob, *La chiesa di S. Stefano a Soletto. Tradizioni bizantine e cultura tardogotica*, Lecce 2007 (Terra d'Otranto bizantina, 1) p.11.

⁷ Per la presenza di Euclide nella cultura greco-otrantina si consideri la lettera di Giampaolo Vernaleone di Galatina a Pinelli, dell'11 ottobre 1590: R. Moscheo, *Matematica, filologia e codici in una lettera inedita della fine del XVI secolo*, in *Helikon*, 33-34 (1993-1994), pp. 159-241.

⁸ M. Berger-A. Jacob, *La chiesa di S. Stefano a Soletto. Tradizioni bizantine e cultura tardogotica*, (Lecce 2007), (Terra d'Otranto bizantina, 1), p. 11; F.G. Giannachi, *Lettere ed epigrammi di Francesco Arcudi (1590-1641). Un umanista nel meriggio della grecità otrantina*, in (Studi sull'Oriente cristiano) 21/2 (2017), pp. 77-151: 78-85.

⁹ Per la bibliografia su Antonio Arcudi si rimanda agli *Atti del convegno*, Galatina 8-9 giugno 2012, 'Gli Arcudi e l'identità culturale del Salento' pubblicati in (Studi sull'Oriente Cristiano), 21/2 (2017).

¹⁰ Per associazione di idee ricordo che vidi nel 1997 a Bari, una raccolta di memorie manoscritte della prima metà del XVII e XVIII sec. conservate presso la famiglia di Mario Montinari. Due tra queste, quella del 1775 'Notizie storiche su Soletto inviate dal Canonico Don Saverio Pandelli a Don Francesco Carrozini', e il manoscritto anonimo, *Memorie e tradizioni*

un testo con notizie sulle famiglie più aristocratiche e influenti dei due vicini paesi.

Infine, nella parte destra del foglio *recto*, figurano undici stemmi riconducibili ad antiche famiglie galatinesi o vissute nell'antica Terra di San Pietro in Galatina e realizzati con inchiostro nero/marrone scuro. Gli stemmi, a tratto leggero, risultano sbiaditi perché logorati dall'usura del tempo, dall'azione di funghi della carta e/o dall'aggressione di tarme, come si nota in particolare al centro assai corroso nel margine inferiore e superiore. Sono i seguenti.

Da sinistra, il primo stemma è quello dei Castriota Scanderbeg “*d'oro all'aquila bicipite di nero, col volo abbassato, incoronata in capo, innestata la punta d'azzurro alla stella d'oro di sei raggi*” congiunto (ma non partito) con quello della famiglia Arcudi che è “*d'azzurro all'orso nero ritto mirante cinque stelle d'oro in disordine*”. All'interno degli stemmi, sono collocate le iniziali delle famiglie; S per gli Scanderbeg d'Albania, e A per gli Arcudi di Soletto (provenienti Galatina). Si conoscono due matrimoni tra Castriota e Arcudi, ma dato che lo stemma Castriota precede l'altro, dovrebbe trattarsi del matrimonio tra Pietro Castriota Scanderbeg e Leonarda Arcudi da Soletto. Le uniche notizie certe di questo matrimonio le ricaviamo dal libro dei morti nell'archivio parrocchiale di Soletto, dove alla data del 22 febbraio 1616, l'arciprete di Soletto, Francesco Arcudi, fratello di Leonarda, riporta la morte del Castriota: *Adi 22 feb(raio) 1616 morse Don Pietro Castriota de Scanderbeg mio car(issi)mo Cog(na)to et amatissimo consorte di Leonarda mia sorella, giouane d'età, d'anni 19, di buoniss(im)i costumi e vita, e di nobiliss(im)o sangue, si sepelì in chiesa n(ost)ra.*¹¹ Da questo unico documento, ricaviamo che il Castriota era nato nel 1597 e come riportato dall'atto di morte, muore

riguardanti l'antichità di Soletto raccolte nell'anno 1872, sono pubblicati in *Soletto una città della Grecia*, Schiena editore, 1993, pp.173-210. Tra i tanti documenti gelosamente custoditi dal Montinari, anche una bellissima raccolta di antichi stemmi su pergamena del XVI sec. Di un'altra raccolta manoscritta di notizie storiche di Soletto, l'amico Giancarlo Vallone possedeva copia, data in prestito per studio e perduta. Anche per la storia di Galatina, si conoscono opere manoscritte, perdute o secrete: tra queste ricordo di Silvio Arcudi “*Cronica particolare dell'origine antichità e Signorie della Terra di S. Pietro in Galatina*” risalente al XVII secolo, e la seconda “*Istoria della Terra di S. Pietro in Galatina*” scritta dal pronipote Alessandro Tommaso Arcudi nel XVIII secolo.

¹¹ Seppellito nella chiesa matrice SS. Assunta di Soletto.

giovanissimo¹². Ho cercato di individuare il matrimonio tra i due coniugi, ma la ricerca è fallita, perché nel registro che va dal 1612 al 1637 non è presente l'atto. È possibile che lo Scanderbeg e la Arcudi, si siano sposati altrove, comunque in anni immediatamente precedenti la morte di lui, o anche che sia stata omessa la registrazione perché affidata, come avveniva, in fogli volanti poi non trascritti.

Proseguendo con le individuazioni più interessanti, segnalo un altro stemma 'partito' che compare come decimo: il partito di sinistra è dei Cavazza (una torre), quello di destra è riconducibile ai Castriota per il matrimonio tra Mario Cavazza (fratello del celebre Gian Tommaso) e Giovanna, figlia naturale di Ferrante Castriota Scanderbeg, il duca di Galatina¹³.

Trascrivo in ordine di posizione, gli stemmi delle famiglie riprodotti sulla pergamena:

Scanderbeg/Arcudi(Galatina o Soletto), *Tafuri/Carrozzini* (Soletto), *del Balzo* (Conti di Soletto), *Guidano* (Galatina), *Orsini* (conti di Soletto e principi di Taranto), *Mezio* (Galatina), *Cavoti* (Soletto e Galatina), *Mongiò dell'Elefante* (Galatina), non identificato/*Rizzo* (Soletto), *Cavazza/ Castriota* (Galatina) e infine *Aruca* (Galatina).

2. Indico, come secondo reperto un libretto dal titolo *I veri trattamenti ò discorsi spirituali di Monsignor Francesco di Sales, Vescovo, e principe di Genua*, stampato in Roma, presso Francesco Cavalli, nel 1652 che ho trovato nell'archivio della Basilica di Santa Caterina in Galatina, che è notevole di per sé, ma che poi conserva nel suo interno un frammento pergamenaceo egualmente interessante; ma andiamo con ordine. Il volumetto dall'*ex libris* risulta essere stato proprietà del noto Alessandro Tommaso Arcudi (Galatina 1655 – 1718)¹⁴. L'Arcudi fu un antiquario e teologo, religioso nell'Ordine domenicano

¹² Ringrazio don Daniele Albanese parroco della Collegiata chiesa di Soletto per avermi concesso di visionare gli antichi registri.

¹³ G. Vallone, *Arcudi, la chiesa dei Domenicani e la famiglia Cavazza*, in *Il Filo di Aracne*, gennaio/febbraio (2016), pp. 8-11. L'importante famiglia dei Cavazza, compare in Galatina, proveniente da Taranto, ma con la prestigiosa cittadinanza napoletana. La certezza della patria tarantina ci viene da due inediti rogiti nei quali *Joanne Tomasio Cavazza de civitate Tarenti era ad presens* (1594) *comorante dicte terre Sancti Petri* (Galatina).

¹⁴ Appartenente ad una storica famiglia galatinese (e poi anche soletana), ebbe modo di conoscere e consultare opere e manoscritti di grande utilità per la storiografia, in genere poi perduti. La sua *Galatina letterata*, una raccolta di ricerche su una quarantina di galatinesi illustri,

con grandi conoscenze della storia di Soletto e Galatina. Il libro ha coperta in pergamena di colore giallo e misura mm. 235x173, e la coperta conserva sull'intera sua superficie esterna (tav. 2) diversi disegni che, se fossero dell'Arcudi, confermerebbero le sue passioni antiquarie.

L'Arcudi, se fu lui, si destreggia a disegnare sul piatto anteriore destro del frammento una civetta a riposo e sotto di essa la scritta *Veglia*. La civetta, entrerà ai primissimi del XVIII secolo a far parte del simbolismo Galatinese e sarà quindi inserita nello stemma civico¹⁵. Sopra la civetta, compaiono le lettere maiuscole A.T.A che stanno, certamente, per Alessandro Tommaso Arcudi. Al centro (corrispondente al dorso del volumetto) vi è lo stemma Orsini e all'interno di esso le scritte *Jo. Antonij Orsini conte Soleti*, evidente riferimento al figlio del principe Raimondello Orsini del Balzo, e ancora la scritta in grassetto di color marrone scuro, *Conte di Soletto*. Sotto questo stemma compare un animale (orsa?) sormontato sul capo da una *corona*, avente in bocca forse una *colonna*. Sorprende come questo bozzetto riproduca assai fedelmente sia lo stemma della famiglia Orsini che l'animale coronato, riprodotti nel codice Vat. Lat. 2905 della Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana del XV sec. al f. 1r¹⁶, e che io ripropongo qui (alla tav. 3) Un bellissimo stemma orsiniano, ritratto forse dal vero, è presente sul piatto anteriore sinistro della coperta (sempre a tav. 2).

Come ho detto, tra i fogli interni di questo piccolo libro, ho trovato un minuscolo frammento in pergamena (tav. 4) che presenta un disegno con lo stemma anche dei Castriota Scanderbeg. Il frammento è un sottilissimo brandello in pergamena di colore giallo chiaro, che misura mm. 155x119. Mutilo da tutti i lati, evidenzia segni di lacerazioni anche all'interno, dovuti a manipolazioni remote e alla sua forte cristallizzazione. Il frammento presenta l'immagine di cinque

è tuttora una preziosa fonte storiografica. Su di lui G. Vallone, *L'Antiquaria barocca di Arcudi*, in (Archivio Storico Pugliese), vol. 69 (2016), p. 181-238. Per maggiori dettagli su di lui e sugli Arcudi, vedasi gli *Atti del convegno*, Galatina 8, 9 giugno 2012, 'Gli Arcudi e l'identità culturale del Salento' pubblicati in (Studi sull'Oriente Cristiano), 21/2 (2017).

¹⁵ Di color azzurro, caricato da due chiavi pontificie di color oro, poste in croce di Sant'Andrea, con l'ingegno rivolto verso l'alto e cimato in capo da una corona, di tre punte dallo stesso, e da una civetta (simbolo di Athena) posta in maestà. Al capo del blasone segni esterni di Città, sui lati ramoscelli di ulivo e alloro. Va detto che lo stemma civico galatinese ha subito nei secoli alcune variazioni, o meglio delle aggiunte. Bisogna fare riferimento alle versioni più antiche.

¹⁶ Il ms. è disponibile online al seguente link: <https://digi.vatlib.it/mss/detail/Vat.lat.2905>

componenti: il castello, e quattro stemmi araldici. Da una accurata analisi, il primo bozzetto ad essere stato disegnato sul frammento, risulta essere quello del castello.

Ritratto frontalmente con inchiostro marrone, è ben visibile l'antica struttura che si affaccia sull'attuale piazza Dante Alighieri, dove si trova l'entrata principale. Il portone presenta un grande arco a tutto sesto su cui è presente un grande stemma non identificato (potrebbe trattarsi dello stemma Spinola). Impostato sulle antiche mura della città, sul lato sinistro del castello, oggi via Pietro Cavoti, è visibile un altro ingresso, oggi non più esistente, e questo restituisce un altro spaccato inedito di questa struttura castellare. Particolare di rilievo, è l'antico tetto a spiovente, che faceva da copertura, circondato da piccole finestrelle quadrate. Ancora a sinistra si vede un oggi scomparso torrione e uno scorcio delle mura che toccavano il castello. D'impianto quattrocentesco, fu dimora della principesca famiglia Castriota Scanderbeg, originaria d'Albania, resa illustre da Giorgio (1405-1468), principe d'Albania ed Epiro e valoroso condottiero. I Castriota abitarono il castello dal 1485 sino al 1561¹⁷.

Accanto ai Castriota sorse una corte, una vita elegante, un certame poetico di cui rende testimonianza, fortunatamente sopravvissuta, il "Canzoniere" galatinese del XVI secolo dei Vernaleone. La raccolta di rime fu allestita in onore e per richiesta di Maria Castriota Scanderbeg, cui si ispirano gran parte dei componimenti di Ottavio Vernaleone e di altri¹⁸. Il castello fu residenza del Vescovo Gabriele Adarzo de Santader (1657-1674) e con costui vescovo, il centro amministrativo della diocesi di Otranto si trasferì effettivamente nel Castello di Galatina. Successivamente, Pietro Antonio Sanseverino (†1568), sposando in terze nozze nel 1539 Erina Castriota Scanderbeg, figlia ed erede di Ferdinando, acquisì il ducato di San Pietro in Galatina. Alla morte del suocero e *maritali nomine* divenne duca di San Pietro in Galatina e conte di Soletto.

¹⁷ G. Vallone, *Galatina: la storia*, in *Guida di Galatina*, Congedo, Galatina, 1994. pp.13-30. Di notevole interesse il sito: <http://www.castriotascanderbeg.it/la-storia>.

¹⁸ A. Vallone, *Venature religiose in un canzoniere galatinese del XVI secolo*, in (Lares), XL, 2-3-4 (1974), pp. 281-296; ID. *Ordine e disordine nelle rime galatinesi dei Vernaleone*, in (BSTO), I/1991, pp. 15-21.

Tra il 1615 e il 1616, San Pietro in Galatina fu ceduta per i debiti degli eredi Sanseverino e fu acquistata dalla nobile famiglia genovese Spinola. Giovan Battista Spinola concluse l'acquisto dell'importante feudo¹⁹. Ultimo feudatario di Galatina fino al 1806, anno in cui fu soppressa la feudalità, fu Carlo Gallarati Scotti (1775-1840). Il castello fu oggetto nei sec. XVIII e XIX di importanti rifacimenti, con demolizione delle antiche torri e ricostruzioni in adiacenza dell'originario corpo quattrocentesco. Dunque, quest'inedita immagine del castello di Galatina, potrebbe essere precedente l'Arcudi, ma risalente comunque al XVII secolo, e fa *pendant* con la rappresentazione pittorica ad oggi conosciuta come la più antica, effigiata ai piedi del *Patrocinio di S. Pietro su Galatina*²⁰, (tav. 5 e tav. 6) forse di alcuni decenni anteriore al frammento qui proposto (tav 4).

I quattro stemmi sovrascritti con inchiostro nero, sono ben visibili e facilmente identificabili. Sovrapposti sull'immagine del castello (tav. 4), appare chiaro che sono successivi al disegno del castello e di mano diversa. Al centro, e piazzato frontalmente al castello, vi è l'antico stemma civico dove è scritto in alto *San Pietro in Galatina*.²¹ In basso a sinistra compare, in una versione più grande rispetto agli altri, lo stemma della famiglia Castriota Scanderbeg posto a ridosso del torrione, ma per negligenza dell'autore, non compaiono *le corone* sulle due teste dell'aquila. Alla sinistra, in alto sopra lo stemma civico, compare quello degli Spinola, che tuttora campeggia sul portone principale del castello e sul portone interno, che si affaccia su piazza San Pietro.

Sopra quest'ultimo si intravede lo stemma dei Sanseverino, ma reciso quasi di netto. Come negli stemmi precedenti anche questi riportano dentro lo stemma la lettera iniziale di famiglia 'S'. Una certa omogeneità tra la rappresentazione iconografica degli stemmi riportati nella tavola 1

¹⁹ R. Santamaria, *Giovanni Battista Spinola primo duca di S. Pietro, "fondatore" di una dinastia*, e ancora, *Gio. Maria Spinola secondo duca di S. Pietro e Senatore della Repubblica*, in (Palazzo Doria Spinola. Architettura e arredi di una dimora aristocratica genovese), Genova, Le Mani Ed. (2011), pp.157-175.

²⁰ Tela seicentesca proveniente dalla chiesa dei domenicani di Galatina ed ora conservata presso l'episcopio idruntino.

²¹ Le chiavi furono concesse per insegna a questa città dal Pontefice Urbano VI che, tenuto prigioniero a Nocera, fu liberato dai Galatinesi guidati da Raimondello Orsini del Balzo – come ci ricorda lo storico Silvio Arcudi: "Clavium insignia oppido Divi Petri Galatinorum concessa sunt a Pontifice Urbano VI, ob Britannorum direptionem": Le insegne delle chiavi furono concesse a San Pietro dei Galatini dal Pontefice Urbano VI, per la vittoriosa riportata sui Britanni.

con quelli della tavola 4, ci lascia pensare che si tratti dello stesso amanuense, ma non ci sono concreti elementi per ipotizzare che siano opera di Alessandro Tommaso Arcudi.

3. La terza testimonianza frammentaria, individuata sempre nell'archivio di S. Caterina in Galatina, è un foglio membranaceo mutilo dalla parte sinistra. Si tratta del piatto anteriore della coperta di un libro perduto e di un piccolo brandello del dorso: il piatto è disegnato sia al *recto* che al *verso*. Su questo piatto o coperta esterna al *recto* (tav. 7) è trascritto ad inchiostro nero un documento, con diverse annotazioni (forse del tardo Cinquecento) che consta di 20 righe. La difficile interpretazione e trascrizione del testo, ci rimanda necessariamente a prossima pubblicazione.

Oltre alla scrittura, nel foglio, figurano tre stemmi: uno scuro, monocromatico, e due colorati con inchiostro rosso e nero. I primi due stemmi in basso, sono della famiglia Orsini (tav.7), e tra questi si nota l'arma araldica di un *Cardinalis de Orsinis*, evidenziata da una *manicula* posta al di sopra. Il terzo stemma, privo della parte alta e posto dal lato sinistro, è un bellissimo stemma dei Castriota Scanderbeg inquartato con la croce di Gerusalemme (tav. 8). È visibile solo una metà dello stemma, ma sufficiente a individuarlo. Probabilmente una concessione di Carlo VIII re di Francia al duca Giovanni Castriota per la sua adesione al progetto, poi sfumato, di crociata in Oriente, e dunque risalente agli anni 1494-1495.²² Uno stemma assai simile, compare in una sala del palazzo ducale di Tricarico in provincia di Matera (Basilicata) ed è uno splendido stemma scolpito in pietra di Erina Castriota Scanderbeg, duchessa di San Pietro in Galatina, contessa di Soletto, e principessa di Bisignano.²³

Lo stemma murario di Erina, rappresenta una variante di quello dei Castriota Scanderbeg:

“inquartato: nel primo e nel quarto d'oro all'aquila bicipite di nero, col volo abbassato, coronata d'oro su ambo le teste; con la pila

²²Ne parla chiaramente, contro le affrettate considerazioni del Petta, G. Vallone, *Voisava Bernay e i Domenicani a Galatina nel Cinquecento*, in (AA.VV.) *I Domenicani a Galatina e la Chiesa di S. Maria della Grazia*, a c. di G. Vincenti, Galatina, Congedo, (2017), pp. 9-15: 9-10.

²³G. Vallone, *Famiglie nobili albanesi nella feudalità meridionale*, in (Quaderni Stefaniani 31) 2012, pp. 25-79. C. Biscaglia, *Lo stemma della principessa Erina Castriota nel Palazzo Ducale*, (Basilicata Arbëreshë), marzo-aprile (2022), p. 2.

d'azzurro raccorciata nel capo e caricata da una stella di sei raggi d'oro; nel secondo e nel terzo d'argento alla croce potenziata d'oro, accantonata da quattro crocette dello stesso (Gerusalemme); sul tutto campo di cielo a due leoni affrontati d'oro, tenenti fra le branche due spade d'argento incrociantesi ed accompagnate in punta da un massacro di bue d'oro"²⁴. Altre raffigurazioni dello stemma riportato nel frammento cateriniano, sono quelle lasciateci dal galatinese Pietro Cavoti, celebre studioso e illustratore d'arte (1819-1890), ed anzitutto una che vide posta sull'architrave della porta di accesso al piano nobile del castello di Soletto, residenza iniziale dei Castriota Scanderbeg²⁵ (tav. 9). Propongo poi, uno "*stemma un tempo su un palazzo di Galatina con quarto femminile Castriota Scanderbeg*"²⁶ (tav. 10) che Cavoti aveva rinvenuto su un edificio di Galatina, oggi non più esistente, e riferibile al matrimonio fra Giovanni Arcudi e Maria Castriota Scanderbeg del ramo di Copertino e Lecce²⁷. Ed è proprio Silvio Arcudi, medico e umanista di Galatina che nelle sue *Memorie* del 1627 ci fornisce notizie importanti di questo matrimonio, anche a riprova dell'enfasi e del lustro che si connetteva all'imparentarsi con i Castriota Scanderbeg, "[...] nelle sei del mese di dicembre si strinse il trattamento del matrimonio di Giovanni Arcudi mio figlio di anni 17 con donna Maria Castriota de Scanderbech. È donna Maria Castriota de Scanderbech figlia di donna Antonia Verdesca Morelli di Copertino, et figlia maggiore e primogenita di don Costantino Castriota de Scanderbech che fu di don Pardo che fu di Ferrante, che fu di Giovanni, primo duca di San Pietro (Galatina) che fu di Giorgio Castrioto detto Scanderbech, re di Epiro et di Albania".²⁸

Sul *verso* del medesimo foglio pergameneo (tav. 11), vi è raffigurato un uomo con barba e un singolare berretto, e al di sotto di esso, uno stemma alquanto articolato. Il disegno ad inchiostro marrone chiaro, e alquanto sbiadito, è collocato in alto a sinistra del foglio ed è

²⁴ A. Castriota Scanderbeg, *I Castriota Scanderbeg d'Albania*, pp. 17-21, Edizioni Grifo, (2021). Per maggiori dettagli, consultare il seguente sito: <http://www.castriotascanderbeg.it/>, *I Castriota Scanderbeg Principi d'Albania*.

²⁵ L. Galante, *P. Cavoti. I tesori ritrovati*, EdiPan, (Galatina, 2007), p.129. L'arma dei Castriota è pubblicata in copertina del *BSTO*, 14 (2005), Congedo Editore. G. Vallone, *Famiglie nobili albanesi nella feudalità meridionale*, p.81.

²⁶ *Ivi*, p. 133.

²⁷ A. Castriota Scanderbeg, *I Castriota Scanderbeg*, p. 19

²⁸ Vacca N. *Il fastoso sposalizio del figlio di un medico nella cronaca paterna*, in A.A. VV., *Nuptiae Sallentinae*, (Lecce 1955). Vedi anche, <http://www.castriotascanderbeg.it/>

accompagnato da altri disegni antichi (non pubblicati) eseguiti probabilmente in epoche e da mani diverse.

Al centro dello stemma si nota appena una fontana con acqua sgorgante. In alto a destra e a sinistra della figura, sono rappresentate due aquile dei Castriota, poi in basso, a sinistra della base, una corona, e a destra una stella a sei punte racchiusa in un piccolo scudetto. Da alcune ricerche, la fontana sarebbe stemma da attribuire, con molta cautela, alla famiglia Musachi immigrata dall'Albania in Mesagne²⁹, e il personaggio raffigurato potrebbe essere un membro di questa famiglia.

4. La quarta testimonianza frammentaria, individuata nell'archivio del Convento della Madonna delle Grazie di Soletto, è un foglio cartaceo di forma rettangolare di mm. 212 x 152. Il foglio è mutilo e presenta lacerazioni interne e segni di forte umidità e muffa. Nascosto all'interno di un volume del XVIII secolo, di Domenico Viva³⁰ *Damnatorum Thesium Theologica Trutina... Tomus Primus, Patavii, Ex Typographia Seminarii, MDCCXXIII*", già appartenente ai Padri Riformati del Convento di Santa Maria delle Grazie di Soletto, è disegnato a grafite nera risalente con ogni probabilità al XVII secolo e raffigura lo stemma dei Granai Castriota (tav. 12). Costoro, passati nel Regno di Napoli al seguito degli Scanderbeg, inizialmente godettero della benevolenza della corte reale di Napoli proprio in virtù della protezione di Andronica Arianiti, vedova del principe Giorgio.

Forti del crescente favore dei sovrani aragonesi, cominciarono ad affermare -strumentalmente- un legame parentale con la famiglia principesca albanese in realtà inesistente, e finirono addirittura con l'atteggiarsi a eredi dello Scanderbeg, innescando una confusione genealogica che ha ingarbugliato, complice anche l'omonimia di alcuni membri familiari, storici in ogni epoca. Lo stemma Granai Castriota, ne ricalca i caratteri, cioè gli elementi araldici ed i colori, ma si distingue per la forma bipartita, dove l'aquila dei Castriota è affiancata ad un leone

²⁹ R. Jurlaro, *I Musachi despoti d'Epiro in Puglia a Salvamento*, Edizioni del Centro librario, Bari-Santo Spirito, (1970) p. 47. In questo volumetto si raccolgono incerte notizie sull'uso dell'aquila bicipite come arma dei Musachi. A. p. 48 (v. qui foto nr. 6) c'è lo stemma, conservato in Mesagne, dei Granai Castriota (e forse di Giovanni) e non certo dei Musachi.

³⁰ Domenico Viva era un teologo gesuita della metà del XVII secolo, ricordato soprattutto per la sua famosa opera *Trutina Theologica Damnatarum Thesium*, pubblicata per la prima volta nel 1708, apparteneva ad una famiglia leccese originaria di Soletto.

rampante in campo azzurro, con la spada d'argento nella branca, sormontato dal giglio di Francia (tav. 13). Ed è proprio quest'ultima versione ad identificare lo stemma Granai³¹, come dimostra anche lo schizzo a lapis disegnato dall'artista galatinese Pietro Cavoti nel palazzo marchesale di Sternatia (tav. 14).

Ma un'altra arma muraria risulta essere identica a questo frammento di Galatina. Essa si trova nella piccola chiesa della Madonna della Misericordia in Mesagne ed è inglobata nel muro di destra (tav. 15). Erroneamente la si considerava uno stemma dei 'Castriota-Musachi'.³² Si tratta quasi certamente dello stemma di Giovanni Granai Castriota vissuto alla fine della sua vita in Mesagne, e che non va confuso con Giovanni, figlio di Giorgio Scanderbeg, morto molto tempo prima, nel 1505, forse a Canosa. Infine, sembra che lo stemma dei Granai (*che affianca in partito all'aquila bicipite un leone rampante con la spada che colpisce il giglio di Francia*), sia stato adottato dopo la battaglia di Cerignola dove i Granai combatterono per la Spagna sconfiggendo i Francesi; e si comprende l'esigenza di una distinzione netta dallo stemma degli Scanderbeg.³³

³¹ <https://bildsuche.digitale-> *Insignia Neapolitanorum, Genuensium* – BSB Cod. icon. 279, Italien, 1550-1555, foglio 40. Vedi anche A. Castriota Scanderbeg, *Dello stemma*, pag. 20.

³² Sulla storia della famiglia Musachi in Puglia: R. Jurlaro, *I Musachi despotti d'Epiro in Puglia*.

³³ G. Vallone, *Andronica e Giovanni Scanderbeg in Italia*, in *Studia Albanica*, anno 55. N. 1 (2018) pag. 92 e nt.150.

TAVOLE



Tav. 1. Galatina, Basilica di S. Caterina d'Alessandria, Archivio, A/9, 16; [framm. A] (*Catechismus Romanus*, ... Padova 1711): coperta membranacea - foto L. Galante.



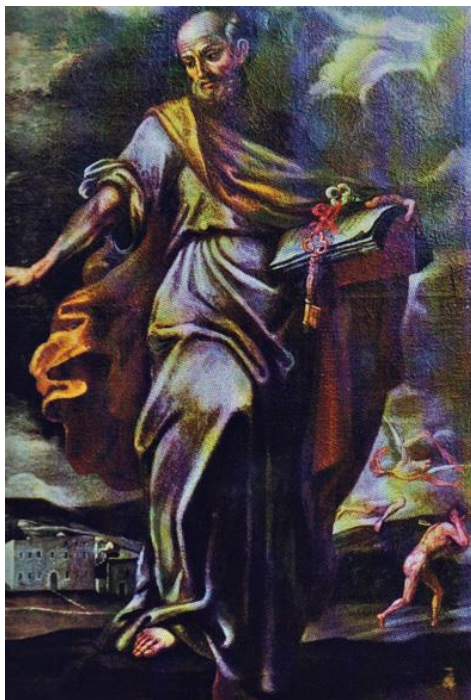
Tav. 2. Galatina, Basilica di S. Caterina d'Alessandria, Archivio. Coperta membranacea, s.n; (*I veri trattamenti ò Discorsi spirituali di Monsignor Francesco di Sales Vescovo e Principe di Genua. In Roma appresso Francesco Caualli. 1652*): coperta membranacea. Foto L. Galante.



Tav. 3. Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana. Codice Vat. Lat. 2905 del XV sec. al f. 1r.



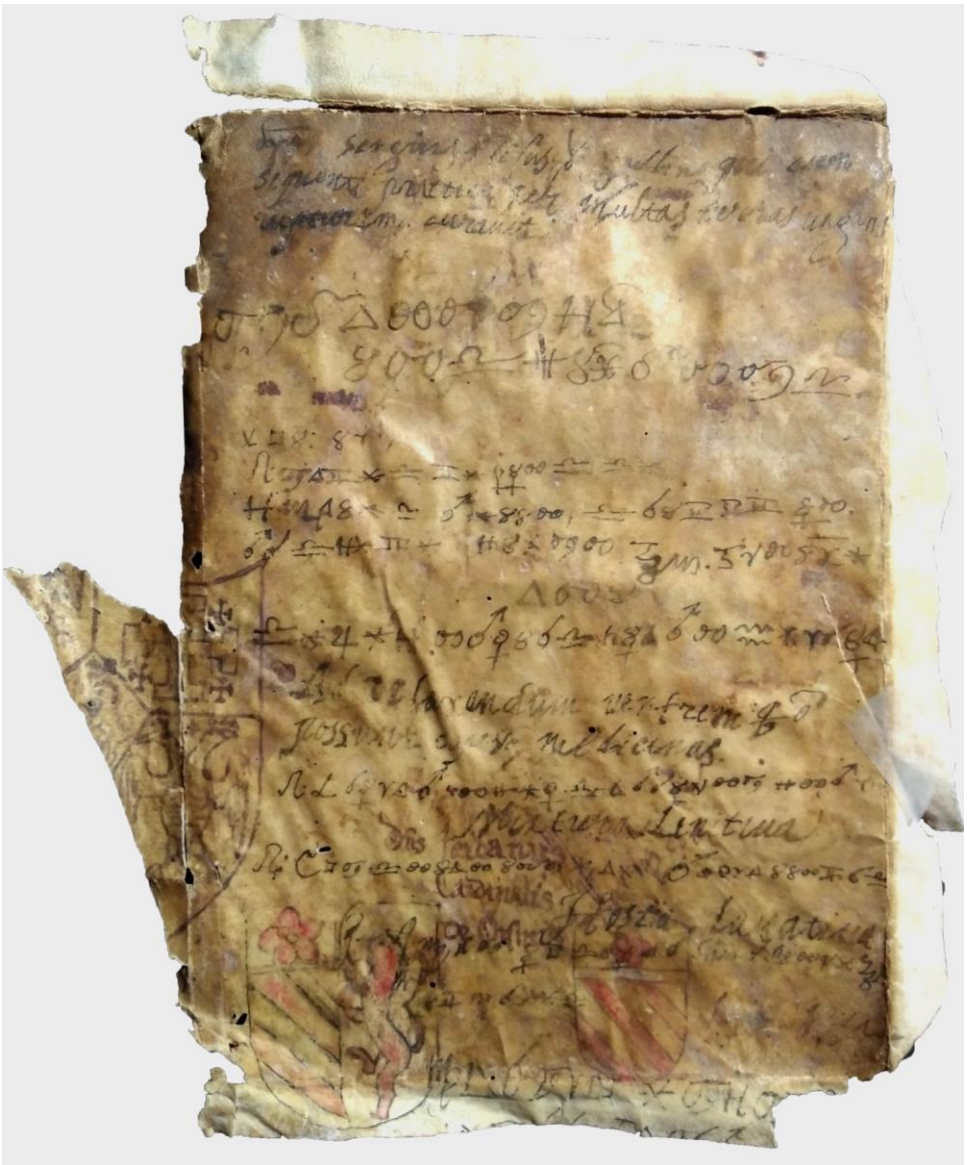
Tav.4 Galatina, Basilica di S. Caterina d'Alessandria, Archivio, s.n; frammento pergameneo. Foto L. Galante.



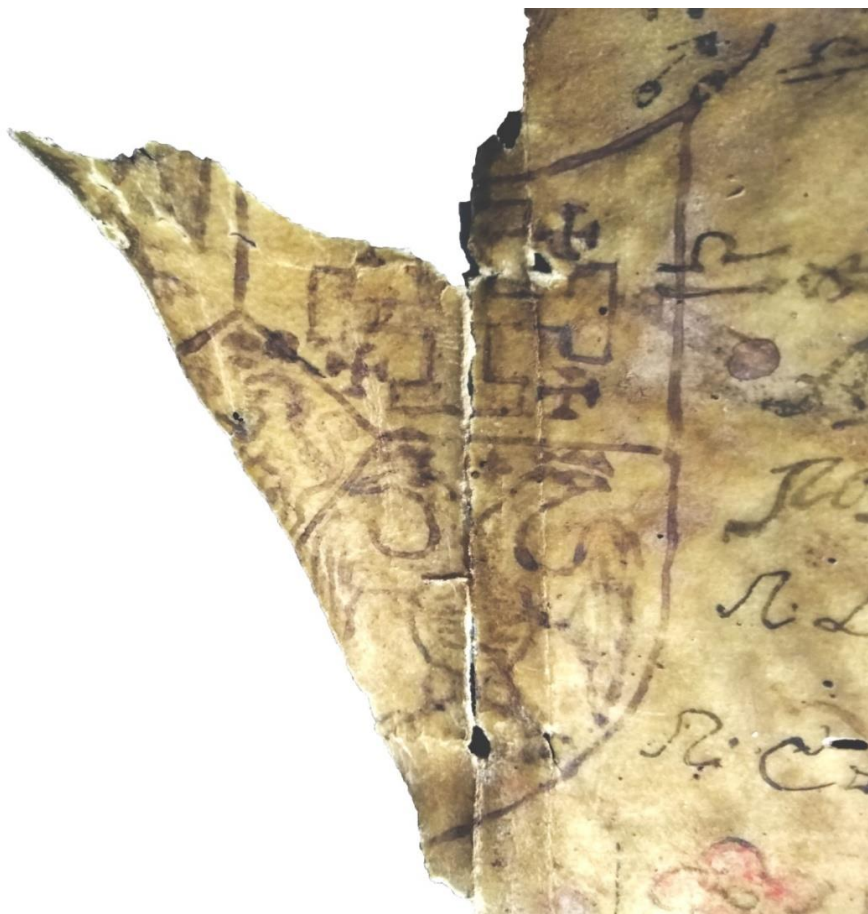
Tav. 5. Otranto. Episcopo. Patrocinio di San Pietro con la mano destra protesa a protezione di Galatina. Nel cerchio, il castello dei Castriota Scanderbeg.



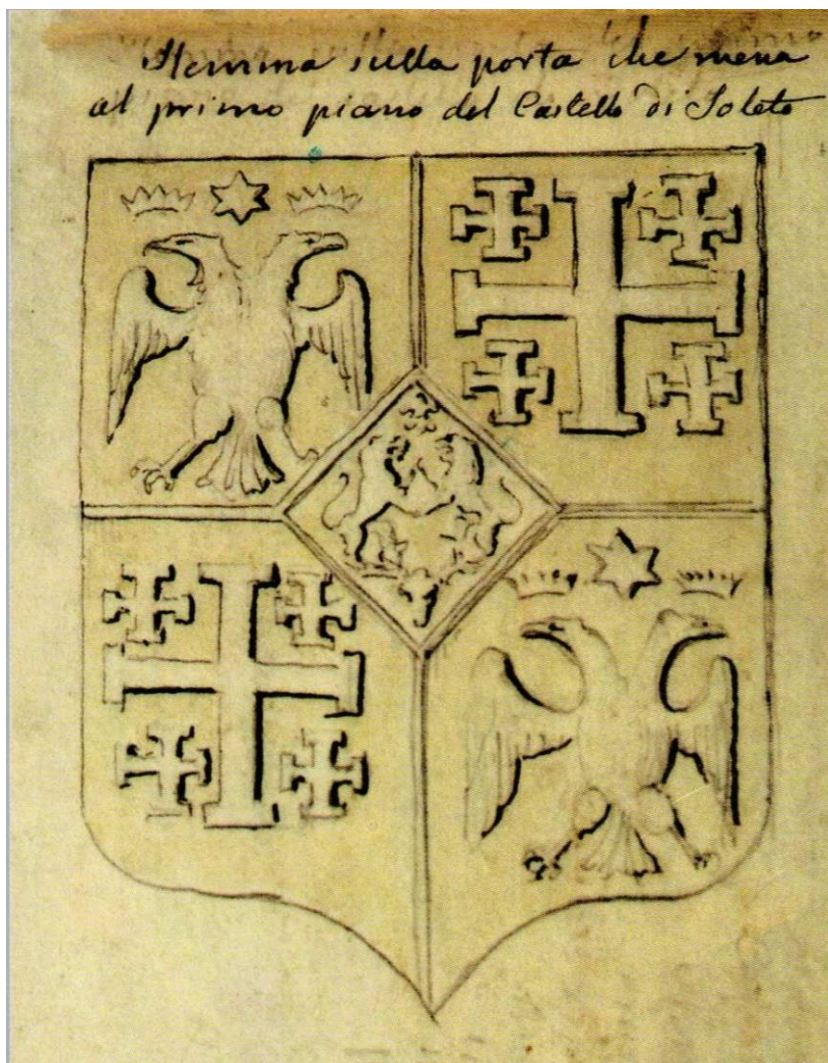
Tav. 6. Otranto, palazzo vescovile. Particolare di un dipinto seicentesco (prima del 1675) raffigurante il prospetto del castello di Galatina, già dimora dei Castriota Scanderbeg. foto L. Galante.



Tav. 7. Galatina, Basilica di S. Caterina d'Alessandria, Archivio; frammento membranaceo, s.n.
 Foto L. Galante. A sinistra frammento di stemma dei Castriota Scanderbeg; in basso degli Orsini.



Tav. 8. Particolare dello stemma Castriota Scanderbeg.



Tav. 9. Museo Civico di Galatina. Stemma degli Scanderbeg 'sulla porta di accesso al primo piano del castello di Soletto', oggi demolito. Da un disegno di Pietro Cavoti, 1850 ca. Foto L. Galante. stemma Castriota Scanderbeg.



Tav. 10. Museo Civico Galatina. Stemma Arcudi - Castriota Scanderbeg, disegno di Pietro Cavoti, da "Pietro Cavoti. I tesori ritrovati, pag. 133. Foto L. Galante



Tav. 11. Galatina, Basilica di S. Caterina d'Alessandria, Archivio; frammento cartaceo, s.n.
Personaggio forse della famiglia Musachi. Foto L. Galante.



Tav.12, Archivio del Convento - Santuario della Madonna delle Grazie di Soletto; frammento cartaceo, s.n. Foto L. Galante.



Tav. 13. Stemma Granai. Da un antico stemmario napoletano che era nella Biblioteca della casa reale di Baviera. *Insignia Neapolitanorum, Genuensium* – BSB Cod. icon. 279, Italien, 1550-1550. foglio 40.



Tav. 14. Pietro Cavoti. Museo Civico Galatina. Stemma Granai/Castriota. n° inv. 676.
Foto L. Galante



Tav. 15. Mesagne (Brindisi) Chiesa Madonna della Misericordia. Stemma murario dei Granai Castriota, forse di Giovanni.

Zeqirja M. BALLATA

**GJERGJ KASTRIOTI– SCANDERBEG IN
INTERNATIONAL AND NATIONAL ALBANIAN MUSICAL
CREATIVITY**

On some early musicians of our nation

We, Albanians, even though among the oldest in the Illyrian Peninsula and beyond, because of different historic events, did not progress under natural conditions and circumstances. We did not have an overall uninterrupted and favorable development of culture, including music creativity, like other European and developed nations. Nonetheless, the truth is that we had a promising initiative, an early development of music that was valuable even though it was not under favorable circumstances. It started in the second half of the IV century and beginning of the V century with the renowned Dardan bishop: **Niceta di Remesiana** (= **Nicetas of Remesiana**), who was born, lived and ended his significant activity during 340-415, in Remesiana (near Bela Palanka in Serbia today), an area that belonged to the Illyrian Dardania, bordering with the province of Dacia. There he lived in times of numerous barbaric incursions, accompanied by looting, destruction, burning and murder. He was endowed with religious, literary, and musical gifts and duties: he wrote Songs and Hymns, which he taught to believers in choirs. Such a preparation was required by a clergyman like Nicetas, well known, and respected. In addition to his duties as a clergyman, he was also the composer of the universally known hymn "Te Deum laudeamus" (We praise you, Lord), widely spread throughout the Christian world, as one of the rarest prototypes of Paleo-Christian Hymnody to date.

He had friendly relations with personalities of the time, especially with poet Paolin Nolan, a versatile intellectual who had dedicated to Nicetas two poems and had mentioned and praised him in various

writings. The works of Nicetas are especially referred to in the work of Genad Marsei, entitled "De viris illustribus" (= Illustrious men), which talks about the works of Nicetas. One of Nicetas' works is entitled: "Instructio ad competentes", made of VI Brochures/Treatises, with guidelines for catechumen; the other is entitled "De diversis appellationibus"; the third "De vigilis servorum Dei" (= Masses in the service of God); the fourth "De psalmodiae bono" (= On the benefits of psalms); the fifth "De utilitate hymnorum" (= On the importance of hymns), and the book "Ad lapsam verginem libellus" (For the fallen virgin). We should add to these books "De Pascha" (On Easter), and the hymn mentioned above: "Te Deum laudeamus". His friend, P. Nolan also mentions other songs and hymns, composed by Nicetas, even though he does not mention his name. The English scholar-musician, A. E. Burn, published them in the volume titled "Nicetas of Remesiana, his life and works", in 1950, Cambridge (England). Two sermons were published in the "Journal of the studies, no. 2 during 1920-23 with the support of C. H. Turner, translated first in German (by F. Kattenbuch: Das Apostol-Symbo, published in Leipzig (Germany) in 1894-1900), and then in English by G. C. Wolsh, published in the column "The Fathers of the Church" VII in New York (USA) in 1909. They were also translated in Italian by J. Cazzarige, "Note ambrosiane" (= Ambrosian notes), published in Milano-Verese, in 1948.

These hymns with theological-liturgical content reflect the situation and the dogmatic problems of the Christian Church at the time, when theology was conceived as a religious philosophy and ecclesiastical discipline. Those times and duties demanded works with that kind of religious content even from Nicetas of Remesiana, considering that he was a product of the society at that time; and, the society, including the circumstances of the time when he lived and acted, must have influenced his activity as a bishop. The works of Nicetas of Remesiana, best illustrated by "Te Deum laudeamus" and the "De psalmodiae bono" composition, as well as other works, have been further appreciated by the cultural-artistic and religious tradition, as an early memorial of musical creativity and musicology. Throughout the centuries, the hymn "Te Deum laudeamus" has been adapted, reworked, and orchestrated in various compositions, including choral, vocal-instrumental, and even orchestral-symphonic, by different composers, such as: da Palestrina,

Byrd, Gallus, Gossek, di Lasso, Festa, Praetorius, Hassler, Schein, Luli, Purcel, Scarlatti, Handl, Jomeli, Hasse, Scharpentier, Mozart, Leo, Boyce, J. S. Bach, Paisiello, Berlioz, Gounod, Bruckner, Dvorzhak, Verdi, Mahler, Widor, Puccini, Sgambati...

Nicetas of Remesiana, an invaluable personality in the theological and philosophical world, and an author of studies with a musicological nature, is known for his booklet "De Psalmodiae bono" (= the good Psalmody), with singing instructions and a great variety of details for singers or choir leaders. "De Psalmodiae..." was written in the Latin language of the early Middle Ages. This is understandable, given the fact that, at the time when Nicetas wrote it, Rome was the political, ecclesiastical and economic center, and Latin, or old Greek, were the common languages of writing and speaking, despite the existence of different ethnicities¹.

There was a gap during the VI-XII centuries. However, during the 13th-14th centuries, we have the singer, choral director, the pedagogue and the widely known composer, recognized from the tender age when he was a student to his culminating development: this was **John Koukouzelis**, born around 1280 in imperial Durrës, educated in Constantinople who passed away in the Great Lavra of Greece between 1360 -1375.

John Koukouzelis, as a student, attracted attention for his super musical and beautiful voice. Therefore, he applied and was accepted to the School of the Imperial Palace of Constantinople. He stood out among the students early on, and earned the nickname "The Angel Voice" or "the Angelic", and then "Master". Then he became the leader of the singers and Master of the Imperial Chapel; he became known as a singer, the leader of the imperial choirs and the most popular musician and composer in Constantinople throughout his life and after.

According to the tradition, passed down from generation to generation, Koukouzelis did not know Greek language when he went to study to Constantinople and was poorly fed, and when his schoolmates asked him what he was eating he answered briefly: "kuqezele" meaning red cabbage. Probably that's how his last name came to be: Koukouzelis.

¹See: Edmond Buharaja, Niceta i Remesiana-s: teomuzikozofia e tij në kulturën Niceane, Tirana: Akademia e Shkencave e Shqipërisë, 2018, pg. 237.

After becoming well known and respected, John settled in the best monastery, the "Great Lavra" - Holy Mountain (Greece), to deepen and expand his activity as an outstanding musician, pedagogue and composer along his whole life. He created a system of musical writing, known as Koukouzelian musical writing, which is considered the third phase of Byzantine Semiography, explained in the form of a special treatise, entitled "Initiative of psaltic signs, compiled and processed by master John Koukouzelis". Notation, his musical system, was used for several centuries in all ecclesiastical music of the East.

John Koukouzelis, being a composer, pedagogue and hymnographer, created also other didascal works, very important for Hymnology and the History of Byzantine music at that time. Some of the well-known hymns he created include Anixandres, Song of the Cherub/Cherubs, Psalm 107, Polyeleia, the great papadic Iso and many others. He died around 1360/1375 in the Monastery of Great Lavra, Holy Mountain, Greece. He was the most prominent representative of all Byzantine musical culture: singer, composer and a music theorist on an international level.

After Koukouzelis, there was a "silence" regarding creativity, though a shorter one. After a little more than a century, another Epirote of our race emerges during the XVI century: the versatile abbot Georgius Danucio Lapaçay(a), or Gjergj Danush Lapaçaj in Albanian, originating – as he himself wrote – from imperial Durrës. He lived in Monopoli and was a symbolic scholar, mathematician, and composer of European Renaissance, discovered first by the Italian musicologist Domenico Morgante, and after the year 2000, by pedagogue, composer, and musicologist Ramadan Sokoli (1920-2008). His work was later explained in more detail and reinforced by musicologist dr. Edmond Buharaja². Georgius Danucio Lapaçay was a mathematician and a personality of our nation's musical culture, originating from an Arbanon family with roots in Durrës. He was the author of the "*Antifonari 1532*". He proved to be the connecting link over the centuries ensuring the existence of our national historic musical Culture. It started with **Nicetas of Remesiana**, early Medieval Ages, IV-V centuries and then **John Koukouzelis** during the High Middle Ages in the XIII-XIV centuries, Georgius Danucio Lapaçay during the XV-XVI centuries with his

² Dr. Edmond Buharaja, *Niceta i Remesiana-s: teomuziksofia në kulturën Niceane: Tiranë, Akademia e shkencave e Shqipërisë*, 2018, p. 237.

musical Codex, composers *Luka Sorgo* (among Croats known as: Sorkoçeviq, Dubrovnik, 1734-1789) and his son Anton Sorgo (among Croats known as: Sorkoçeviq, Dubrovnik, 1775 - Paris, 1841), and composers of different genres. Georgius Danucio Lapaçay (XV-XVI centuries) forms the link of Albanian national musical creativity between Nicetas of Remesiana (IV-V centuries), John Koukouzelis (XIII-XIV centuries), and Luka Sorgo/Sorkoçeviq (1734-1789) and his son Anton Sorgo/Sorkoçeviq (1775-1841)³, all of them authors of different musical works...

Gjergj Kastriot – Skanderbeg,

Inspiring international and Albanian nationwide composers.

Key words: *Gjergj Kastrioti – Scanderbeg, an internationally recognized leader, folk songs and works, works of different musical genres by foreign and Albanian nationwide composers.*

Summary:

The 550th-anniversary of the Albanian national strategist hero, designated as the “Year of Gjergj Kastrioti - Scanderbeg” on an international and Albanian national level, aimed to show the great personality of Scanderbeg as a leader and strategist on a European level and beyond. As such, besides influencing other fields, such as sciences and figurative arts, he influenced considerably the field of musical creativity including a series of various musical genres among foreign and Albanian composers, nationwide and internationally. Works of most diverse musical genres and formations were composed on this subject, starting from romances and choral songs with or without a soloist or reciter, to symphonic poems and concerts, symphonies and operas.

Antonio Vivaldi (Venice, 1678, Vienna, 1741), violinist at the church of Saint Mark, part of the orchestra and then a substitute for his father. He learned music theory and the organ from Legrenzi; and then became the conductor of the Orchestra of the Basilica of Saint Mark. Being afflicted by ill health, he was released from his priestly duties and was able to devote himself to being a violinist, composer and teacher at the *Seminario musicale dell Ospedale della Pieta*, where he spent almost his

³ R. Sokoli, 16 shekuj, Eurorilindja, Tiranë, 1995, pp. 11-48.

entire life as "Maestro di violino", *dei Concerti*, as a director and composer. He raised the artistic level of the *Orchestra of Ospedale*; he composed works for that orchestra, writing performance instructions and notes on music scores, which are preserved as valuable evidence of performance, but he was also acclaimed internationally as a virtuous violinist. Vivaldi, after 1710, had many works performed and published in Italy, Germany, France, and England; an internationally renowned personality whose operatic works travelled around and were performed in Vicenza, Florence, Milan, Rome, Venice, etc.

One of his 50 most beautiful operas is considered to be **The Scanderbeg opera with 3 acts**. It is divided into 38 parts and dedicated to the Albanian national hero, Gjergj Kastriot – Scanderbeg. It is based on the libretto of Antonio Salvi, published under the title "Scanderbeg" and it is in the national library of Rome numbered *37-7-b-31- drama per musica da representarsi in Florence nel Teatro della Pergola, estate MDCCXVIII*". The authorities of that well-known Theater had alerted the fans that - in honor of the solemn reopening of the Theater - on June 22, 1718, the performance of the opera Scanderbeg by composer Antonio Vivaldi would take place. In that premiere, the role of Scanderbeg was played by soloist Giovanni Batista Carboni; the role of Donika by soprano Franzesca Cuzzoni-Sandoni "La parmigiana"; the role of Aronizi (=Arianit), by tenor Antonio Ristorini; the role of Ormondo (=Count Uran), general in the Kastrioti Army, by Giovanni Pietro Sbaraglia "il Pesciatino"; the role of Climeni (= Kelmendi), general of Scanderbeg by Anna Guglielmini-soprano; Sultan Murat II by Gaetano Mossi, tenor; the role of Asteria, his daughter by Agata Landi-contralto, and Acomati, general of Sultan Murat II and lover of Asteria, by Rosa Venturini, soprano.

It is thought that this opera was one of Vivaldi's most beautiful, but unfortunately also one of those operas with an irregular and short-lived progress; even to date, without having the chance to be seen often on the Italian or other scenes! Based on the chronicles of the time, it is thought that there is important data that can shed light on this unfortunate problem. Besides the libretto, only fragments of the music score have been preserved! Vivaldi's operas, composed starting from 1713 and after, as well as the "Scanderbeg" opera, were praised very positively. But soon the performance of this opera became impossible, due to the fact that part

of its music score was lost under unclear circumstances!!! Only a few dozen pages, and pieces of their fragments, remain. The opera would be one of Vivaldi's most successful works. And, to this day, it is not known how was it possible that the music score of this opera was lost, while only some of its pieces and fragments have been preserved! Thus, a series of questions were raised and are being raised to this day: Why was it taken out so quickly from the repertoire? Musicologist Ennio Stipčević, son of the well-known Arbereshe Illyrologist Aleksandër Stipčević, wrote that the opera "Scanderbeg" was the first Vivaldi presented himself to the public of Venice"; he also collaborated with the librettist. We know that it reflected Vivaldi's successful activity as a composer, violinist and conductor, as well as the fact that Vivaldi was commissioned to create it and it was then successfully performed on the occasion of the opening of Theater dela Pergola. It was strange that the "Scanderbeg" opera stopped being performed, after it was successful for a season. The interruption of its performance could have been related perhaps to the political situation of that time! As the musicologist mentioned above wrote, "Venice had fought for centuries against the Ottoman Empire; had even more faith in the defenders of Christianity. In return, Venice sometimes provided assistance with people or money, or gave thanks or praise...It is known that after numerous successful battles, the figure of Scanderbeg would become interesting in Venice and in other Italian states, but the stories about the brave Albanian prince would become equally uninteresting after the danger had passed, similarly to how they would become relevant in many moments of crisis and fear in Europe related to the expansion of the Ottomans! Another question rises as well: how was it possible that the major part of the score of this opera was lost while some of its fragments still remain and are still preserved? Was the score of this opera by this famous violinist, pedagogue, and composer lost due to carelessness, or was most of it stolen by someone commissioned by the politics of the time? This remains unexplained to this day! Could it have been a theft (!), not completely finished, by some jealous and insane musician or composer? Or, even, by an anti-Albanian, let's say for the fact that the key role in this operatic work was entrusted to a freedom-loving internationally recognized Albanian hero! It is possible also that the score could have remained in the library of a composer or even a musician from the former

Republic of Yugoslavia. At 25 years old, I, the author of these lines, was here five decades ago in 1968, as a master's student in composition and in the third year of musicology in Ljubljana. I had a letter of recommendation from the head of the Branch of musicology at the time, prof. Dr. Dragotin Cvetko, to go to the Library of Rome or the Vatican and do research on Scanderbeg opera. I had returned doing nothing else other than seeing the pieces of pentagram sheets of the displayed musical score!

Francois Rebel (Paris, 1701-1775), violinist and composer, member of a royal ensemble of 24 violins; he was an excellent instrumentalist; performed concerts in Germany and the Czech Republic; he was also a composer in the royal palace; then the queen appointed him chief interdant for chamber music during 1732-55 when he developed intense theatrical and concert activities.

Composer Rebel received many awards and was known mostly as a composer in the musical theater genre. He was the author of ballets, pastorals, cantatas; then he authored a *Te Deum*, a *De profundis* and - what is more important for us - he was also the author of the opera entitled "*Scanderbeg*", which he composed in 1735. However, regarding this opera, unfortunately we have no information nor can we find any details in the European encyclopedias about its possible performances.

Kosta Manojlović (1890 - 1949), a composer, choir leader and musicologist. He is among the foreign composers, whose works are connected in some way or form with the figure of our hero Gjergj Kastriot-Scanderbeg. He started learning music at the religious and music school in Belgrade with the well-known composer Stevan Mokranjac. He spent a period of his studies in Moscow and then in Munich. The Balkan Wars and the First World War interrupted his studies, which he then completed in 1919 at Oxford. He was the Chairman of the Association of singers of Belgrade and Mokranjac; professor in the High School of Music, secretary of the Belgrade Philharmonic... He contributed to the founding of the Belgrade Academy of Music, and served as a professor and dean; author of miniatures, cantata *Psalm 137* and a series of choral songs. These songs include the *Cycle of four Albanian folk songs*, composed in Albanian, the source

language, in 1933, and entitled “*The songs of Scanderbeg’s motherland*”. The first song is “*Oj, would you come with me*”, which is a love song with a beautiful melody and verses. The second song, entitled *O half of your forehead*, is more extensively developed. The third song, titled *Take off the clothes of boyhood*, is the only one for a female choir in this cycle of four songs, and has a slightly oriental sound. Meanwhile, the fourth one, *North winds*, is developed based on modal harmony.

Fan Stilian Noli (Ibrik Tepe, European Turkey, 1882 - Philadelphia, USA, 1965), a versatile figure: poet, translator, publicist, statesman, bishop. In the 1930s he finished his studies in the field of composition at the New England Conservatory (USA). He had before expressed his passion and interest for this creative branch. During several years he composed *The Choral Hymnal* (Save Us, Easter Troparion, Another Easter Troparion, Troparion of St. George, The Sunday Entrance Song (1936) and Psalm 137 “Along the rivers of Babylon” for mixed choir; the *Albanian Rhapsody*, confirming also in this creative field his persistent will to develop his creative-artistic skills, even though these skills had not been lacking until then.

He left no field untouched during his wide activity stretching over five decades. Thus, during his studies he composed differently three nationally important works for the nationwide musical creativity. The *Albanian rhapsody* for orchestra, developed according to the model used by the romantics, relies on some folk melodies. This is natural, since folklore is imposed in a way by the title itself. The topics developed as basic musical thematic material are lined up, so to speak, one after the other and tend to create contrasts of orchestral sounds and colors. These are clear and the variety of rhythmic-metrical and agogic elements refreshes them. The sounds of the orchestration become very satisfying when instruments play individually and during orchestral blocks. It was performed in an understandable language with lyrical and elegiac elements, similar to the works of the XIX century. The sound and color, as well as the combined themes are developed according to the romantic compositional technique.

The other work of Noli, *Poor Gaspër*, a ballad for tenor and orchestra, was composed based on the similarly entitled poem by French poet Paul Verlaine and translated by Noli; he had been especially impressed by this

poem. That's why he decided to put it to music for his graduation, bringing to fore the instruments and instrumental groups, but also the slightly larger orchestral blocks. It is worth saying that this *Ballad* relies on musical themes known as revolutionary and proletarian to the general public. Use is made of the song of the French Bourgeois Revolution, the Marseillaise and the Internationale. Noli showed his progressive worldviews through poetic and journalistic works, plays and translated militant poems and through international revolutionary musical themes.

The symphonic poem "Scanderbeg" is developed as a whole which consists of a series of parts connected to each other through the thematic material and tempos that mold all the material into a unique whole. This poem stands out for two reasons: its content is related to the most enlightened period of our national history, including the European recognized glorious hero, Gjergj Kastrioti-Scanderbeg and his battles with his loyal warriors in the Albanian lands; the second reason is because this musical work was written for an orchestral formation, when there were very few such and similar works by Albanian composers.

The "Scanderbeg" poem stands well architecturally. Its theme is related to the content of the homonymous poem by Longfellow. Here we have a work which, to some extent, stands in the context of the creative trends of the time in the broadest sense of the word. The musical themes with different characteristics align and intertwine with one another, depending on the content of the poem progress. The first theme with an epic-heroic character presents the figure of Skanderbeg and sounds confident on the major scale. Although it begins on a clear scale, modulations follow immediately, which indicates that Noli had analyzed and studied Classical and Romantic music, but also the modern music. Theme II has an oriental mood and aims to describe the call to prayer by the muezzin. It is followed by a theme with a dancing character that tends to present the environment where Scanderbeg was born and raised. Noli uses pathetic and heroic expressions to address the theme of commitment and call for war against the Ottomans. Meanwhile, this latter theme is supplemented by the motif of a chorale by J. S. Bach, which gives the work more epic weight. Then there is again theme II, as well as the initial theme of Skanderbeg. They have attached a melody from the Anglican liturgy as well. Present is also the folk song "*Even the cobblestones of the street*". It symbolizes the triumphant return of Skanderbeg to the

Motherland with his warriors. Noli depicts the Ottoman conquest by a reprise of the II oriental theme, but he also repeats the Anglican liturgical one. He should have done this in order to strengthen the desire for liberation from foreign rule. It is worth saying that the way the thematic musical material has been developed for orchestral formations is similar to how it was practiced in the rhapsodies for piano, namely for orchestra, by the romantic F. Liszt and other composers. If we remove the motifs which have a character alien to the theme of the poem's content, which weigh on the texture of the work a little bit, this poem has the necessary dramaturgical, musical, and architectural features and an advanced orchestral technique. These elements produce a sound with combined colors and a polyphonic spirit created in a flexible way, in accordance with the content of the poetic text.

Martin Gjoka (Tivar, 1890 - Shkodër, 1940), graduated from the Franciscan College in Shkodër and continued his university studies in theology-philosophy in Salzburg, Austria (1908-1912). There he also trained as a musician. Upon returning to Shkodra, in 1912, he was a music teacher, collector and developer of the musical folklore of the Mbishkodra Highlands. This was the basis upon which he created his musical language. He was among the organizers of musical activities during 1917-35 in Shkodër and founder and director of choral and orchestral formations; activist in "Rozafa" and "Bogdani" associations; author of a number of mainly ecclesiastical musical works.

Some of his main works are: Rhapsody on Albanian folk songs for wind orchestra, Album for harmonium with 24 pieces, a series of vocal and instrumental pieces, musically developed the opera Judas Maccabey (1917) based on the same title drama by poet Gjergj Fishta, the hymn "*Like the wing of God's Angel*" (1913) based on the verses of Fishta, *At the bridge of Shala for flute and piano*, *Pastoral for orchestra*, *Psalm 137 "By the rivers of Babylon"*. And, above all, he is the author of the composition *Rhapsody on Albanian folk songs* for wind orchestra, as well as the author of the first two-time symphony "*Two flowers on the grave of Skanderbeg*" (1922), dedicated to Gjergj Kastriot-Scanderbeg.

At the same time, this was the first attempt among us to develop sounds and works of "a due" orchestral format. These were also the first real steps towards the development of professional musical creativity,

including the integration of the symphonic orchestral formation, which was very important for the development of a series of post-war composers. Composer Father Gjoka was also the conductor of the Shkodra Orchestra and founder of the choirs "Rozafat" in 1918 and "Illyricum" in 1922. In those years, Father Martini had paid special attention and dedication to our hero Gjergj Kastrioti-Scanderbeg – creating and performing the symphonic orchestral work entitled poetically *Two flowers on the grave of Skanderbeg* (1922).

Harallamb Kristo Koçi (18??- 19??). His family, after the failure of the uprising in Olimp, in which his father Kristo Koçi had participated, moved and settled in Odesa (Russia). Harallamb, after completing his studies at the Odesa Seminary, secretly came to South-Eastern Albania dressed as a monk, and - perhaps - even selected some Albanian folk songs, which he himself published during 1892-1894; and, during this time, he may have recorded some Albanian folk songs, which he also published later. After returning to Russia, he enrolled at the University of St. Petersburg, simultaneously pursuing higher music studies with teachers in the Conservatory there. In the capital of tsarist Russia, he tried to show the world the glorious past of the Albanian people through the press and lectures.

On 21.01.1895, he organized an "*Albanian Evening*", with the participation of prominent artists of the Imperial Theatre, with Choir and Ballet⁴. Various numbers were performed in the first part: *Songs from Korça, ballads and romances*, composed from Harallamb; Part II: *Dances and songs*, was performed by the Imperial Choir dressed in Albanian costumes and directed by Harallamb himself. It is thought that the drama "*Tears of Albania*" was first shown in the St. Petersburg Theater. Harallamb may have also left marches and other musical plays, and even an opera dedicated to Scanderbeg. Similarly, according to a booklet printed in Russian in Peterburg, he composed and published an anthem for Albania in 1895. Several foreign newspapers published in Petersburg, such as "Peterburger Zeitung", reported on the activity of this Albanian creator. They wrote that Harallamb Kristo Koçi had summarized Albanian stories and the heroic poem "*Death of Skanderbeg*" in a text in Russian and Albanian.

⁴ Eurorilindja, Tirana, 1995, shih 1, a, b e c).

Murat Shehu from Berat, (Berat, 1897 - Philadelphia, 1978), was an exile who immigrated at a very young age to the USA - on the eve of the Independence of the Albanian state. Besides doing additional work in exile, he managed to complete the Music Conservatory, supported by conductor Valter Krigiatus. Throughout his life as an exile, composer Shehu sang to his homeland, through works of different formats, such as:

- *Lyrical songs: One night in Albania, Our Mother Albania, The Rose of Albania...*, composed in support of Albanian folk intonations full of longing and patriotic spirit. The *Rose of Albania* was perhaps dedicated to Gjergj Kastriot-Scanderbeg.

Composer Shehu composed also *Three Symphonic Poems*, otherwise known as Albanian Rhapsodies. He donated them to the Albanian state representatives in the USA. Rhapsodies no. 4 and 5, unfortunately, were lost when the composer was hospitalized. He passed away in hospital in 1978.

Petro Kosta, another exile in the USA, active patriot and composer and Choir leader. Together with the musical band of the Pan-Albanian Association "Vatra" of America, he came with 200 Albanian volunteers from the USA to participate and help in the Defense of Vlora. He then returned to the USA to continue his contribution to develop musical culture among the Albanians there through writings and music publications in various papers. In addition to his activity as a Choir leader, he composed, besides songs and other pieces of music, in 1926, the *Triumphal March for voice and piano*, dedicated to Gjergj Kastriot-Scanderbeg, which was published in the USA.

Lorenc Antoni was born in Skopje in 1909, where he earned his initial knowledge of music. Then he continued privately. In 1941 he came to Kosovo, first in Ferizaj, then he settled in Prizren, where he contributed to the founding of SHKA "Agimi" (1944) and its Choir, which he directed in the following years, achieving success outside of Kosovo as well. He was both the initiator of creative life and music among us. He contributed, in 1948, to the establishment of the Lower School of Music as its director; then the high school of music was established, where he was also a teacher and director until 1956. In those

years, he developed a number of choral songs and some orchestral ones, such as "In the beautiful Prizren", and other songs written for a mixed choir, and some of his ethnomusicological works were also published. Then (in 1956), he went to work to Radio Pristina – as a folk music editor, and later to RTV-Pristina Production, where he also led groups of singers. He continued as a musical melograph; collected and published nearly 800 Albanian folk songs/melodies from Kosovo, Presheva Valley, Macedonia and Montenegro. As a result of all this ethnomusicological creative work, he developed seven collected volumes of songs, published one after the other, entitled Albanian Musical Folklore (1956-76). He continued even more intensively by processing and creating choral songs: Albanian Choirs; The echoes of the heart (1960), the Opojanja suite (1962), In the joy of Ulcinj; and then continued with the Collection of songs for pioneers "*An old crab*" (1974), works for mandolin orchestra, some Albanian Rhapsodies for tambourine orchestra (1960), and some orchestral works: In old Prizren (1959), In beautiful Prizren, Three Albanian Dances (1962-65), Highlander (1969), etc.

On the occasion of the 500th anniversary of our internationally acclaimed hero, Gjergj Kastriot-Scanderbeg, RTV-Pristina Music Production announced a competition for the composition of musical works. Among others, Lorenc Antoni composed the choral song *triumphant Skanderbeg for mixed choir*, based on the verses of poet Enver Gjerqeku. Family members informed us that it is not known how and where this song was lost.

Preнкë Jakova (Shkodër, 1917- Tirana, 1969), composer, a People's Artist. He was born in Shkodër, where he completed the high school. From an early age he participated in the artistic life of the city: as a chorister, instrumentalist, theater actor, and then director of the Choir and Band. His first compositions date from that period.

During 1936-1939, he worked for some time as a teacher in the villages of Shkodra and Mirdita and during 1941-42 in Katërkoll in Ulcinj and Ostro in Kraja. In 1938, he composed the children's operetta *The Dwarfs*, the Kolë Jakova libretto and, later, an *Album of songs for children*. In 1943, he studied clarinet at the "Santa Cecilia" Academy in Rome. After the liberation of Albania, he worked at the House of Culture in Shkodra, where he directed the musical creativity of the district for 30

years. There he founded, in 1962, *the festival of songs for pioneers*, a national event that is continuing to this day.

After the "Judah Maccabee" melodrama in (1945), staging "*The Shkodra Wedding*" (1947) and the musical act "*Light on Albania*" (1952), he composed, in 1958, the opera *Mrika* based on the libretto of writer/poet Llazar Siliqi, the first national work of this major genre such as the musical theater. Composer Prenkë Jakova was the author of the second opera, *Scanderbeg*, composed in 1968, based on the libretto of writer/poet Llazar Siliqi, dedicated to the memory of the 500th anniversary of the death of our internationally acclaimed legendary leader, Gjergj Kastriot- Scanderbeg.

As the founder of the Albanian opera, Prenkë Jakova is considered, at the same time, to be one of the main representatives of vocal lyrics with a classical-romantic orientation, who, in addition to musical-theatrical works, composed cantatas, romances, *mass choral songs*, and other songs, such as *Eye like a cherry*, *Margjelo*, *New Wheat*, *New Spring*, *songs for pioneers...*

The Opera *Scanderbeg*, with two acts, 6 tableaux and 22 characters was composed by the nationally known Albanian composer, Prenkë Jakova, for soloists, choir, and orchestra, based on the libretto of the well-known writer Llazar Siliqi. The subject of this musical-theatre work is the most sublime period of resistance of all Albanian people, led by the national hero Gjergj Kastriot-Scanderbeg against the Ottoman Turks.

Act I with tableau 1, in the autumn of the distant year 1443. The scene shows a forest from the lands of the Kastriots. On the background there is a cave. It is dawn. Next to a fire, sitting on a stump is a warrior with long hair and beard, as a token of mourning: shepherd Damjan Mirosha, brave and loyal to Gjergj Kastriot".

It begins with an Introduction, in the tempo *Andante maestoso*, measure 2/4, melodic lines of different major seconds, continued partly along all the scales up and down to the 14th measure. When the curtain opens, the melodic lines change at the same time in bar 3/4 with octave tremolo, in *Larghetto* tempo, sequencing a string of augmented chords across bars 16-27, continuing through augmented chords to basslines, passing through bar 33, to bar 34, in the F-minor dolce cantabile scale, where there is a sensitive melodic line accompanied by low-sounding

chords, mainly where the F-minor tonal element is followed along the bars.

Ramadan Sokoli (1920, Shkodër, 2008), an ethnomusicological and ethnoorganological researcher, composer, professor. He was born in Shkodër, where he completed his High School. He attended higher studies for flute and composition in Florence during 1946-53, worked at various tasks in the field of culture and music; since 1953 he was a teacher at the artistic high school "J. Misja", where he founded the flute class, the Folklore Class and the Folk Instruments Cabinet, which became the foundations of Albanian ethnomusicology. He led many expeditions and collected rich folklore material. In 1957, he participated in the complex expedition with German researchers: Stockman and Wilfrid Fidler; in 1958 he led the Albanian-Romanian Expedition. Sokoli published a number of works in the field of Ethnomusicology and Musicology, such as: "*Les danzes populaires et les instruments musicaux du peuple Albanaise*", 1958 (Albanian Folk Dances); Albanian folk songs (1966); Illuminated Figures (1965); Albanian musical folklore (Morphology), 1965; A Method for Flute (1970); The Dance and Music of Our Ancestors (1971); Albanian musical folklore (Organography), 1975; The Figure of Scanderbeg in music (1978); Folkloric Research (1982); The patriotic Song (1985); The musical instruments of the Albanian people (co-author), 1991. Sokoli has researched figures of Albanian art and culture over the centuries and published the books: "16 centuries" (1995), "Georgius Danucio Lapaçay (2000)", "The oral traditions of the Albanian world"; and articles from the fields of musical studies and other fields of art and national culture. He composed vocal-instrumental and orchestral musical works, songs that have become popular, such as: *Return of Scanderbeg to Kruja* for choir and piano (verses: N. Frashëri); Turtledove; Bleating sheep; Zanusha; Grow tiny apple, etc. He received the "World Oscar of Folklore" Award from IUFA; and was awarded with the order "The Great Master".

Abdulla Grimci (Shkodër 1921 - Ascoli Pizzeno/Rome, 2018), originated from a family of musicians. After completing the high school in his hometown, he graduated from the "Santa Cecilia" Conservatory of

Music in Rome, majoring in wind instruments; in 1935, he became a member of the Shkodra Band; in 1937, member of the Royal Band; in 1939, a member of the Band of the Royal Guard of Rome. In 1944, he returned to Albania, and in 1945-46, he led the Shkodra Band; in 1949, he was head of the Music Office at the Arts Committee and organizer of the National Folk Music Festival.

In 1950, he was founder of the Albanian Orchestra and Philharmonics in Tirana; in 1953, head of the music editorial staff at Radio-Tirana and a music editor for 10 consecutive years. In 1960/62, founder of the Symphony Orchestra in Radio-Tirana; in 1964, he worked at the Central House of Folk Creativity; he headed also the musical activity in Durrës. Author of arrangements and adaptations of songs and dances, for choir and wind orchestra, winner of awards at festivals; author of romances for voice and piano, symphonic dances and poems, pieces for brass bands. He published the book Theory of music and solfège.

On the 500th death anniversary of Scanderbeg, composer **Grimci**, like Prenkë Jakova, composed, the opera Gjergj Kastrioti Scanderbeg, according to the libretto by Matish Gjo' Luc. Its premiere was shown that same year (1968) at the Palace of Culture "Aleksandër Moisiu" in Durrës.

Çesk Zadeja (Shkodër, 1927 - Rome, 1997), was born in Shkodër. He began to train as a musician in the artistic environment of his city. He got his first music lessons from Martin Gjoka, Filip Mazreku and Prenk Jakova. He was a trumpet player in the Wind Orchestra lead by Prenk Jakova. He studied at the Music Academy "Santa Cecilia" in Rome during 1941-43. Then he returned to his homeland, where he worked at Radio-Shkodra in 1946/47; during 1949-51 he was the conductor of the AAUP.

Zadeja studied Composition at the Conservatory "P. I. Tchaikovsky in Moscow (1951/56); a composer, a people's artist; among the most prominent representatives of the Albanian professional musical tradition. Upon returning to the Motherland, he became one of the country's central musical figures: co-founder and director of important musical institutions. He was one of the founders of the Composition and Polyphony Class (1962); head of the Music Department at ILA (1966), artistic director of TOB (1972). Until the end of his life, he was a

professor of Composition at the Academy of Arts. Many composers trained under his direction; enriching Albanian music with quality works. Zadeja's rich 40-year-old creativity became a vocal representative of the development processes of Albanian musical creativity in the second half of the 20th century. It helped for the formation of the professional tradition, as well as the cultivation of traditional forms and genres in Albania. His style was formed based on a synthesis of the European musical experience of the XIX and XX centuries, using the intonation and modal resources of the country's folklore heritage. He is considered the most influential composer among the generations of Albanian musicians.

He created, so to speak, in all musical genres and forms. Some of his various works are: Tokata (1954), Humoreska (1961), Prelude (1965); Symphony in La (1956), Symphonic Suite "Scanderbeg" (1957); Heavy Drum Dance (1964); Ballets "Delina" (1962), Fearless Eagle, The Girls of the Stone city, Before the Storm (1982); Concerto for piano and orchestra (1968), Sonata for violin and piano (1972). His works were performed inside and outside the country. He was given the Award of the Republic, 1st and 2nd degrees. He died in 1997 in Rome.

The Symphonic suite "Scanderbeg" The great Albanian warrior, by Çesk Zade, composed in collaboration with composer Georgi Sviridov, consists of 12 parts. It begins in Moderato tempo with 35 measures in Maestoso tempo. The basic theme is quite similar to folk melos. It begins with rhythmic elements that are similar to the character of the mentioned tempo and theme, played by first chair violins. They are supported by other strings and here and there by small groups of wind instruments. It was used for the soundtrack of Scanderbeg movie, in 1957.

Part II, "Bleeding Land", Andante, with a total of 53 measures. The theme continues with the bass-clarinet and with an oriental element of the enlarged second, supported in part by woodwinds, cellos and double basses. The binary measure is 4/4; it continues, changing the measure sometimes to 4/4, sometimes to 3/4 with the continued presence of the entire orchestra, raising the intensity and dynamics to "forte e fortissimo", until this part is finished in the entire orchestral apparatus.

Part III, "Homeland", continues in bar 54, and includes 119 measures. It is in Andante con passione tempo in 2/4. It flows mainly with an

average dynamic. The theme here is mainly with eighth notes and relying on first chair violins, such as in the famous song "The mountains were filled with snow", supported partly by the strings and in part by the series of woodwind instruments. Then the other orchestral groups follow, almost the whole orchestra, at the same time while the tempo is accelerated (*Piu mosso*) and the dynamics are raised, ending with an eight-measure *Agitato presto*.

The fourth part, entitled "The Return", is significantly longer than the other parts performed so far. It has 97 measures, with a lively tempo, *Vivace*, and the dynamics revolving around are "forte" and "fortissimo", with the participation of almost the entire orchestral formation.

It is followed by the 5th part, "The Dance", in the *Allegretto* tempo and the 5/8 measure, which is present in our folk songs. The theme is, so to speak, ever more present and played by smaller orchestral groups.

The March of the Janissaries continues, until reaching the VII part which is an *Andante con dolore* made of 42 measures. The 8th part, the Assembly of Reconciliation, has a *Maestoso* tempo with 61 measures.

Follows the 9th part, "The Battle", with 21 measures. It has the "First Battle" with a *Vivacissimo* tempo comprising of 104 measures. "Subito attacca" continues with Battle II, *Allegro vivace*, of 97 measures. It continues in *Moderato* along 118 measures and followed suit by a proud theme starting from bar 120 and beyond, culminating in measure 139 in dyn. "ff", where it slows down up to measure 149 in "ppp". The Suite closes with a final in the "Andante" tempo, but with the same theme, full of pride and dynamics raised to "fff" by the entire orchestral formation and ends in measure 169.

Nikolla Zoraqi (Tirana, 1929 - 1991), composer, a People's Artist, born in Tirana; he graduated from the Artistic Lyceum "Jordan Misja", majoring in violin. During 1958-61, he studied in the Department of Composition at the Conservatory "P.I. Tchaikovsky" in Moscow. He finished his studies in 1962 at the Music Conservatory of Tirana. During 1959-68, he was the artistic leader of the People's Army Ensemble. During that period, he created his first musical works. He had important duties in the Ministry of Culture and Education. In 1973, when he turned to free creativity, he was in charge of the Musical Creativity Sector at Albanian Radio and Television.

His creativity includes almost every musical genre. Some of his works include four concertos for violin and orchestra, among which No. 2 stands out, composed in 1968. Composer Zoraqi contributed to the development and enrichment of the Albanian musical tradition; he is among the most popular representatives of 1-time orchestral forms; among the most illustrious composers of choreographic and musical-theatric works; author of several ballets and choreographic tableaux, such as: *The girl of the mountains* (1970), *The choreographic Rhapsody*, *History of a song* (1971), opera *Commissar 75*, etc,

Composer Zoraqi is, moreover, the author of a work dedicated to the national hero Gjergj Kastriot-Scanderbeg, composed for mixed choir, based on the poetry of the poet Luan Qafzezi, in 1968.

Mark Kaçinari (Prizren, 1935 – Pristina, 1985), after completing the High School of Music in Prizren – specializing in Pedagogics (1949-'53), and then the Academy of Music (1954-59) in Belgrade, returned to Kosovo as a fully formed professional, to contribute to the education of the younger generations in their mother tongue, which was rare in general and music schools. He was prof. of the Solfege at the SMM in Prizren and leader of the ShKA "Agimi" Choir in Prizren. Then he moved to the Pristina ShLP School as a Prof. of Solfege and founder and leader of the "Collegium cantorum" Choir of Pristina during 1966-'75, and then he became a prof. of Solfege at the Academy of Arts - Music Branch. Mark didn't stop there: he wanted to gain additional professional knowledge in the field of composition and studied during 1973-75 in the Department of Composition at the Faculty of Music in Skopje, in a class taught by prof. Toma Proshev. He did not manage to finish it because of his permanent engagements with the Choir.

After 10 years of activities with this Choir, with the aim of deepening his skills as a choral conductor, he enrolled in 1977 in postgraduate studies in Belgrade with prof. Vojislav Iliq, with whom he successfully continued most of his studies and performed, in 1979, the Mozart's Requiem in Pristina.

One of his analyzed works is the chorale *Sons of Albania* for mixed choir, composed in 1968, based on the verses of poet *Rifat Kukaj*, on the occasion of the 500th death anniversary of Gjergj Kastriot-Scanderbeg. It is a choral for mixed choir, spread over the B-minor scale, slightly

longer, divided into five short sections, like choral songs. It is called here a "Choral Cantata". It consists of a slow introduction, with a low dynamic, followed by a part in which the thematic musical material develops. A section with material from the Introduction follows, which takes on an aesthetic character, and near the end there is a reprise from the Introduction, with some relevant changes, ending strongly and solemnly, no longer in minor, as it started and developed, but in B-major. The division of choral voices into more groups with elements of recitative singing contributes to its overall composition within the relevant sectors. This is how he strengthened the epic-lyrical and dramatic character of the poetry, which is combined and merged into one with choral sounds.

Esat Rizvanolli (Gjakovë 1936, Pristina, 2006), after finishing the elementary school in his hometown, he graduated from the High School of Music in Prizren, in 1954. He worked for three years in Gjakovë as a music teacher. In 1957, he was enrolled in the theoretical-pedagogical Department at the Academy of Music in Belgrade, while in 1959 he started to study composition, in the class of prof. M Živković; after his professor passed away, he graduated with prof. Josif Enrico.

During 1983-1985, he specialized and completed postgraduate studies at the Conservatory "P. I. Tchaikovsky" in Moscow. Then he worked as a folk music editor at Radio Pristina, while in the last decade of his life he was a professor of Solfege at the Faculty of Music in the University of Pristina.

Esat started composing early as a student (We can't stand foreigners), and afterwards the choral songs: "Song on the murder of Maxhar Pasha"; "To our Paths"; "Mining"; "Short march"; solo songs: "The Fisherman", "The Spring song", "Abdyl, you sold your property"; the vocal-instrumental work "Resistance 43", the Concerto for violin and orchestra, the Concerto for viola and orchestra, the "Elegy for Halit Kasapolli" for string orchestra, as well as the orchestral work "Musica sinfonica"

He wrote the cantata "The Word of Scanderbeg," which he may have competed with in the same Year of Scanderbeg. Based on the verses of poet Rrahman Dedaj, the cantata was for soloist, choir and instrumental ensemble. However, it is not certain whether he competed and submitted

the source music score on that occasion in the music production office at RTV Pristina; its review was made from a manuscript existing in 2 versions, both of which are not fully complete because, in the meantime, composer Rizvanolli had devoted himself to other works, specifically to "Musica sinfonica". At this time, he was also graduating in the field of composition. Hence there is only the manuscript of the Cantata, but as far as we can see from the manuscript (two versions), it is not known whether the work was finished or whether it competed (since 50 years have passed and much has changed in the music production department of RTV Pristina after the last war in Kosovo).

Fahri Beqiri (Mitrovica, 1936), is one of those composers who started creating around the beginning of the 1960s. He started quite early to process and compose choral songs, some solo songs accompanied by piano and solo and chamber instrumental works, which have been presented outside of Kosovo. Fahri began to compose choral songs since he was a high school student in Prizren, such as: "Missitis came" (1958), "The song of youth" (1959, poetry by R. Hoxha), "The song of the martyr" (1959), dedicated to M. Bektesh, text by F. Gunga, "The song for Silvira Tomazini" (1959, text by L. Mulaku), "November Song", etc.

Even during his higher education (1961-66), at the Academy of Music in Belgrade, he also composed and developed several songs in the choral genre, such as: "Old Ibri" (1961), "My Dear" (1962), "Flying back and forth like a bird", as well as nearly 20 songs for the Children's Choir. The developed songs and the original choral songs based on artistic verses are clear in form and, in most cases, strophic. Even in terms of the technical-expressive musical means, almost all of them are not very complex: they are understandable, familiar and easy to listen; mostly for youth, happy and excited, with generally constant linear rhythm and light melodic lines, clear and linear harmonies. Some other developed songs are very relatable to the masses and have a folk sound. Therefore, these songs are often sung by students in different schools.

The dramatic poem "Scanderbeg" for symphony orchestra (1968-71) was the result of his desire to compose a symphonic work, which was the immediate need of his generation in terms of enriching musical creativity, as, until the mid-1960s, there were only a few accomplished works on this field. There was one work by L. Antoni and an attempt by

the very talented young man Halit Kasapolli; then, some orchestral works by R. Muliqi. This became necessary for Fahri, who in 1968 composed the Symphonic poem Scanderbeg. Moreover, that very year, the civilized world was commemorating the 500th death anniversary of the national leader Gjergj Kastriot-Scanderbeg. It was on that year (1968) that the content and theme of his first symphonic work was related to the figure of Skanderbeg and his just and continuous wars for the preservation of the lands and national identity.

His symphonic poem begins with an introduction and a slow tempo - the Adagio, which serves to foreshadow the dramatic conflicts that follow. The heroic-dramatic mood, which will programmatically represent the fabric of Skanderbeg's and our whole nation's heroism, is felt immediately. The author, speeding up the tempo and raising the sonorous power of the work with spontaneity and a predominantly post-romantic sounds, transitions to a fast tempo which develops with the participation of the entire orchestral formation, highlighting with strings and woodwinds the main epic-heroic theme. The composer uses this theme in different ways, sometimes choosing one instrument or instrumental group, sometimes another, and changing the sonorous power and sometimes the meter, through a transition bridge, to reach a slower pace. Theme II, lyrical and "cantabile", follows afterwards. This is the melody of our well-known song "The mountains are filled with snow", which has been used by other composers as well. He develops it mainly with imitative and augmentative-diminutive elements, thus reaching some dramatic climaxes in the "f" and "ff" dynamics of all the orchestral formation. At the same time, the author makes surprises, changing, on purpose, without any preparation, the fast tempo "Allegro drammatico" to a slow "Adagio". He does this to remind the listeners of the introductory theme of the Poem. Then he goes back (again) following the "Allegro drammatico" tempo.

After some dramatic moments, achieved by the force of the entire orchestral formation and musical expressive means, the symphonic poem reaches the end part with an optimistic and solemn "Maestoso" character. And, here comes to the fore, as before, the epic-heroic main theme intonated by 4 horns and the trombones, ending with a part from the slow introduction (Adagio), performed confidently.

The dramatic poem "Scanderbeg" for orchestra by composer Beqiri is quite convincing and successful. The poem is a clear and comprehensible work, with clear emotions, youthful spirit and both lyrical and dramatic moments. That's why we say that this symphonic poem, with its means of expression, its clear and almost classical form and language, and its mainly post-romantic language, is one of the author's most important works and an important symphonic work nationwide.

The author of this paper (Gjakovë, 1943), after finishing the high school of music (Prizren), graduated (1967) in the Department of Composition at the Academy of Music under the guidance of Acad. Prof. Matija Bravničar and completed his master studies (1969) with Acad. Prof. Lucijan M. Shkerjanc in Ljubljana as well; he also studied Musicology at the Faculty of Philosophy (1965-1969) in Ljubljana. He specialized in Venice (prof. Virgilio Mortari), in Siena, (Italy, prof. Franco Donatoni) and in Rome (prof. Gogfredo Petrassi).

In 1968, on the occasion of the celebration of the 500th anniversary of Gjergj Kastriot-Scanderbeg in Kosovo, I created the choral work *Scanderbeg came forth*, for reciters and mass choir, (mainly 8-voice), based on the verses of poet Rrahman Dedaj. This voluminous 8-voice choral work, for reciters and massive Choir, titled "Scanderbeg came forth" (and the Arbanon song "*Scanderbeg on midnight*", for reciters and male choirs, in 1991), is developed into sections of different sizes forming a piece of 3 acts, in the Andante tenebroso tempo. The 1st Section is sung on a 4-part measure. This section is relatively long, going up to the transitional-interconnecting Part, a type of "Pastorale ed pocco liberamente", which is used for the performance of a part of this choral song. The song begins with the Basses, divided into chromatic movements. The Altos appear in the III measure, then the Tenors and then the Sopranos. All divided into: I and II. This intervention of voices is a warning for what to come. After the introduction, the voices seem to retreat into background sounds, creating a stable, calm atmosphere of the initial narration. This is the nature of the song until the time changes (4/4 to 5/4). After the measure changes following Part I, the rhythmic progression changes also. Thus, use is made of shorter note values in order to achieve a special dramatic effect, expressed either by the melodic movements of voices or by the vertical harmonic sound of

choral singing. The presence of the signs of dynamics and the sung agogic serve to this purpose. They aid to the dramatic intensity expressed by the singing of a massive 8-voice choir. The choir members are dressed as recitators and create supporting sounds during the 2 measures. Afterwards there are three bars of text sung by the choir alone, and another three closing bars of reciters accompanied by the choir with sustaining sounds. The last three measures of this piece create a certain idea with the dynamic and unusual singing: in *ffp.* and with long note values. Between the first part and the second part, in between the sections, a part is sung only with low female voices in five beats: with the altos separated. This is an intermediate part, a part for relaxation, where the altos sing without text with vocal A, characterized by "pastoral" and "pocco liberamente".

Part II (New Sector) is in "Piu mosso". This part stands out by the formation of the choir but also because of how it is sung in its entirety. Here, the material presented in the first part develops especially at the start. In this part, the measures are variable, they contrast each other regarding the overall expansion of the texture and its elements.

Part III ("Moderato maestoso") resembles the finale of a dramatic development performed by a large choir. Based on the material, this part is similar to the First. Here the text is in isometry and isorhythm with the voices. The text is homophonized in choral singing. Seeing the historical greatness of Scanderbeg, and having in mind the considerable respect for this moment in time, the author of this choral song leans towards a massivity in choral singing. While writing this song, the literal rules of creating a choral song were observed. The considerable elemental richness of the overall choral texture is striking. The choral formation, the reduction of voices, their grouping and change at necessary moments and the change of measure, speak of a synchronized and complete operation of this choral work.

The author has not determined the tonality, but at times there are lines of choral tonality, although there are no contrapuntal actions; the melodic lines of the voices are independent and singing is arranged in a homophonic style with the presence of recreational elements. The register of voices and their color inside the groups, the melodic-rhythmic movement, according to the characters, make this massive choral work have the desired effect on the psychological treatment of the text. A

desirable level of choral singing is reached also by adding other elements of choral texture for the complete implementation of this theme.

A nationwide major work, Symphony no. 5 "Scanderbeg", an extra voluminous work of ten times (the first as a fifth symphony by an Albanian composer), winner in the RTSh competition for the jubilee year of Gjergj Kastriot-Scanderbeg, created by the well-known Albanian composer **Aleksandër Peçi**, premiered on November 23, 2018 by the Symphony Orchestra (+ piano) of Albanian RTV, together with soprano **Gesu Zefi**, already known on an international scale, played from the eighth time to the end, directed by the well-known conductor Eno Koço.

The voluminous symphony no. 5 "Scanderbeg" has no interruptions. It is very demanding in terms of technique, physical interpretation, and language, namely its contemporary musical language in the broadest sense of the word. Thus, it requires a very concentrated commitment from all participants for its performance, especially from the conductor, considering that it also includes poetic texts from three well-known international poets from the distant past: Faerno Briele (1505-1561), Amadis Jamin (1540-1593), and George Gordon Byron (1788-1824, "Childe Harold").

Tempo I: Andante soffrendo, otherwise called Prangatoria, includes, in the opinion of the composer, a new musical structure, a symbol of Albania under usurpation during the Ottoman centuries. It is first played with a motif in the contrabassoon, which acts as a basic theme for the entire macroform of this major work. It has "ostinatos" and "crescendos" of various syncopations, strong rhythmic strokes on percussion instruments, echoes in the surlas, horn signals (kornos), a castle fugato which rises and falls, a motif of the janissaries, musical chains that connect to the drum, the metal chains of percussion instruments and the sharp notes of the Albanian Kaba. These sounds let the enemy know, whoever it might be, that you can destroy the Albanian Castle, but not the Albanian spirit that rises like a castle. The authentic polyphony and the traditional songs are ancient and testify to the invincible Albanian spirit

Tempo II: Horse riding has a motivational cell in the fugato, which represents the riding of the mounted archers interspersed by the assaulting symphonic waves entwined with the cavalry rhythms, the clatter of swords, and the percussion instruments. They give a strong

energy to the symphony, passing to the theme of the Hero by playing cornets and trumpets, supported by the fighting power of the trombones.

Tempo III: Freedom, has a warm and fluid expanse with registers full of brightness and sentiments that convey the feeling of a dawn of freedom.

Tempo IV Liturgical music seems to take us under the dome of a church, to convey the idea "Gjergj Kastrioti-Scanderbeg, knight of Christianity". Here the bows dialogue with each other on the ostinatos of the seven gravities, an invention echoing our Century, while the piano performs on baroque ornamentations.

Tempo V: Marriage, followed by the adrenaline rush of an Albanian wedding with horse riders, riding on a separate/particular rhythm, to go to the league.

Tempo VI with seven sonorous gravities symbolizing the seven princes representing the seven principalities of the Arbanon. Following is the main theme of the Leader brought upon clouds of harmonic sounds with string sextols supported by the bellicose sounds of the trombones.

Tempo VII: Riding II continues with the battle reflected by the percussion strokes, the ever more strained symphonic of sword flourishing sounds and metallic percussions, and the pizzicato of the strings, reshaping the resistance motif of the trombone in Tempo II, which now represents a closing part, in which the resonant matter loses energy. On this occasion, values zoom out to drown out the metronomic ticking of the battle, while sad minor chords herald a deathly Largo, which ascends to:

Tempo VIII together with the dramatic soprano, composed based on Barleti's poetic prose (History of Gjergj Kastriot Scanderbeg), our ancient tragedy, together with our rituals brought by the author (like Achilles weeping for Patroclus) through a very moving symphony.

The penultimate Tempo with a choral reverberation, "*polioi*"⁵ and "*kaba*"⁶ laments and "*maje krahu*"⁷ sounds, to end with:

Tempo X, ending with a type of monumental symphonic anthem. The dramatic Soprano, the verses of the world renown poets, mentioned at the beginning, on which the brass instruments place "a very heavy

⁵ Mourning sounds (translator' note)

⁶ Region (translator' note)

⁷ Type of traditional song which was used as a call to arms (translator' note)

harmonic weight", with overpowering effects and the verticalised sounds and motifs of Tempo I, raise the monumental Hymn of the Hero just as it is engraved in the memory of our invincible nation for centuries.

Another voluminous work, now musical-theatric, created by our other well-known composer, **Acad., prof. Dr. Vasil S. Tole**, who, after finishing the High School of Arts in Violin and composition with the direction of prof. Ç. Zadeja, studied and graduated in the Department of Composition at the High Institute of Arts, with professor Kozma Lara (1983-87). He defended his Doctorate Thesis in Ethnomusicology (1994). He completed postgraduate studies in composition (1994-95) at the Folkwang Hochschule in Essen-Germany, with prof. W. Hufschmidt; attended his postdoctoral studies in the Department of Musicology (1996); was elected prof. associate. - Master of research (2000), Prof. - Research manager (2004), member of the AS of RP (2008), and many other professional functions.

In addition to the activities as a Ethnomusicologist and Musicologist (studies, books, texts, musical works performed and published inside and outside the Motherland), he is, in parallel, active with the creation of musical works of all genres, from compositions for solo instruments, romances...), chamber music (string trio and quartet, wind instrument quintet, other ensemble works...), to concert pieces: Concerto for soloist and orchestra, Poem for soloist(s), choir and orchestra...), other orchestral-symphonic works (Overtures, Symphonic Poems, Orchestrals Suite, Symphonies...), musical-theatric works: opera Eumenides (2001-2004)...

The jubilee anniversary of our hero, Gjergj Kastriot-Scanderbeg, the European recognized leader, motivated Vaso to compete in the national Competition of Musical Creativity, announced by the Ministry of Culture in the framework of the "Year of Skanderbeg – 2018. He created the solemn Opera: "**Scanderbeg, Overlord of Arbanon**" with: *Overture, 2 acts, and 8 scenes, with music and libretto.*

The opera "Scanderbeg, Chief Lord of Arbanon", centers on Life and Eternity, inspired by the figure of the national hero of the Albanians: Gjergj Kastriot-Scanderbeg on the 550th anniversary of his death. The libretto of this solemn opera and the spirit of its composition are based on the motifs of the well-known work of Fan S. Noli: "*Scanderbeg - Overlord of Albania*". The opera is composed of an Overture and Act II,

which correspond **to the life and myth** of Gjergj Kastriot-Scanderbeg in the Albanian world, namely the hero and era of Arbanon throughout the centuries of European Humanism and anti-Ottoman resistance. **The musical registers of all the participants in this Opera and the word** (narration) adapt well to these parts, which complement each other.

There is a relative symmetry in the subdivisions of the Overture and Act II of the Opera: thus, after the Overture we have *four arias* in Act I, versus *four chorales* in Act II. The difference between them lies in the relationship: the individual-the era, life-eternity and hero-myth. This Opera overcomes the difference that is formal and conceptual in accordance with the wisdom conveyed the Latin saying: "*et pluribus in unum*" (= and together in one, or - as the great Fan Noli wrote in another work: *separate but together*). Fortunately, many adorers of this great national musical-scenic genre, such as composers, musicians, singers, friends and guests in Tirana had the chance to hear a good part of this Opera.

In Act I, made of four arias, four scenes, the Hero appears with divine inspiration (Saint George appears to our George, giving him confidence in victory); longing for one's homeland, as an eternal and general feeling, which has taken root since ancient Greek literature (Odysseus and Ithaca); with a vocation and ***motivation to persevere*** (*Embëtha!*), ***as well as the concept of freedom*** (I didn't bring you freedom...). In the four arias, the portrait of Scanderbeg appears as a figure of European Humanism, centered on ***Saint Man***, with faith in his own strength and the will to build the individual destiny and that of the community, according to a new image; this part starts with the individual and ends with the community, "*et pluribus in unum*"; from the dream of the hero to: "*I found freedom amongst you*".

Act II follows the well-known models of the Requiem/Mass ***with an evocative and whispering character***. It develops through four choral parts, which are the four scenes of each ***Mass/Requiem***; the afterlife of the hero is glorified, which is his true power, as the pivot where his people come together. We, Albanians, have been kept alive by the figure of Scanderbeg, as well as the resilient manly language of Arbanon. Both of these acts together, give this Opera a dual character, namely: **heroic** and **solemn** at the same time. **The soloist** (lat. = solus, Albanian = one,

only) in Act I, the hero is identified through his *logoi*, which can also be understood as *acolytes* (...)

The choir (*Gr. Horos = together*) in ACT II is *pluribus* (= community, together), Albanian survival over the centuries; **the spirit** of the hero in immortality.

This musical-theatric work, taking into account the personality of our nation-wide and internationally acclaimed hero, the time, his life, and his acts for the protection of his people from the descendants of those who had come from different steppes, has a musical language not coincidentally a little more traditional; this is evident especially in the First Act, including the outlines of our national colors with a painful past. Meanwhile, we have, not by chance, in Act II, pre, during, and post classical elements, dominated by the presence of the Requiem, namely the Mass among Albanians, merging - in a way or another - historical and mystical elements, based on the figure of our Gjergj Kastriot-Scanderbeg, whose acts are compared to the works of byblical Moses.

Gëzim HOXHA

NEW ARCHAEOLOGICAL DATA ON THE PREHISTORY OF THE SCANDERBEG'S BURIAL GROUND

The first archaeological excavations which have been carried out at the church of Saint Nicolas (*albanian: Shën Kolli*) in Lezhë, were only partial. On the other side, it should be mentioned that these were realized even under a time pressure since was going to celebrate in Tiranathe 500th anniversary of the death (14.01.1968) of our national hero Gjergj Kastrioti-Skënderbeu¹.

On that case, the well-known archaeologist Frano Prendi, presented a research paper at the Second Conference of Albanological Studies (12-18.01.1968) which was published at its proceeding. He assumed that the traces of the church at current Memorial in Lezha are properly related with the church of St Nicolas (*albanian: Shën Kolli*) where Skanderbeg was buried². About three or four decades later, different statements and arguments have been arisen concluding that this church and Skanderbeg's tomb were not located in the lower city, but within the surrounding walls of the Lezha Castle, or even outside the medieval city's enclosure³. In that paper is presented and reviewed what have provided so far the archaeological excavations on that research topic.

Ten years later amongst the years 1978-1979, several excavations were carried out at the same site which have never been published but still exist today only as archival documentation⁴. Reviewing such archival sources can reveal many unknown details helping us to better understand some artefacts. Also these have proved to be useful to understand the situation of church constructions phases which has been overlapped across the centuries.

¹FRASHËRI 2002, 479

²PRENDI, 1969, 241-248

³See for these thoughts: FRASHËRI, 2002, 471-47

⁴ANAMALI 1978, 1-5

The plinth found in the middle of the medieval church's nave was built with blocks of marble and lies more or less in the north-south direction with a slight deviation from the northwest to the southeast (Fig. 1a-d).

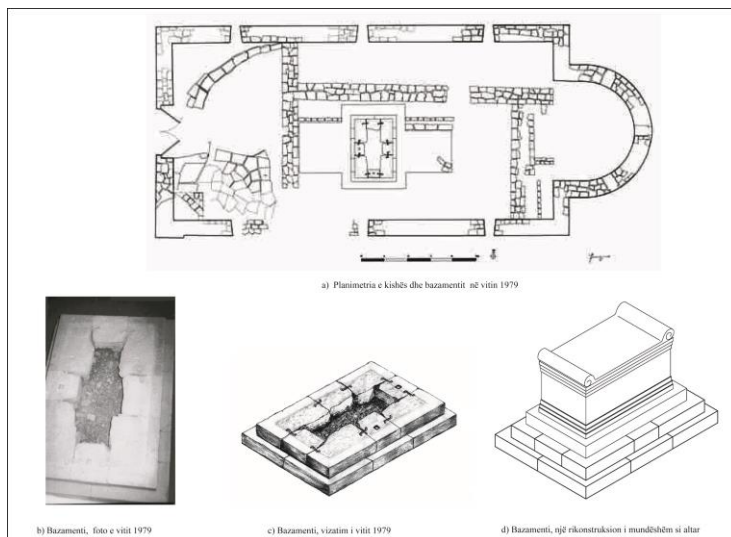


Fig. 1. The plan of the church of Saint Kolli and its base found under its foundations (year 1979)

Its stratigraphic level (1st-2nd centuries AD), the shape, construction, dimensions and orientation of such two-step base demonstrate that we aren't in front of a grave foundation, but with the understructure of an ancient monument in the form of a pedestal. As a result there are assumptions that it could be a commemorative obelisk, a plinth of a knight's statue, a *cipus*, a funerary stele or an altar.

From these variants are excluded the stela'tomb or *chipus* since according to the law in that period there could be no burials *intra urbem*. Even the assumption it is obelisk, doesn't look reliable judging the longitudinal shape of the hole at the support pillar. In that framework it seems more possible the version which links it with the presence of an altar in the area concerned. Such base typology is well known in the votive or memorial altars which belongs to the Hellenistic and Roman period.

Meanwhile it should be noted that a similar altar in miniature has also come to light even from the excavations in the ancient city of Olcinium (today's Ulcinj). Likewise, altars of that typology are also frequently represented on the reverse of coins of the Roman imperial period ⁵(Fig. 2a-b).



Fig. 2. The altar from Ulcinj and the representations of altars on some Roman coins

Based on these examples, we could hypothetically rebuilt this monument as shown in Figure 1d.

The plan of the church, made in 1979 present a brick floor, which is enclosed with the shape of an *excedra* on the western side of that site. Based on these details, could arise the assumption for the presence "*in situ*" of a '*cella*', a pagan monument which had an altar in its center. Also several archeological findings revealed as result of new excavations during the period 2006-2011 confirm such hypothesis. The luxury objects which are found on that site arean evidence that these belong toan environment linked with an early imperial period monument.

⁵ See respectively by coins in fig. 2 b: RIC I, 458, (Nero 66-68); RIC II, 272 (Domitian, 85); RIC II, 422 (Diva Sabina 136/8); RIC III, 441 (Marcus Aurelius 161-180); RIC IV, Part III, 90 (Trajan Decius, 249-251); RIC VI, 75 (Galerius, 311-313).

The fragment of a marble votive plate from the 1st-2nd centuries AD. with the relief of a sacrificial scene on an altar (Fig. 3a), it directly echoes the above-mentioned plinth. Likewise, a relief with the representation of the eastern deity, "Men", and a Latin inscription⁶ (Fig. 3b), also demonstrates the presence of pagan monuments in that place.



Fig. 3. Votive plate and relief from the excavations of Lezha.

In addition to the construction remains, some luxury objects also have been found on the site. Amongst these can be mentioned a clay *skyphos* of the Augustinian period decorated in the relief with the appearance of twelve human figures (Fig. 4a) and a musical instrument made of bone , a double flute which has been known in ancient times by the Greek name *Auloi* (Fig. 4b). Meanwhile these are following by two other objects of the Augustinian period such as a lamp of the Loeschcke VIII type⁷ where is represented the deity Apollo playing the lyre (Fig. 4c) and a sigillata plate of the Goudineau type 6⁸(Fig. 4d).

⁶ANAMALI, CEKA DENIAUX, 2009, 37; EHMIG, HAENSCH 2012, 62-64

⁷LEIBUNDGUT 1977, 34-36, Abb. 5, 4-6, to Table of forms nr. XX.

⁸ATLANE 1985, 194, Tavola LV, 9 (dating in the period from 20 to the end of the 1st century BC).

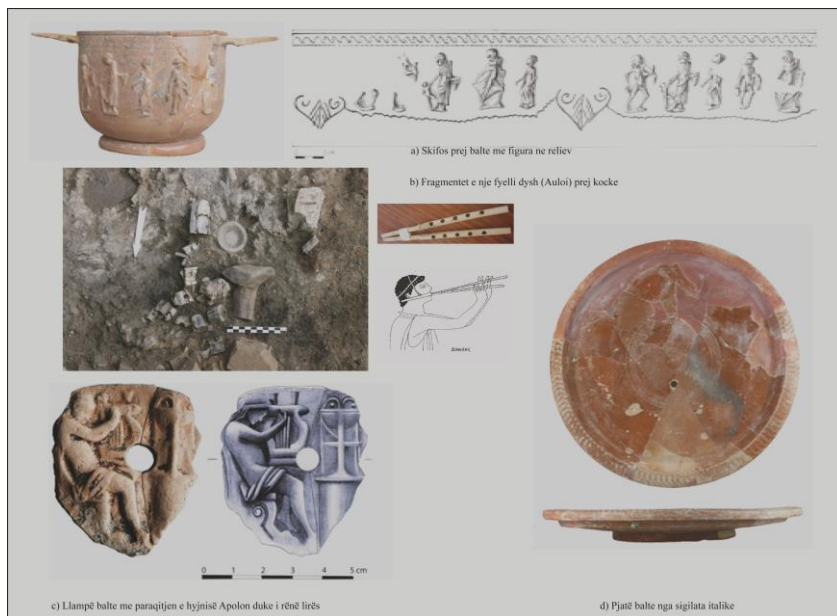


Fig. 4a-d. Four objects from the early imperial period from the excavations of Lezha

The excavations carried out during the time period 2007-2008 in sector D, in front of today's Scanderbeg Memorial, have surprised us with another very interesting discovery (Fig. 5).



Fig. 5. The location of the baptistery before the archaeological excavation in 2007

A building structure with five piscines has now been clearly identified as a baptistery and is dated at first half of the 6th century AD through the coins of emperors Anastasius (491-518) and Justinian (527-565)⁹ (Fig. 6). In this context, it looks reasonable the finding of a paleo-Christian Corinthian capital in the northern part of the city, a fact that has been previously mentioned at a publication of Praschniker and Schober scholars¹⁰.

The piscines (Bathtubs) no. 1-4 have served for filtering water, washing feet or hands and small children, etc. which were practices known for the Paleo-Christian period¹¹. While the piscine no. 5 best fulfills all the conditions to perform the rite of baptism in compliance with the requirements of the paleo-Christian liturgy (Fig. 7). Through the literature review we have collected data that such baptismal piscines have been scattered throughout the Mediterranean area.



Fig. 6. Paleo-Christian baptistery near the church of Saint Kolli (Baptistry)

It is interesting to mention that the architectural form of the central piscine of Lezha is known especially in the territory of the Eastern

⁹Hoxha 2011, 285-302

¹⁰Praschniker-Schober 1919. 21, fig. 28

¹¹About the rite of baptism in late antiquity see: Beatrice, 1983, 225-230; Chevalier, 1988, 154; Menis, 1996, 68-70; Ristow, 1998, 82-84, 91; Pavić, 2006, 48 – 51 dhe Taf. 3; Taf. 4; Hoxha 2011, 285-302.

Empire, while the rite of feet washing is a phenomenon mainly observed amongst the countries of the West.



Fig. 7. Central baptismal piscine

The new discovery of the baptistery in Lissus unequivocally confirms the presence of a Paleo-Christian ecclesiastical building in *the intra muros space*, which is about six centuries older than the modern dating of the medieval church of Saint Nicolas¹². This fact directly express the well-known preference of a paleo-Christian construction over a pagan object, which had a sacred or commemorative character¹³.

The experience originated from the written sources and similar discoveries in such constructions, allows to create a schematic idea which approximates the reality of the construction in that period. Precisely, a source document of the V century AD, describes un equivocally that: "*Intra atrium sit aedes baptisterii*"¹⁴ (baptisteries were built inside the atrium).

On these grounds can be raised the hypothesis for the presence of a basilica with larger dimensions rather than the medieval construction we already know. It is very likely that it has had a narthex andan atrium

¹²PRENDI 1969, 244-247; MEKSI 2004, 180, which give the earliest dating of the church to the 12th century.

¹³DAGRON 1977, 6-7 ; VAES 1989, 306-307.

¹⁴Testamentum Domini nostrii Jesu Christi, (ed. E. Rahmani), Mayence, 1899, 23, 155

inside which was built the baptistry. Such building group *basilica-atrium-baptister*, constitutes a very well-known scheme used in the constructions of the Paleo-Christian cult¹⁵ (Fig. 8).

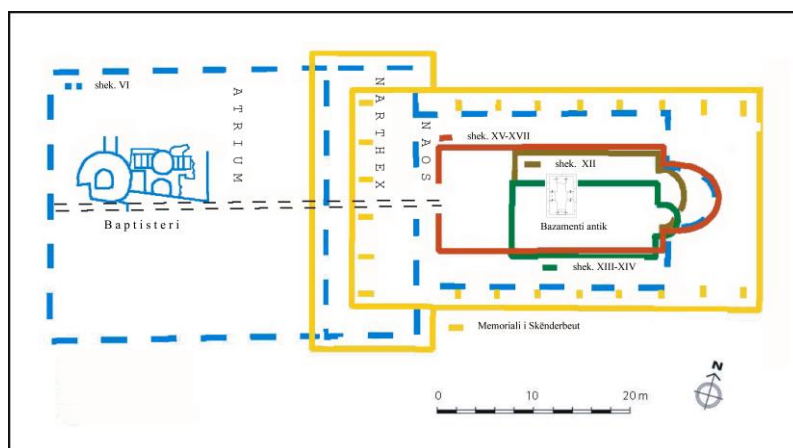


Fig. 8. Planimetry of Christian construction on ancient foundations until the late Middle Ages

This Paleo-Christian basilica construction of the 6th century, with foundations embedded in an ancient pagan plot, was rebuilt in the same place three more times during the pre-Turkish Middle Ages. The Albanian scholar Prof Alexander Meksi stated *that an architectural fragment in the shape of a semi-arch, which is originated from the window of the previous church or the aciborium, is dated a little before the 12th century*¹⁶. The church was rebuilt in the 13th-14th centuries and still continued to be in place until it was destroyed in the middle of the 15th century, to be rebuilt again in 1459¹⁷, about 10 years before Skanderbeg's death.

Such church continues to be mentioned as the city's cathedral in the ecclesiastical reports of the first half of 17th century¹⁸ and then during the 19th-20th centuries across the written historical archaeological literature related to the city of Lezha¹⁹.

¹⁵GRABAR, 1957, 224-230

¹⁶MEKSI, 2004, f. 180

¹⁷PRENDI, 1969, f. 244-247.

¹⁸ORSINI, 1629, 400-401; BARDHI, 1641a, 145

¹⁹POUQUEVILLE, 1826, 400; HAHN, 1854, 92; IPPEN, 1907, 55; SEREMBE, 1927; SIRDANI, 1932,

But our research interes still remains on the 15th century. The emergency excavations which were conducted in November 2003, in the lower town, close to the former bed of the Drini river , have brought to light a set of realiable traces which belongs to the jetty of the medieval harbour of Lezha (Fig.9).

The most significant archaeological material found in that sitedates back to the 15th century, when the Venetians owned this river port. In addition to the archaeological data, an epigraphic evidence of the year 1456 was also found on a stone block with a Venetian inscription which stands today as an architrave above the southern gate of the Saint Mary Nunciata church in Lezhë (Fig. 9).

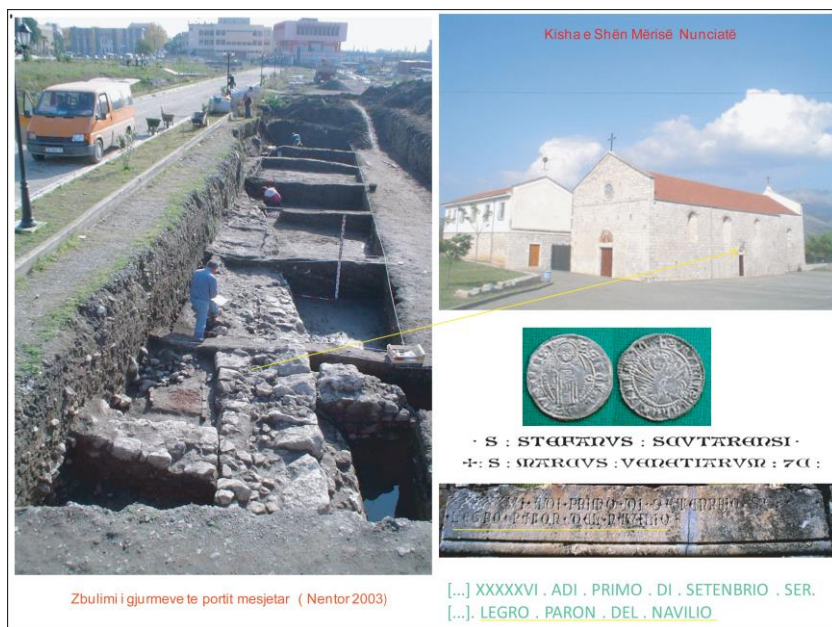


Fig. 9. The quay of the medieval port, the inscription of the Nunciata church and Venetian coins from Shkodra

Father Flavio Cavallini has wrote on such inscription in an article that was published in the scientific journal "Iliria". He stated that " the name engraved on this inscription LEGRO. PARON. OUT. NAVILIO. is linked to the owner of a small fleet who was in charge with the transport of goods across Drini river. As he noted in the article" *...the inscription derives from a building in the Lezha harbour... and ...represents the only*

epigraphic document that proves the navigation in Drini river during the Venetian rule when Gjergj Kastrioti was alive"²⁰.

The character of the letters on that inscription and the language dialect clearly prove its Venetian origin. Amongst others, it is confirmed by the calligraphic analogy with the writing of legends on contemporary Venetian coins which have been found both in Shkodra and in Lezha (Fig. 9).

As described in previous excavations²¹, in sector A, near the church of Saint Nicholas(*albanian: Shwn Kolli*), have been still found fragments of Venetian glass vessels, majolica and fine glaze vessels and other luxury household furnishings. Such artefacts confirms an intensive settlement in the 15th century (Fig. 10) which has been located in an area that was connected to the church.



Fig. 10. Ceramic and glass vessels from Lezha of the XIV-XV centuries

The previous and new researches in the area present us the following historical-archaeological overview from the Roman period until today:

a) The Roman time, which is represented by the base of the altar and the Roman imperial findings mentioned above.

²⁰CAVALLINI, Iliiria XXXII, 2005-2006, 298-299.

²¹PRENDI 1969, 244 ; ANAMALI 1978, 1-5

b) The Late Antiquity period is represented by the baptistery, capital, tangible heritage artefacts and coins.

c) The pre-Turkish Middle Ages is evidenced by the remains of the Saint Nicholas(*albanian: Shën Kolli*) church reconstruction during XII, XIII-XIV and XV centuries.

d) From the Late Middle Ages, there are continuous references of the church across the documents of the XVII-XVIII centuries.

e) Later, it is followed by the transformations of the modern times, its transformation to a Mosque and the construction of the Skanderbeg Memorial.

Based upon history of church and its tradition, it is already known that baptisteries were built and operated mainly near cathedral churches. In that framework could be said that the baptistery discovered in Lezha seems to have lost its role only after the Turkish invasion. But it has been present across all the medieval construction phases of the church which have described in that paper. Such new argument supports the statement expressed 50 years ago by the archeologist Frano Prendi.

Other archaeological evidences which support that conclusion are: a) the continuation of three construction phases of the same church until the 15th century. b) Also that is associated with the presence of a densely populated city quarter, the river harbour and the rich archaeological findings. c) No other church in Lezha has a baptistery and isn't linked with such historical and archaeological continuity.

The arguments expressed so far that the cathedral church of Saint Nicholas (*albanian: Shën Kolli*) should be searched in the area of Lezha Castle are mainly based on the data or travelers notes, who affirm that it was located "*in castello*", within the surrounding walls of the castle. It can be defined as right information but should be well verified whether it was a reference for the castle above or is linked with the high and powerful surrounding ancient-medieval walls of the lower city (Fig. 11). It is already known that such fortified cities, even in lowland areas, were usually called "*castello*" - castle.

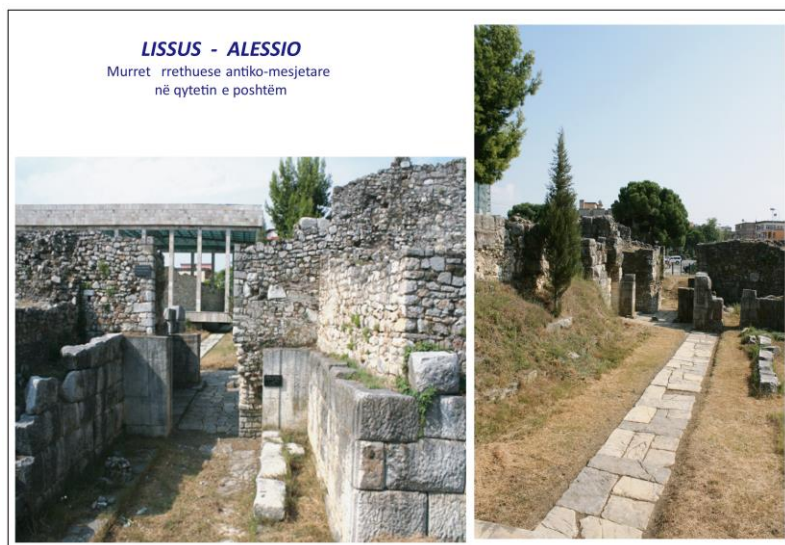


Fig. 11a-b. Today's view of the ancient and medieval surrounding walls of the lower city of Lezha, (within which is located the Church of Saint Nicholas- *albanian Shën Kolli*)

The past and current archaeological excavations haven't had the chance to find the missing tomb of our national hero Gjergj Kastrioti-Skënderbeu. However these have provided concrete data, to assume about the location of the cathedral church of Saint Nicholas (*albanian Shën Kolli*) where he was buried with honor and glory.

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Alvin SARAÇI

**THE ROLE OF THE VENICE CONSULATE OF DURRES
IN PROTECTION OF THE ECONOMIC INTERESTS OF
VENICE AT THE BEGINNING OF THE XVIII CENTURY**

At the beginning of the XVIII century, while Venetian trade was increasingly turning to regional, a small country like Albania would be the main commercial partner of Venice¹.

After the end of the Morea War (1684-1699) and the Treaty of Karlovic (Sremski Karlovci, January 16-26, 1699), the Venetian trade authority, the Five Wise Men, in a report to the Doge of Venice, noted that Albania, an “opulente di nogotio”, with a large volume of trade passing through, had now become a crossroads of goods from all over the Balkans (Macedonia, Greece, Transylvania, Wallachia, Moldova, etc.).²

In fact, the main role was played by the port of Durrës, a crossing point for goods and traders from Shkodra, Elbasan, Voskopoja, Tirana, Kavaja, Ohrid and Skopje, Costur, Siatista, Ioannina, Arta and Thessaloniki, Arvanitochori of Ternova (Albanian settlement in Bulgaria). It was also used by the leaders of Albanian origin of Romanian and Moldavian Principalities³. According to the report of the French

¹ This is proved by the figures shown in the customs registers of the State Archives of Venice, especially those belonging to the second half of the XVIII century.

² “opulente di nogotio”, *Archivio dello Stato di Venezia (ASV)*, Cinque Savi alla Mercanzia (CSM), 2 Serie (2°S.), busta (b.) May 28, 1699; Gelina Harlaftis, “International Business of the Southeastern Europe and the Eastern Mediterranean, 18th Century: Sources, Methods and Interpretative Issues”, në *Dove va la Storia Economica?: Metodi e Prospettive, Sec. XIII-XVIII – Where is economic history going? Methods and Prospects from the 13th to the 18th Centuries*”, *Atti della “Quarantaduesima Settimana di Studi”*, 18-22 aprile 2010, to the attention of Francesco Ammannati, Prato, Fondazione Istituto Internazionale di Storia Economica “F. Datini”, Firenze: Firenze University Press, 2011, p. 408

³ ASV, CSM, 2°S., b. 28, September 25, 1704; Nikos G. Svoronos, *Le commerce de Salonique au XVIII siècle*, Paris: Presses universitaires de France, 1956, p. 193; *Dokumente të shekujve XVI-XVIII për historinë e Shqipërisë*, vëll. IV (1675-1699), prepared by Injac Zamputi, Selami Pulaha, Akademia e Shkencave e Shqipërisë, Instituti i Historisë, Tiranë: 1990, doc. no. 228, February 8, 1699, p. 476-478; Cristian Luca, “Greek and Aromanian merchants protagonists of the trade

consul of Durrës, Balthasar Le Comte, in Durrës there were about a hundred merchants, who were represented in Venice by their correspondents⁴.

During the XVII-XVIII centuries, the economic centers moved to the Northeastern Mediterranean. By the end of the XVII century, the Venetian authority for trade, the Five Wise Men, noticed that out of all the trade routes of the Ottoman Empire where there was a Venetian consulate, only Durrës and Smirne (Izmir) were the two ports where trade with Venice was proceeding at a good pace.⁵

In 1594, Jewish merchant Daniel Rodriga o Rodriguez proposed to the Venetian authorities to make the Durrës Trade Road (la scala di Durazzo) a transit route for trade conducted between Venice and the Balkans, similar to the Split Trade Road project in 1592 (la scala di Spalato) for trade between Venice and the Ottoman Empire.⁶

The Venetian consulate in Durrës opened in 1671 and had under its jurisdiction the ports of Bar, Shirgji, Shengjin, Vlora and Sajadha (la scala dell'Albania) and only the port of Ulcinj⁷ was not included. This would contribute to make trade between the Albanian ports and Venice well-organized and highlight Durrës as an important port for international trade exchanges. This was due to the fact that trade networks and local trade were intertwined with large-scale *micro and macro* trade.⁸ In the same period, in 1673, the French consulate opened in Durrës and after 1680 the consulate of Netherlands opened as well⁹.

relations between Transylvania, Wallachia, Moldavia and the Northern Italian Peninsula (second half of the 17th –first half of the 18th Century)", në *Transylvanian Review*, XIX, Supplement nr. 5, Cluj-Napoca Romania: 2010, p. 313-316.

⁴ *Dokumente të shekujve XVI-XVIII ...*, vëll. 4, prepared. I. Zamputi, S. Pulaha, doc. no. 228, February 8, 1699, p. 476-478.

⁵ In the original version: «pare che abbia avuto una miglior piega et inclinazione al negozio» ASV, CSM, 2° S., b. 28, 28 April, 1699.

⁶ Riccardo Calimani, *Storia del Ghetto di Venezia*, Milano: Mondadori, 2014, p. 191- 192; Renzo Paci, "La «Scala» di Spalato e la politica veneziana in Adriatico", në *Quaderni storici delle Marche*, vol. 5, 13, Bologna: Società editrice Il Mulino S.P.A, 1970, p. 48-105.

⁷ ASV, CSM, 2° S., b. 27/bis; Rosana D'Alberton, "Tra sanita e commercio: il difficile ruolo del lazzaretto veneziano alla scala di Spalato", in *Studi Veneziani*, n. s. XXXIX, Pisa, Roma: Istituti editoriali e poligrafici internazionali, 2000, p. 265.

⁸ Maria Fusaro, "Les Anglais et les Grecs, Un réseau de coopération commerciale en Méditerranée vénitienne", në *Annales, Histoire, Sciences Sociales*, 58e Année, No. 3, Paris: EHESS, May - Jun., 2003, p. 608.

⁹ Luan Rama, *Konsullatat franceze në Shqipëri gjatë shekujve XVII-XIX*, Tirana: Bota shqiptare, 2019; Alvin Saraçi, *Tregtia adriatike e Shkodrës me Republikën e Venecies në shekujt XVII e XVIII*, Academy of Albanological Studies, Institute of History, Tirana: 2018, p. 119-130.

The consulates were established based on the agreements (capitulations) between Venice and other countries trading with the Ottoman Empire.¹⁰ Thus, the establishment of the Venetian consulate was founded on the agreement of February 1670, (which was based on the first capitulation of 1481) signed by Mehmet IV to Alvise Molin, ambassador extraordinary of Venice to Istanbul.¹¹ The French consulate in Durrës was based on the trade privileges granted to France by the Ottoman Empire, which were renewed at the end of May 1673 and were based on the agreement of 1535 between the King of France, François I and Sultan Suleiman I. According to Article 3 of the agreement, the French were allowed to set up embassies in Istanbul and consulates in the Eastern Mediterranean countries, which would deal with trade issues¹². Finally, the Dutch consulate in Durrës was set up following the agreement of 1680, which was based on the first capitulation of 1612.¹³ These consulates recognized these countries as nations within the Ottoman Empire, sanctioning their trade privileges on customs duties which regulated trade relations.

According to Vera Costantini, faced with the trading power of the Republic of Venice in the Mediterranean, the Ottoman Empire entered into bilateral trade networks with a privileged and experienced trading partner like Venice, in order to make the most of these exchanges for the valorization of its economic resources¹⁴. However, on the other hand, the initiation of open trade and the arbitrary role of the capitulations signed between the Sublime Porte and European trading powers such as France (1535), England (1580) and the Netherlands (1612), was not just a way to generate substantial incomes from the trade of goods coming from

¹⁰Suraiya Faroqhi, *The Ottoman Empire and the world around it*, New York, London: I. B. Tauris, 2004, p. 3.

¹¹Milos Jačov, "Gli accordi commerciali tra l'Impero ottomano e la Repubblica di Venezia", *Rapporti diplomatici e scambi commerciali nel Mediterraneo, Atti del Convegno Internazionale di studi (Fisciano, 23-24 ottobre 2002)*, Salerno, under the supervision of Mirella Manfrici, Università degli Studi di Salerno, Rubbettino Editore, 2004, p. 106.

¹²Paul Célestine Mason, *Histoire du Commerce Français dans le Levant au XVIII siècle*, Paris: Hachette&C, 1898, p. 214; François-Emmanuel Guignard comte de Saint- Priest, *Mémoires sur l'ambassade de France en Turquie et sur le commerce de France en Turquie et sur le commerce des français dans le Levant*, vol. 2, Paris: Ernest Leroux, 1877, p. 278-279.

¹³Mehmet Bulut, *Ottoman-Dutch Economic Relations in the Early Modern Period 1571-1699*, Ankara: Hilversum, 2001, p. 116-118.

¹⁴Vera Costantini, *Il Sultano e l'isola contesa, Cipro tra eredità veneziana e potere ottomano*, Torino: Utet, 2009, p. 28-32.

various areas, including the Balkans, and passing through its customs. Although it did not affect the decadence of Venetian trade, it still weakened Venetian trade hegemony. Moreover, given the fact that the borders of both countries had to be crossed, the expansion of Venetian trade in Albania had established close relations and increased the role of Albania's foreign trade with other European trading powers.

In the XVIII century, the Venetian and French consulates of Durrës were among the 14 Eastern consulates that included the Balkans and the Eastern Mediterranean¹⁵. The Venetian consulate in Durrës consisted of a consul, deputy consul or dragoman, copyist (scribe), chancellor, consular customs agents, couriers (postmen), janissaries (guards) and the consular council (which included ship captains) who all had a special function within the consulate.¹⁶

To Venetians, diplomacy and trade were inextricably linked. This may explain why Venetian trade laws were drafted by the Five Wise Men and approved by the Senate which also had the power to elect consuls¹⁷.

They were then sent to the consul along with the instructions, which he had to abide by and follow. In some cases, these laws were posted as advertisements on the ports where the consulates were located, including Durrës. According to Steensgaard, Venetian economic policy in all Venetian consulates was developed by the Five Wise Men and was implemented by the consul on the one hand, and by the heads of merchants and Venetian citizens in Durrës on the other¹⁸.

The Venetian consul protected the rights of the Venetian citizens living in Durrës, mainly merchants and sailors, including those coming from the ports that were part of the Republic of Venice. They protectes

¹⁵Maria Aglietti, *L'istituto consolare tra Sette e Ottocento. Funzioni istituzionali, profilo giuridico e percorsi professionali nella Toscana granducale*, Pisa, ETS, 2012, p. 216; Géraud Poumarède, "Naissance d'une institution royale: les consuls de la nation française en Levant et en Barbarie aux XVIe et XVIIIe siècles", *Annuaire-Bulletin de la Société de l'histoire de France*, Paris : Société de l'Histoire de France, Editions de Boccard, 2001, p. 66.

¹⁶Maria Aglietti, *L'istituto consolare tra Sette e Ottocento. Funzioni istituzionali, profilo giuridico e percorsi professionali nella Toscana granducale*, Pisa: ETS, 2012, p. 216; Géraud Poumarède, "Naissance d'une institution royale: les consuls de la nation française en Levant et en Barbarie aux XVIe et XVIIIe siècles", *Annuaire-Bulletin de la Société de l'histoire de France*, Paris: Société de l'Histoire de France, Editions de Boccard, 2001, p. 66.

¹⁷ Antonio Trampus, "Le diplomate vénitien entre les XVIe et XVIIIe siècles: statut, rôles et fonctions", në *Le diplomate en question (XIe-XVIII siècles)*, ed. Eva Pibiri, Guillaume Poisson, Lausanne: University of Lausanne, 2010, p. 121.

¹⁸Niels Steensgaard, "Consuls and nations in the Levant from 1570 to 1640", in *Scandinavian Economic History Review*, 15, 1-2, London: Routledge, Taylor & Francis, 1967, p. 25.

also the middle class of correspondents (*commissionari*) not only from Venice, but also from Ioannina, Arta and the Ionian Islands, in whose hands was an extensive trade network and who were also the heads of merchants. Foreigners representing or working for the Venetian consular administration, including the Albanians, were also protected by the Venetian consul.

The mission of the Venetian consuls was mainly focused on the expansion and management of trade relations¹⁹. As for their diplomatic mission, some authors have seen them as having a political role²⁰. The consul was also a person representing the law.²¹ He had to know the situations of trade and politics, gather information on diseases and epidemics, record the number of foreign and Venetian ships passing through the port of Durres, draft cargo insurance for merchant ships, give Venetian pass to foreign merchant ships sailing in the Adriatic, etc.²²

The consuls of Durrës were elected by the Five Wise Men and then approved by the Venetian Senate with 2/3 of the votes.²³ The requests that the candidates sent to the authority of the Five Wise Men for Trade, with a list of their merits,²⁴ had also a special weight on the election of the consuls.

Following the Karlovic Treaty, which marked the opening of trade between Venice and the Ottoman Empire, the Venetian consul in Durrës, Francesco d'Andria, who originated from a Genoese family from the Greek island of Scios (Chios), had meanwhile submitted the names of the candidates for the position of the next consul of Durrës who would

¹⁹*Ibid*, p. 14; Jörg Ulbert, "Introduction. La fonction consulaire à l'époque moderne: définition, état des connaissances et perspectives de recherche", në Gérard Le Bouëdec, Jörg Ulbert, *La fonction consulaire à l'époque moderne: affirmation d'une institution économique et politique, 1500-1770*, Rennes: Presse Universitaires de Rennes, 2006, p. 13.

²⁰Adolfo Maresca, *Récueils des cours – Collected courses of the Hague Academy of International Law*, vol. 134, Leyden: A. W. Nijthoff, 1972, p. 116; shih "Qui est le diplomate au XVIIIe siècle?", në A. Trampus, *Le diplomate vénitien entre les XVIIe et XVIIIe siècles...*, p. 130-131.

²¹See "Introduction" in P. C. Mason, *Histoire du commerce français...*, p. xij.

²²ASV, CSM, 2. S, b. 28, 2 maj 1699. The law of August 19, 1671, gave the Consul of Venice the competences of the "magistrato alla estesa della patente".

²³Maria Pia Pedani Fabris, "Consoli veneziani nei porti del Mediterraneo in età moderna" në ed. R. Cancila *Mediterraneo in armi (sec. XV-XVIII)*, Palermo: Associazione Mediterranea, 2007, p. 178-179.

²⁴Umberto Signori, "Supplier pour le consulat. Entre défense des 'intérêts personnels et service fidèle des consuls vénitiens dans le Levant ottoman (1670-1703)", në *Cahiers de la Méditerranée*, 98, Rennes: Presse Universitaires de Rennes, 2019, p. 34.

be elected by the Five Wise Men for Trade: Giorgio Cumano, Iseppo Vellai, Niccolò Marco Bruni, Nicola Pulimeno and Francesco Soffietti.²⁵

Giorgio Cumano had the most chances for the position. First, he was from the island of Crete, which had been part of Venice until 1669, and as such he was preferred as a Venetian citizen. Apparently he belonged to an Albanian-Hellenic family because he knew the Albanian language well and had a previous experience as consul in Arcadia, Greece, which had been unpleasant because he had lost his wealth.²⁶ In the petition he sent to the Five Wise Men as a candidate for the position, he described his consular career from the period he was deputy consul and dragoman of consul Dimiter Taxiano in 1674 and then as head of the Venetian consulate upon the leave of Dimiter Taxiano.²⁷ He had won the position of the dragoman because in addition to Greek and Albanian, he had very good knowledges of Italian, Venetian, Ottoman and Slavic languages.²⁸ Moreover, at the end of the Morea war in 1699, he had not allowed the Ragusans, rivals of Venetian trade, to land imported goods on Durrës and had given them the right to use the port of Kotor "la scala di Catarro" as a trade route.²⁹ Finally, when Tommaso Cottoni from Arta was Consul he held the position of deputy consul, but with the outbreak of the Venetian-Turkish War of Morea (1684), he was forced to leave for Venice.³⁰ However, he did not speak of his other merits such as mediation in Venice for the release of the merchants of the Ottoman Empire and his return in 1688 to take the position of the Dutch consul in Durrës³¹.

Giorgio Cumano had also the support of correspondents and retail middle-class merchants who conducted trade through the port of Durres, and who were mainly from Ioannina and Arta.³² This was because he and

²⁵ ASV, CSM, 2° S., b. 28, May 28, 1699.

²⁶ *Ibid*, CSM 2° S., b. 28, May 4, 1699; Cristian Luca, "The Dynamics of the Commercial Activity in the Ottoman Port of Durazzo during the Consulate of Zorzi (Giorgio) Cumano (1699-1702)", in *Small is Beautiful? Interlopers and Smaller Trading Nations in the Pre-Industrial Period, Proceedings of the XVth Congress of Economic History Utrecht (Netherlands) 2009*, VSWG-Beihefte, 213, under the supervision of Markus A. Denzel, Jan de Vries, Philipp Robinson Rössner, Stuttgart: P. Steiner, 2011, p. 189.

²⁷ ASV, CSM 2° S., b. 28, May 4, 1699; A. Saraçi, *Tregtia adriatike e Shkodrës...*, p. 144,178.

²⁸ *Ibid*.

²⁹ ASV, CSM, 2° S., b. 28, May 4, 1699.

³⁰ A. Saraçi, *Tregtia adriatike e Shkodrës...*, p. 145, 161.

³¹ *Ibid*.

³² ASV, CSM, 2° S., b. 28, May 15, 1699.

his nephew had also been correspondents to the merchants of Voskopoja in Venice. The latter, on the occasion of his election, sent a petition to the Five Wise Men for Trade on September 1, 1700, showing their support³³.

The newly elected consul of Venice, Giorgio Cumano, arrived in Durrës on April 9, 1700, and a day later he began his correspondence with the Five Wise Men³⁴.

After his election in Venice, the Venetian consul had to have the recognition from the Sublime Porte by a *berat*, so he had to leave immediately for Istanbul, where, despite delays, he managed to secure it in October with the help of the Venetian ambassador extraordinary in Istanbul, Lorenzo Soranzo³⁵.

However, his time as consul would have a short duration, until November 29, 1702, the year of his death. The position would temporarily go to his brother, Giovanni Cumano, and nephew Giorgio, the son of Emmanuele Cummano, who would temporarily represent the Venetian consulate in Durres, pending the decision of the Five Wise Men to recognize him until the election of the new consul.³⁶

Since the Venetian consulate had been closed until the drafting of the Treaty of Karlovic, which had opened trade between Venice and the Ottoman Empire, from the beginning of his consular activity, the consul of Venice in Durrës, Giorgio Cumano, knew that the Venetians had to regain trade and face the competition from the French and Dutch consulates of Durrës, and to a lesser extent from the consulate of Ragusa³⁷.

The French sub-consulate of Durrës was already open, as shown in the letter of May 6, 1673, from the French ambassador to Istanbul, Charles Olivier Nointel (1670-1679) to Jean Baptiste Colbert, Secretary

³³*Ibid*, CSM, 2° S, b. 28, September 1, 1700; C. Luca, "The Dynamics of the Commercial Activity...", p. 179.

³⁴*Dokumente mbi Shqipërinë në shekullin XVIII: letrat e konsujve venedikas të Durrësit*, vëll. I (1696-1707), prepared for publication by Zija Shkodra, The Academy of Sciences of the Republic of Albania, vol. I, Tirana: 1975, doc. no. 2, April 10, 1700, p. 31-32; ASV, CSM, 1°S., b. 661, April 10, 1700.

³⁵ASV, CSM, 2°S, b. 28, 20 dhjetor 1700; *ibid*, doc. no. 4, June 17, 1799, p. 34-35; dok. no. 6, Octobre 6, 1700, p. 36-37.

³⁶ASV, Bailo a Costantinopoli (BC), Lettere, b. 167, doc. no. 11, November 29, 1699.

³⁷Stavri Naçi, "Rreth tregtisë së Sanxhakut të Shkodrës me Republikën e Venedikut gjatë shek. XVIII", in *Bulletin of the University of Tirana*, Tirana: 1963, no. 1, p. 14-15; Zija Shkodra, "Problemi i tregut shqiptar në shek. XVIII", in *Historic Studies*, XX, no. 3, Tirana: 1966, p. 63.

of State and French Navy, which writes about the complaint that the Jewish, Greek and Armenian merchants had communicated to the Sublime Porte with regard to the Venetian captain and the French vice-consul of Durrës³⁸. The French consulate in Durrës oversaw trade between the French port of Marseille and the three Adriatic ports that were not controlled by the Republic of Venice: Ancona (port of the Pope), Ragusa (Dubrovnik), Fiume (Rijeka - Croatia, a Hungarian port at the time)³⁹.

The French had been able to monopolize some goods such as wheat, oil, etc., and had increased their prices, such as 3 reals per 100 oka* of wheat, bringing the number of French ships loaded with grain in Albania to twenty.⁴⁰

Meanwhile, the War of Morea had made navigation difficult for the ships arriving from the Kotor city of Perast, which were generating low incomes from the cargo of the merchants in Durrës. The vacuum they had created was well filled by the merchant ships from Ulcinj, which were now trading with the French and Dutch consulates in Durrës.

As such, in 1696, the French consul of Durrës, Balthasar Le Comte had signed a contract with the owner of a ship from Ulcinj, which he had named "Saint Jean Baptiste", and whose captain was Frenchman Joseph Isnard or Iseppo. As shown in the Venetian records, he would load goods on the account of Charles & Brousson, The Mediterranean Company of Marseilles,⁴¹ and he had 7000 cantari (measurement unit)⁴² to rent in the

³⁸ *Correspondance consulaire des ambassadeurs de France à Constantinople: 1668- 1708: inventaire analytique des articles A. E B1 376 à 385*, prepared for publication Raia Zaimova, Philippe Henrat, Pierrefitte-sur-Seine, Centre Historique des Archives Nationales, Paris: 1999, p. 343, May 6, 1673, p. 29.

³⁹ *Dokumente mbi Shqipërinë në shekullin XVIII...*, prepared by Z. Shkodra, volume I, doc. no. 2, April 10, 1700, p. 31-32 and doc. number 5, 1700, p. 34-35; ASV, CSM, 1°S., b. 661, April 10, 1700.

*1 okka was equal to 1.5 kg.

⁴⁰*Ibid*, doc. no. 14, November 27, 1700, p. 57.

⁴¹P. C. Mason, *Histoire du Commerce Français...*, p. 193-194; Jean Reynaud, "Joseph Fabre et les industries de la faïence et de la soie", në *Marseille*, S. 3, no. 9, Marseille: April 1950, p. 33-40. Pierre Charles was one of the 15 founders of the Mediterranean Company of Marseilles on September 21, 1685, which was under the leadership of Joseph Fabre. It was created for the development of manufacture and trade of French clothes and fabrics with the East.

⁴²Maria Giagnacovo, *Appunti di metrologia mercantile genevose: un contributo della documentazione aziendale Datini*, Firenze: Firenze University Press, 2014. Cantaro (kandar) is a measurement unit equal to 150 libbre or 47-52 kg, p. 97.

ship⁴³. By means of this ship, he would develop trade between Durrës and Venice in a difficult period for Venetian trade due to the Morea war⁴⁴.

On the eve of the Karlovic Treaty, the Venetian trade authorities considered it useful to recognize the right of Captains from Perast to enter into similar contracts with Venetian, Albanian and foreign merchants trading with other consulates present in the port of Durres.

The Five Wise Men also proclaimed this law to the Venetian ambassador in Paris.⁴⁵ On the other hand, the Perastinians sent a petition to the French ambassador in Venice, on January 23, 1699, informing him that Venice had given them the monopoly of transporting all goods passing through the port of Durres, including those passing through the French consulate⁴⁶. Not only the highest French trade authorities were informed of this matter, but even the king himself.

Such a situation would be the prelude to an ongoing rivalry between Perastinian and Ulcinj sailors in the port of Durres to ensure transport of goods with their merchant ships.

Another fact that prompted the community of Perast to turn to the ambassador extraordinary of Venice, Lorenzo Soranzo, to resolve the issue with the French ambassador in Istanbul was that the French were trying to attract the captains of Perastine ships who were waiting in line to be loaded in the port of Durrës, offering them advantages and the right to change the Venetian flag with the French if they would transport goods through the French consulate⁴⁷. This was due to the fact that the number of Perastine ships was greater than the cargoes passing through the Venetian consulate in the port of Durrës⁴⁸.

According to the instructions he had, the Venetian consul would not allow Venetian ships to change the flag for the flag of any of the other consulates. Therefore, with regard to the disorders that had occurred with

⁴³ASV, CSM, b. 661, n. 1, July 9 1700; *The Archives of the Institute of History (AIH)*, The Archive of Venice (V.) – 1, “Konsujt e Durrësit”, doc. no. 1, July 9, 1700; *Dokumente mbi Shqipërinë në shekullin XVIII...*, prepared by Z. Shkodra, vol. I, doc. no. 1, July 9 1696, p. 30-31.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*

⁴⁵ASV, CSM, 2° S., b. 28, January 23, 1699.

⁴⁶*Ibid.*, CSM, reg. 19-20, January 23, 1699, p. 580; Pëllumb Xhufi, *Shekulli i Voskopojës (1669-1769)*, Academy of Sciences of Albania, Tirana: Toena, 2010, p. 100-101.

⁴⁷*Dokumente mbi Shqipërinë në shekullin XVIII...*, prepared by Z. Shkodra, vol. I, doc. no. 3, June 1, 1700, p. 32-33.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, doc. no. 5, 1700, p. 36.

the Perastine merchant ships in the port of Durrës, Giorgio Cumano vowed to the Five Wise Men by the letter of June 18, 1700, that he would put order in Venetian navigation⁴⁹.

In 1700, Venice had selected six perastine ships at the port of Durres for regular cargo shipments, not counting the ships with grains⁵⁰. The ship captains and merchants had signed before the Venetian consul of Durrës (who in played the role of notary this case) lease contracts for the transport of goods to Venice or Durrës, which were kept by the chancellor in the consulate archive. So, the transport of goods took place in a programmed way and in case the number of cargoes was greater, additional ships were sent.

The council of captains and owners of Venetian ships was also established at the Venetian consulate in Durrës, which met regularly with the Venetian consul, in order to present him with requests and remarks on Venetian navigation⁵¹.

From the beginning it appeared that Venetian diplomacy would be very active and was overcoming one by one the obstacles that Venetian trade faced with regard to the taxes that it paid which were higher in comparison with what the other trading powers paid. In the Karlovic Treaty, the customs duty on trade between Venice and the Ottoman Empire was reduced from 8% to 5% in the customs of the latter⁵².

This is proved by the letter of the consul of Venice in Durrës, Francesco D'Andria, who announced the reduction of the customs duty after peace was signed. However, the customs duty of the Ottoman Empire for France, Netherlands and England was 3%, hence even lower⁵³. Thanks to the close cooperation between the Venetian consul of Durrës with the ambassador extraordinary to Istanbul, Lorenzo Soranzo, and Giorgio Cumano's long stay in the Ottoman capital, Venetian trade acquired an equal footing to the other countries which had a consular representation in Durres. Regarding the customs duty, which was set to 5% by a bilateral agreement, another agreement between the consul of

⁴⁹*Ibid*, doc. no. 4, June 18, 1700, p. 35.

⁵⁰*Ibid*, p. 34-35.

⁵¹ASV, CSM, 1° S., b. 661, June 1, 1700; *AIH*, V-1, "Konsujt e Durrësit", June 1, 1700.

⁵² C. Luca, "The Dynamics of the Commercial Activity...", p. 180.

⁵³ ASV, CSM, 2° S., b. 28, part 2, April 28, 1699; Robert Mantran, *Istanbul dans la seconde moitié du XVIIe siècle. Essai d'histoire institutionnelle économique et sociale*, Paris: Maisonneuve, 1962, p. 526.

Venice in Durrës and the local customs officers in the port reduced it to 3%.⁵⁴ This was also confirmed in the letter that Osmani, the chief customs officer of Durrës, sent to the Five Wise Men, where he expressed his desire to encourage the arrival of goods from Venice⁵⁵. He claimed that the Venetians would be treated like the "French" in terms of the 3% customs duty, which was valid all over the Ottoman Empire.

Meanwhile the Venetian consular tax (*il cottimo*) in Durrës and in the other ports of Albania continued to be 2% on goods. 0.5% of the latter tax charged the incomes of the consul of Durrës. On top of that, he had to pay the anchorage tax of 15 reals which he collected from large ships and 9 reals for small ships.⁵⁶

The Venetian Bailo had to work on abolishing an overtax of 10% on ship chartering contracts, which was arbitrarily claimed by the customs officers and weighted on not only the merchants and captains of Venetian ships, but on the French captains and merchants as well.⁵⁷ This document would be sent to Durrës under the attention of the dragoman of the French consulate in Durrës.⁵⁸ This proves that despite the great commercial competition between Venice and France, sometimes there was mutual assistance between the two consulates.

In November 1700, it looked like the Venetian consulate in Durrës had put order in the port of Durrës and trade had taken its normal course⁵⁹.

But within a short time, two tragic events occurred. Two Venetian ships, "Suddito Fedele" and "Santa Croce", sank off the Albanian coast. The first ship sank after colliding with underwater rocks during a storm,

⁵⁴*Dokumente mbi Shqipërinë në shekullin XVIII...*, prepared by Z. Shkodra, vol. I, doc. no. 6, October 6, 1700, p. 36-37.

⁵⁵*Ibid*, doc. no. 22, April 15, 1701, p. 66.

⁵⁶*AIH*, V-2, "Konsujt e Durrësit", doc. no. 32, October 7, 1706; *ASV, CSM, 1° S., b. 661*, October 7, 1706.

⁵⁷ *Dokumente mbi Shqipërinë në shekullin XVIII...*, prepared by Z. Shkodra, volume. I, doc. no. 22, April 15, 1701, p. 66; Riccardo Predelli, *I libri commemoriali della Repubblica di Venezia*, Regesti, vol. 8, XXX, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012, doc. number 91, August 1700, p. 101.

⁵⁸*Dokumente mbi Shqipërinë në shekullin XVIII...*, prepared by Z. Shkodra, vol. I, doc. no. January 18, 30, 1701, p. 62.

⁵⁹*ASV, CSM, 1° S., b. 661*, November 1700.

while the second, after a duel at sea with an Ottoman ship, was hit and could not continue the voyage⁶⁰.

The survivors of the crew of "Santa Croce" and a merchant from Shkodra present when the ship had sunk, testified before the consul of Durrës that they were attacked by a ship which they thought was a pirate ship from Tripoli. It had hit them causing their ship to sink and later they were rescued by the Venetian ship commanded by Captain Niccolò Moroe⁶¹.

The Consul of Venice, Giorgio Cumano, based on the opinion of the merchants in the port of Durrës, informed the Five Wise Men that the ship was signalled by fire from the coast of Durrës and that it targeted only the "Santa Croce" ship.⁶² For its actions, the ship had the support of Mustafa Topçi Bashi, the "chief artilleryman of Durrës".⁶³

Indeed, at the center of this event was the quarrel between the nobility of the Sublime Porte and two merchants from Voskopoja.⁶⁴

In the end this was a great loss for Venetian trade because each of the ships had a cargo of 700-800 wool bales.

Consul Giorgio Cumano was forced to write to the sons of Andrea Coton from Arta, who had a large company in Venice dealing with trade with Durrës and beyond. He wrote to them because they had a lot of influence over Venetian trade authorities. In the letter, he blames it on the competition with the French consulate which wanted to undermine Venetian trade.⁶⁵ All this seems to be an alibi to justify this great loss⁶⁶. Merchants were disappointed because the Venetian authorities had not escorted with patrol boats the merchant ships with large quantities of goods to protect them from sea attacks, even though the Venetian consul in Durrës had insisted. Despite the fact that the 2% Venetian consular tax was there to provide partial insurance in case merchant ships would sink

⁶⁰*Dokumente mbi Shqipërinë në shekullin XVIII...*, prepared by Z. Shkodra, vol. I, doc. no. 13, November 14, 1700; doc. number 14, p. 54 -57, November 27, 1700.

⁶¹ ASV, CSM, 1° S., b. 661, November 14, 1700; *Dokumente mbi Shqipërinë në shekullin XVIII...*, prepared by Z. Shkodra, vol. I, doc. no. 13, November 14 1700, p. 51.

⁶²*Ibid.*, doc. no. 14, November 27, 1700, p. 56-57.

⁶³He represented the highest authority of Durrës and was dependent on the pasha, who had his headquarters in Kavaja.

⁶⁴P. Xhufi, *Shekulli i Voskopojës...*, p. 111.

⁶⁵*Dokumente mbi Shqipërinë në shekullin XVIII...*, prepared by Z. Shkodra, vol. I, doc. no. 14, November 27, 1700, p. 54 -57.

⁶⁶*Ibid.*

and be attacked, the merchants who had lost the goods addressed together with the Venetian consul the ambassador extraordinary in Istanbul.

Because of the great commercial damages, a lawsuit was filed against Mustafa Topçi Bashi of Durrës, in order to reveal who was responsible and the reasons the ship sink⁶⁷. In the process had to participate all those who traded in the port of Durres, who were not present and had found refuge in the surrounding villages due to the plague that had fallen in the city⁶⁸. They were informed by the consul that everything had been postponed and they had to wait for the end of the epidemic⁶⁹. At the end of the process, the decision taken was to burn the ship of Mustafa Topçi Bashi⁷⁰.

While the Venetian consulate remained closed, the other states had employed in their consular administration people who had previously been candidates for consul in the Venetian consulate. In addition, the traders of Albania and Venice contributed to the expansion of their trade network. One of them was Francesco d'Andria, who was part of the staff of the French consulate in Durrës. He had made it difficult for Venetian navigation with his involvement in the episode of the Perastine ship which had agreed to change the flag⁷¹. This prompted the Senate to enact a law on August 21, 1700 to have Venetian ships respect the queue at the port of Durres⁷².

One of the people who knew well Venetian trade, was the brother of Iseppo Vellai, another rival candidate during the election of Giorgio Cumano. He had the support of the Ragusa and French consulates in Durrës. Nevertheless, the Venetian consul had been able to take him in the Venetian consulate⁷³.

The Cumano and Vellai families has friendly relations among them, but they were also rivals for the position of the Venetian consul of Durrës. Iseppo Vellai had been before 1699 a creditor to the French and Ragusa consulates in Durrës and his loans had not been fully repaid⁷⁴.

⁶⁷*Ibid*, doc. 23, April 18, 1701, p. 67.

⁶⁸*Ibid*.

⁶⁹ *Ibid*.

⁷⁰*Ibid*, doc. no. 39, April 27, 1702.

⁷¹*Dokumente mbi Shqipërinë në shekullin XVIII...*, prepared by Z. Shkodra, vol. I, doc. no. 9, November 11, 1700, p. 44.

⁷²*Ibid*, doc. no. 5, 1700, p. 35-36.

⁷³*Ibid*, doc. no. 6, October 6, 1700, p. 36-37.

⁷⁴ *Ibid*, doc. no. 23, April 18 1701, p. 68; A. Saraçi, *Tregtia adriatike e Shkodrës...*, p. 192.

This fact would later be used by Giorgio Cumano to defend himself for the post of Venetian consul of Durrës against Iseppo Vellai's claims. Cumano would write to the Five Wise Men that Iseppo allegedly supported the Durrës-Ancona-Ragusa trade route and that he supported the other consuls.

It is in this period that the most typical among Venetian trade rivals, Nicola Pulimeno from Ioannina, comes to the fore. He had become the consul of Netherlands in Durrës at the turn of the XVII century which was formerly held by a Dutch consul⁷⁵. He had been one of the candidates for the position of the Venetian consul in Durrës and had lost the challenge to Giorgio Cumano.

The aim of Consul Pulimeno was to stimulate Dutch trade by opposing the Durrës - Venice trade route and supporting the Durrës - Ancona - Ragusa trade route, which undermined Venetian trade by changing the itinerary of the goods⁷⁶.

Nicola Pulimeno had a Polish ship at his disposal, while the French consulate had three ships (tartanas), one of which was made in Durrës⁷⁷. According to the reports of Giorgio Cumanos to the Five Wise Men, these ships were enough to transport the goods in Durrës and they were posing a great competition to the two Venetian ships (frigandone) while waiting for the arrival of the goods.

Competition was also evident among consuls in terms of attracting traders and goods to their consulates. Consul Nicola Pulimeno had

⁷⁵*Dokumente mbi Shqipërinë në shekullin XVIII...*, prepared by Z. Shkodra, vol. I, doc. no. 2, April 10, 1700, p. 32-33; P.C. Mason, *Histoire du commerce français...*, p. 122; Hermann Wätjen, *Die Niederländer in Mittelmeergebiet zur Zeit ihrer höchsten Machtstellung*, Berlin: Karl Curtius, 1909, p. 109. During the first half of the XVII century, Dutch trade was run by the Parliament of the Five United Provinces (Staten- Generaal), until the latter voted for the establishment of Amsterdam-based Chamber of Governance, also known as the Dutch East Company, which managed trade and navigation in the Mediterranean. With the help of Parliament, it appointed the staff of the Eastern consulates and settled matters between merchants. The Dutch consulate in the Mediterranean countries could be represented not only by Dutch consuls, but also by foreigners who were born or lived in these countries, including French, Venetians and Greeks, or by other foreign consulates.

⁷⁶As for the route of goods from Ancona to the Netherlands see: Wilfrid Brulez, "L'Exportation des Pays-Bas vers l'Italie par voie de terre, au milieu du XVIe siècle", në *Annales. Économies, sociétés, civilisations*, 14^e année, no. 3, Paris: Armand Colin, 1959, p. 469.

⁷⁷*Dokumente mbi Shqipërinë në shekullin XVIII...*, prepared by Z. Shkodra, vol. I, doc. no. 19, February 12 shkurt 1702, p. 63-64.

written to the merchants in the port of Durrës and had been able to persuade them to send the goods through the Dutch consulate⁷⁸.

According to his letter, the Venetian consul of Durrës was pessimistic about the situation and thought that the stagnation of Venetian trade would force him to leave the port⁷⁹. He even asked the Venetian authorities for a way to remove Pulimenon from Durrës⁸⁰.

For Giorgio Cumano the only way to cope with competition was to find alternatives with the help of the Five Wise Men. One way was signing ship chartering contracts for the transportation of goods at lower prices, such as was the case with the contracts between Perastine captains and Siatista merchants⁸¹.

In addition, with regards to the contracts signed between the merchants sending goods from Albania and their correspondents in Venice receiving the goods, the Five Wise Men would not allow the correspondents to order the goods from the Dutch consul in Durrës⁸².

According to Venetian trade laws, the Venetian consul and deputy consul were not to engage in trade, but to oversee trade exchange⁸³. However, the French and Dutch consuls could be engaged in trade and their position gave them the opportunity to expand their trade. According to the report of the Venetian consul, the French and Dutch consuls in Durrës were business partners in a company which sold clothes and fabrics made in France and Flanders and which were shipped from Ancona to Durrës⁸⁴. This company aimed to introduce these imported goods to the Albanian and Balkan market, competing with Venetian products. This meant that France and the Netherlands had common economic interests. Two French ships (feluccas) arriving from France with diplomatic messages (i dispacci) to Istanbul, were transporting woolen clothes from the Londrine region of France and Flanders for Pulimeno's Franch-Dutch company⁸⁵.

⁷⁸*Ibid.*

⁷⁹*Ibid*

⁸⁰*Ibid*, doc. no. 33, December 12, 1701, p. 81.

⁸¹*Ibid*, doc. no. 31, November 1, 1701, p. 77-78.

⁸²*Ibid*, doc. no. 33, December 12, 1701, p. 81.

⁸³N. Steensgaard, "Consuls and nations...", p. 25.

⁸⁴ASV, CSM, 1° S., b. 661, October 6, 1700; *Dokumente mbi Shqipërinë në shekullin XVIII...*, prepared by Z. Shkodra, vol. I, doc no. 6, October 6 1700, p. 37.

⁸⁵*Dokumente mbi Shqipërinë në shekullin XVIII...*, prepared by Z. Shkodra, vol. I, doc. no. 19, February 12, 1702, p. 63-64.

According to the letters exchanged between the merchants of Voskopoja and the Five Wise Men, the French and Dutch consuls controlled the port of Durrës and arbitrarily demanded the sales or transit tax "la tassa del capitano" on ships arriving from Venice to Durrës⁸⁶. But this tax was removed with the help of ambassador extraordinary of Venice to Istanbul, Lorenzo Soranzo, who, in the context of bilateral agreements, had influenced the issuing of a *berat* bearing the signature of the Sultan addressed to the kadi of Durrës⁸⁷.

To prevent trade with Venice, Nicola Pulimeno established good relations with the local authorities and customs officers and advised them as citizens of the Ottoman Empire not to follow the laws of Venetian trade⁸⁸. He had also involved in the French-Dutch trade the ship of Mustafa Topçi Bashi, called "Morning Star - Stella Matutina". The ship was commanded by Captain Mehmet Berin*. It had a crew from Ulcinj and four Ragusa sailors⁸⁹. Pulimeno wanted to trade with Venice with this ship, so he persuaded the merchants of Elbasan, Bitola, Siatista and Voskopoja who traded in the port of Durres to send the goods to Venice with the aforementioned ship and not to accept the Perastine ships to transport their goods. This was probably the reason that prompted Captain Marco Stucanovich, on the night of March 22, 1702, to attack and hijack the ship, with all the goods⁹⁰. According to French correspondence, he set sail with the ship for Otranto and the French made efforts to recover the ship⁹¹. Even in the past there had been incidents because of competition between the Perastine marines and those who transported for the other consulates. Some time ago, Giorgio Cumano had informed the Five Wise Men that his brother had called on the sailors

⁸⁶ASV, CSM, 2° S., b. 28, 30 gusht 1701; shih "Hyrtjen" në *Dokumente mbi Shqipërinë në shekullin XVIII...*, prepared by Z. Shkodra, p. 16.

⁸⁷*Dokumente mbi Shqipërinë në shekullin XVIII...*, prepared by Z. Shkodra, doc. no. 27, p. 74-75, berat translated from Italian, August 20 1701; R. Predelli, *I libri commemoriali...*, vol. 8, doc. no. 91, August 1700, p. 101.

⁸⁸ASV, CSM, 1° S., b. 662 (1712-1738), 1705. Report of the Venetian consul Pietro Rosa to the five Wise Men with regard to trade in the port of Durres; Valeriu Papahagi, *Aromâni Moscopoleni Și Commerțul Venețian in sec. al XVII-lea și al XVIII-lea*, București: Editura Societății de Cultură Macedo-Română, 1935, p. 97-98.

* In the other documents the captain is mentioned by the name of Ahmet Beri.

⁸⁹*Ibid.*

⁹⁰*Dokumente mbi Shqipërinë në shekullin XVIII...*, prepared by Z. Shkodra, vol. I, doc. no. 36, March 23 1702, p. 85.

⁹¹*Ibid.*, doc. no. 38, March 31, 1702, p. 87.

of a Perastine ship to withdraw from attacking a ship being loaded on the account of foreign consulates⁹².

In this way, the French and Dutch consuls had the opportunity to create a rift between Venice and the Durrës authorities, putting the Venetian trade in crisis. However, they could not completely shut down Venice's trade with Durrës, because everything was determined by the capitulations and bilateral agreements between Venice and Istanbul.

The two consuls had made use of the damages suffered by the merchants and the ship. They had used all means, even money, to put the Venetians who were in the port of Durrës in the role of defendants. They influenced the customs officer and even the merchants of Elbasan, Bitola, Siatista and Voskopoja, who addressed the qadis of Elbasan and Durrës, unjustly accusing the consul of Venice, Giorgio Cumano, of being the person who had motivated Stucanovich to attack the ship because it was transporting goods from Ulcinj⁹³. Their case reached the vizier of Albanian origin, Hysen Köprülü (Koprili) to settle it with the Venetian Bailo in Istanbul, to whom he asked that the cargo ship be returned to Durrës⁹⁴.

Meanwhile, panic had built in the port of Durrës among the citizens of Perast and Ulcinj. In addition, the relations of Venice with the local authorities of Durrës were strained, which had become *in extremis*, because they had ordered not to allow the Perastinians to land on the shore and were thinking of removing the Venetian ships from the port of Durrës⁹⁵. This situation had made the high authorities of the Venetian navy to go to Durrës to resolve the issue. The attitude of the Albanian customs officer changed suddenly and he distanced himself from Pulimeno. This happened because when he received to translate the letter of the venetian authority, he said the opposite of what it contained. His behavior prompted even the customs officer to tell the Venetian consul the truth about the allegations and showed his will to have the Perastine continue trading as before. As such, the *boomerang* that was created regulated the relations of Venice with the authorities of Durrës. The way

⁹²*Ibid*, doc. no. 19, February 12, 1702, p. 63-64.

⁹³C. Luca, "The dynamics of the Commercial Activity...", p. 181-182; *Dokumente mbi Shqipërinë në shekullin XVIII...*, prepared by Z. Shkodra, vol. I, doc. no. 37, March 25, 1702, p. 86.

⁹⁴ASV, BC, Lettere, b. 167, Adrianopojë, April 17, 1702.

⁹⁵*Dokumente mbi Shqipërinë në shekullin XVIII...*, prepared by Z. Shkodra, vol. I, doc. no. 38-39, April 27, 1702.

was opened for direct talks between the Venetian navy authorities and the Durrës authorities.

The situation was favorable for the Venetians and the impact on trade would be positive. The consul of Venice, Giorgio Cumano, who knew everything, had something to explain to the Venetian ambassador in Istanbul, Lorenzo Soranzo, about the matter. Not only were the obstacles to trade being overcome, but the consul had the opportunity to prove his innocence before the Venetian authorities.

However, it took longer to fully resolve the issue. The Venetian Senate appointed providetor Marino Zane to deal with the indemnification of merchants and the ship abandoned by Marco Stucanovich was seized and sold along with the goods, in order to generate the necessary funds. It was decided to return to the merchants 75% of the value of the goods they had declared at the customs⁹⁶.

There were even other difficult moments for the consul of Venice in Durrës. The merchants of Shkodra, a city with a growing trade, in 1702 turned to the Five Wise Men asking for replacing Consul Giorgio Cumano with Iseppo Vellai⁹⁷. In fact, the Five Wise Men had given the merchants of Shkodra a great deal of weight on the election of the Venetian consul of Durrës, expressing their preferences regarding the candidates for this post.

However, in August 1702 it appears that the Venetian, French, Dutch and Ragusa consulates had forgotten the contradictions they had had among them⁹⁸.

In the end, the geographical proximity of Durrës with Venice on the Adriatic and the decline of trade in the transit port of Split, made the port of Durrës and Albania in the second half of the century XVII a trading center, because goods coming from all over the Balkans could be transported to Venice. Second, English, French and Dutch merchant ships would predominate in the Mediterranean, and in the same period the French and Dutch consulates would open in Durres, which would turn this city into a crossroads of international trade. Third, Albanian and Balkan goods were of high quality and relevant to Venice industry.

⁹⁶Grigore Arbore Popescu, Cristian Luca, *Venezia e l'Europa Orientale tra il Tardo Medioevo e Età Moderna*, Treviso: Antiga edizioni, 2017, p. 17.

⁹⁷*Ibid*; ASV, CSM, 2°S., b. 28, August 21 1702.

⁹⁸*Ibid*.

Fourth, the Albanian diaspora, the relations established among trading companies, the Balkan fairs, etc., played an important role in trade exchanges. Venice would also have to deal with the developed navigation and the merchant ships of Ulcinj. The latter would have their weight on trade relations, which proved that the Venetians did not have full control of the Adriatic.

Eduart CAKA

**TYOLOGIES OF A BORDER CITY: DURRËS DURING THE
FIRST TWO CENTURIES OF THE OTTOMAN RULE (XVI-
XVII CENTURIES)**

Introduction

The Ottoman period has an important place in the history of Albania. This is not only for the five centuries that the Ottomans were present in this region, but mostly because the archival documentation produced during this period provide us with very important information on the history of Albanians. This has been also one reason the Ottoman period is constantly in the focus of Albanian and foreign historians. Both ordinary and qualified readers already have on their hands a considerable corpus of studies on the Ottoman period in Albania.

It should be noted that the Ottoman studies have followed the same trajectory as the other periods, which are considered being thematic in Albanian historiography. Thus, starting from the middle of the XX century, documentary volumes and monographs prepared by Albanian scholars during that period are mostly focused on the military, political and economic aspects. As a result, other topics, such as culture, society, art, religion, have remained in the shadows. In this context, without going further into the problems of the Ottoman studies in Albania, it is worth mentioning the fact that one of the biggest shortcomings we encounter is the tiny number of studies on the Albanian cities during the Ottoman rule. Seen from this point of view, the only accomplished work that we come across on the history of Albanian cities during that period, is the study of Ferit Duka in which he presented and methodologically all the constituent components of the Albanian city in the Ottoman context.¹

¹ Ferit Duka, *Berati në kohën osmane*, Tiranë: Toena, 2001. Another study that should be mentioned is *Qyteti shqiptar gjatë Rilindjes Kombëtare* by Zija Shkodra, published in 1984, even though this study focuses more on the economic aspect of different Albanian cities.

It is precisely because of the reasons mentioned above that we tried to dwell in this article in the first two centuries of Durrës, the “Adriatic Gate”, under the Ottoman rule. Besides being a door to the Adriatic, Durrës was also one of the most important stops along the famous road *via Egnatia*. Unfortunately, we still do not have a proper historical study of Durrës during the Ottoman period. Without expanding on the general overview, in this article we tried to focus essentially on the city of Durrës, its occupation, the issues of security and the order the city had until the beginning of the XVIII century, as well as the relations with the surrounding areas and those beyond the Adriatic in economic development. Besides the studies conducted by relevant researchers in the mentioned period, we consulted the documentary volumes prepared by Zamputi and Pulaha, which contain documents from the archives of Istanbul, Venice, Vatican, Ragusa, etc. We have also tried to present the most recent documentation discovered in Venice and Istanbul about this unknown period of Durrës² trying to shed light during its first two centuries under the Ottoman rule.

The conquest of Durrës by the Ottomans

It is surprising that the fall of Durrës has been studied superficially, in one or two sentences, by the most prominent historians of the Ottoman Empire such as Hammer or Jorga, but also by the Venetian authors and Albanian historiography today.³ Nowadays, the most complete texts related to these events are some passages written by the Ottoman chroniclers translated by Selami Pulaha and published in the volume prepared by him on the Albanian-Turkish war of the XV century.⁴

² More specifically, they are the documentary volumes published by Maria Pia Pedani in Venice which refer to the documents in the Venetian archives regarding the Ottomans but also. Other recent sources comprise the Ottoman imperial orders issued through *Mühimme Defterleri*. A part of the records of the latter corpus have been published in these last two decades by the General Directorate of Archives of Turkey

³ For the history of the entire Albanian coast during the pre-Ottoman period and especially Durrës see: Oliver Jens Schmitt, *Arbëria Venedike (1392-1479)*, translated by Ardian Klosi, Tirana: Fjala Publishing, 2014.

⁴ *Lufta shqiptaro-turke në shekullin XV (Burime osmane)*, prepared for publication by Selami Pulaha, State University of Tirana, Institute of History and Linguistics, Tirana: 1968. For more details on the authors and historians of the Ottoman period who addressed the occupation of Durrës see: Hana I. Kissling, “Zur Eroberung von Durazzo durch die Türken (1501)”, *Studia Albanica Monacensia. In memoriam Georgii Castriotae Scandergei 1468-1968*, vol. VIII, München: 1969, p. 23-31. (Article translated into Albanian entitled “Pushtimi i Durrësit prej

In our opinion, the first step towards the capture of Durrës was taken in 1466 with the construction of the castle of Elbasan and the designation of this new settlement as a sanjak center. In fact, Venice also understood the danger, so the senate of the Republic of St. Mark asked Skanderbeg to attack this construction that the Ottomans were doing.⁵ We cannot say for sure whether Elbasan was built as a driving force to aid the attack on the coast - except for Kruja, which was also the center of the Albanians led by Skanderbeg -, which means Durres, in this case. However, some data reaching us from the Ottoman chroniclers of the time give us reasons to consider such a hypothesis as well. Thus, Idris Bitlisi states that all the sultans who had come to these parts had concluded that taking Durrës from the sea was impossible because of the powerful enemy fleet sailing in the sea opposite the city.⁶ After the death of Skanderbeg and then the fall of Kruja and the conquest of Shkodra, the Ottomans now faced no power inland, which could prevent them from reaching the westernmost tip of Rumelia, Durres.

Referring to the information provided by Ottoman chroniclers, such as Bitlisi and also Hodjas Sadeddin and Ali, who describe the event in question with small differences, except for the fact that Bitlisi gives more details, the sanjakbey of Elbasan, Mehmet Bey, had made long preparations before organizing the attack directed to the fortress of Durrës. He had gathered detailed information on both the plan of the fortress and defense troops and their combat capacity. Then, after having had additional troops from the other sanjaks, on August 17, 1501 he carried out the attack towards the castle in question, capturing Durrës.⁷

Ottoman chroniclers say that Mehmet Bey had divided his troops, bringing forward some of them, while keeping the rest of the army secret. Seeing the troops in front, the defenders of the castle had the courage to go out of the walls to face the enemy. Next the Ottoman troops chose the tactic of retreat, while the defenders of the castle went in pursuit of them.

turqve (1501)", which can be found in the Archive of the Institute of History under indication A-III-371. For the current study, we referred to the version translated by Veniamin Dashi).

⁵ For more information on the reaction of Venice regarding the construction of the Castle of Elbasan see: Eduart Caka, "Vakëfët dhe funksioni i tyre në qytetin e Elbasanit gjatë shekullit XVII", in *Studime historike*, Akademia e Studimeve Albanologjike, Instituti i Historisë, no. 1-2, Tiranë: 2016, p. 101-103.

⁶ *Lufta shqiptaro-turke në shekullin XV ...*, p. 179.

⁷ *ibid.* With regard to the date Kissling refers to the article of Jirecek on Durrës. See: H. Kissling, *Pushtimi i Durrësit...*, p. 1.

It was at this time that the hidden part of the Ottoman army marched, blocking the entrance inside the fortress for the defending troops who were following the retreating part of the Ottoman army. Taking advantage of the situation, the part of the Ottoman army, which had come out from behind the defenders of the castle, managed to enter the building before them, making as such the conquest possible.⁸

It is very surprising how the castle had fallen into the hands of the Ottomans so easily, without sieges, battles, and blockades. In fact, we find the answer in Kissling, who refers to Sanuto's diaries which states that, although Durrës had a strategic position, the number of inhabitants and defenders of the castle was very small. In March 1501, 40 *stratiotes* were asked to come and help guard the city, which was perceived to be increasingly threatened by the Ottomans, but Venice had decided to send only 25. Even they were reluctant to come serve in this city. In this situation, the captain had attempted to make some adjustments to the fortress in order to withstand the enemy attack, but, as we saw above, the city would not avoid the invasion.⁹

The Ottoman and also the Venetian narratives reveal an element which is worth considering. It is the dilapidated condition of the castle of Durrës where, as we read above, the Venetian captain had wanted to fix it with the intention of consolidating the defense of the city. Another detail that reinforces this opinion is in the description of Bitlisi, according to whom, immediately after the conquest of the city, the sultan had issued a decree for intervention on the fortress. Because it describes the demographic situation of the city and in the castle, as well as the interventions that the Ottomans would make, we are presenting the passage of Bitlisi in full below

“As the (old) citadel stretched over a wide area, and taking into consideration the small number of people and the fact that it [the city] would be [partially] uninhabited and taking thus an ugly appearance, [the firman] ordered that as needed the original walls could be reduced down to one third and as such [the city] could be kept and protected by less soldiers. The part that was set aside for a fortress was heavily fortified after the division, while the houses which had been in the citadel were left outside, and so the inhabitants were free to build houses in this

⁸ *Lufta shqiptaro-turke në shekullin XV...*, f. 180-181.

⁹ H. Kissling, *Pushtimi i Durrësit...*, f. 2-3.

area if they so wished. It is easy to perceive the expansion that the new citadel had after this reinforcement and division [from the following fact]: Because near the wall which now divided the one third fortress there was a lot of construction materials such as carved stones, etc., which stood in the foundations of the old [fortress], many skilled masters from all areas of Rumelia were brought in...”¹⁰

From all that was said, it was very clear that Durrës now had become only a coastal fortress¹¹ with a small number of inhabitants, which, in addition to other problems and the invasion it had just overcome, would also be affected by the plague. Thus, in October 1502, the provident of Lezha, Antonio Boni, informed Venice that the plague had fallen in Durrës, that the Ottomans had fled the city, and that it was possible to retake the city with only six ships.¹² As sources reveal, this request of his was not approved therefore Durrës would remain under the Ottomans.

Based on the extremely minimal efforts to protect the city, but also the dilapidated condition of the city, we can deduce that in some way Venice had given up this city. This could have been as a result of the Ottoman empowerment inland, capturing all territories, and also other cities along the coastline, leaving Durres and Lezha isolated. Perhaps it could have been that the Republic of St. Mark was “cautious” trying to avoid confrontations with the Ottomans as it had other more strategic possessions to defend. It is on this spirit that we can also read a proposal the senate approved on October 22, 1502, address the Ottomans with the intention of exchanging Durrës and its surroundings with the island of St. Maura, which meant that if the Ottomans would give them the island back Venice was ready to recognize Durrës to the Ottomans.¹³ As will see below, Durrës will continue to be the object of attempts of retaking it throughout the XVI century.

¹⁰ *Lufta shqiptaro-turke në shekullin XV...*, f. 182.

¹¹ *Historia e Popullit Shqiptar*, vëll. I, Akademia e Shkencave e Shqipërisë, Instituti i Historisë, Tiranë: Toena, 2002, f. 549.

¹² H. Kissling, *Pushtimi i Durrësit...*, f. 4.

¹³ *I “Documenti Turchi” Dell’Archivio di Stato di Venezia*, Inventario della miscellanea a cura di Maria Pia Pedani Fabris, con l’edizione dei registi di Alessio Bombaci, Pubblicazioni Degli Archivi di Stato, Venezia: 1994, p. 20.

The demographics and the physiognomy of the city during the XVI-XVII centuries

Durrës had passed under Ottoman rule in 1501 and had remained dependent as a center of *kadillëk* from the sanjak of Elbasan until the XIX century, when it joined the vilayet of Shkodra.¹⁴ In the Ottoman sources, the name of the city is pronounced *Draç* or *Dıraç* because in their phonetics it is difficult to read the two consonants. An Ottoman source that speaks of Durrës immediately after going under Ottoman rule is the work entitled *Kitab-ı Bahriye* by geographer Piri Reis, who must have visited the coast of Durrës around the first two decades of the XVI century, providing us with a map and some information about the castle and the surrounding area.¹⁵ In his work, Piri Reis emphasizes that on both sides of the bay the water is shallow and that large ships going through this part should do so carefully. As for the smaller boats, he points out that Porto Balo (Cape Pal?) is a more convenient place for anchoring.

Apparently, after the capture of the city, the Ottomans made adjustments and reinforcements to the castle, which, according to von Harff, was in a state of disrepair.¹⁶ An intervention in the castle takes place during the reign of Bayezid II. We learn about this intervention by the traveler and chronicler of the XVII twentieth century, Evliya Çelebi. The latter states that the structure of the castle had been large, but it had suffered numerous damages from the many wars. According to Çelebi the perimeter of the castle is 5,000 steps. He narrated that because of the small number of defense forces in the fortress and the danger of an attack that could come from the sea, in the time of Bayezid II, a division was made in the eastern side of the fortress with a perimeter of 800 meters within the existing walls.¹⁷ Therefore, a small fortress was built inside the big, damaged castle. Çelebi himself does not date the intervention in the castle but, if we take into account the fact that the city was captured by the Ottomans in 1501 and that the sultanate of Bayezid II ends in

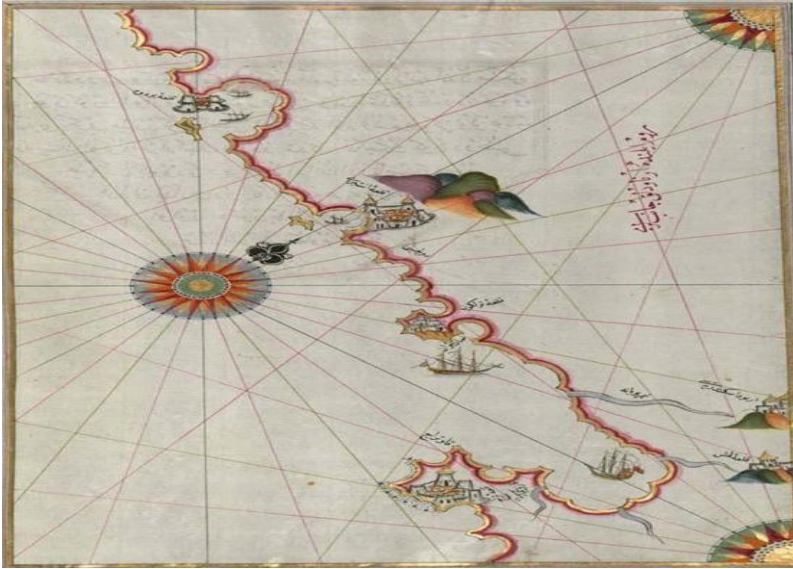
¹⁴ Michael Kiel, "Dıraç", *TDV İslam Ansiklopedisi*, c. IX, İstanbul: 1994, f. 522; Michael Kiel, *Arkitektura osmane në Shqipëri 1385-1912*, translated by Klodiana Smajlaj, Tiranë: AIITC, 2002, f. 121.

¹⁵ Piri Reis, *Kitab-ı Bahriye*, Stamboll: 1526, p. 141-143.

¹⁶ See: M. Kiel, *Arkitektura osmane...*, p. 121.

¹⁷ Evliya Çelebi, *Seyahatname*, c. VIII, Orhaniye Matbaası, İstanbul: 1928, p. 711.

1512, we therefore conclude that the construction in question was carried out during this period.¹⁸



Durrës in the Kitab-ı Bahriye prepared by Piri Reis

Without going into too much detail, it is worth mentioning the fact that almost all the reports and authors referring to the city of Durrës when it was captured by the Ottomans, share the fact that in addition to the extremely bad climate in the city, the castle was constantly adjusted, repaired and changed. This continued until the period of Independence. So, a process of interventions in the castle that lasted about 4 centuries. Thus, in addition to the above information about the intervention in the castle immediately after the capture of the city, there will be again other repairs within the XVI century. We learn from the documents that within the same century, the castle had other repairs. For example, at the beginning of January 1572, we come across a letter sent to the Kadi of Durrës through which he was asked to guarantee the payment of a person

¹⁸ Zija Shkodra, referring to Jorgas, states that the first intervention was made in 1503 with the participation of 8 to 10 thousand people. An exaggerated number, to our opinion but what matters is the fact that the castle was rebuilt. See: Zija Shkodra, *Esnafet shqiptare (shek. XV-XX)*, Akademia e Shkencave e Shqipërisë, Instituti i Historisë, Tirana: 1973, p. 35.

named Hasan Çavush, who had come here to carry out repairs in the castle of the city.¹⁹

The historical past as well and the strategic position, had made Durrës always fall prey to numerous attacks, an aspect which made living in this city unfavorable. Another element that influenced the decentralization of the population in this location was climate. The castle was built on a land with a high concentration of salt and the areas around the castle were swampy, and these conditions were unfavorable for living.²⁰ Moreover, underlining the harmful climate, Hahn states that: "...we should not be surprised that the fever is centered in Durrës".²¹

The above elements meant that the city, in contrast to its strategic importance, could only have a small population.

Kiel points out that at the time the city was captured by the Ottomans, it had a population of about 1 thousand inhabitants. He also refers to a Venetian report, which stated that in this period in Durrës there were only 200 people who could bear the arms.²² This population number in the city is reinforced by Bishop Marino Bizzi, who had counted in Durrës 300 houses in 1610.²³

While Evlya Çelebi, who visited the city about half a century later (1670-1671) informs us that this settlement had 150 houses.²⁴

The data of Bizzi and Çelebi, despite their different numbers, can be accurate in our view. They are supported by the Ottoman calendars, which was compiled during the second half of the XIX century. Thus, in the calendar of the vilayet of Shkodra, in which the sanjak of Durrës belonged, in 1310 Hijri (1892-93) Durrës had a population of 4,785

¹⁹ Ibrahim Etem Çakır, *10 Numaralı Mühimme Defteri'nin (s. 179-356) Transkripsiyon ve Değerlendirilmesi*, Yayınlanmayan Yüksek Lisans Tezi, Atatürk Üniversitesi, Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü, Erzurum: 2006, p. 130

²⁰ Western visitors and officials who visited the city during the XVII- XVIII centuries emphasized that malaria was one of the most prevalent diseases here. For more data on the climate of Durrës at that time see: E. Çelebi, *Seyahatname...*, c. VIII, p. 711; M. Kiel, "Dıraç...", p. 523.

²¹ Johan Georg von Hahn, *Studime Shqiptare*, translated from German by Veniamin Dashi & Afrim Koçi, Institute of Dialogue and Communication, Tirana: 2007, p. 109.

²² See: M. Kiel, "Dıraç...", p. 523.

²³ Kiel gives us additional data about the demographics of the city, namely from Pouqueville (1699) and the French envoy Isnard (1716). They not only confirm the small number of population living in the city but also enable us to create a chronological line of the development of the city in terms of demographics. For more information, see: M. Kiel, *Arkitektura osmane...*, p. 122; M. Kiel, "Dıraç...", p. 523.

²⁴ E. Çelebi, *Seyahatname...*, c. VIII, p. 711.

inhabitants: 3,018 Muslims, 1,520 Orthodox, 199 Catholics and 48 foreigners.²⁵ Referring to the data above, the demographic growth during two and a half centuries can be normal, if we consider the booming demographic growth that Durrës had after the second half of the XVIII century with the opening of foreign consulates.

The data Çelebi provides us with are especially important because the author informs us about the castle as a physical object and adds more information about the administrative, demographic, cultural and economic aspects of Durrës in the XVII century. On the administrative aspect, Durrës depended on Elbasan, a city which housed the headquarters of the commanders of the Spahis and the headquarters of the Janissaries. The kadi of Durrës, according to Çelebi, stayed in the city of Kavaja. Apparently, only the commander of the castle stood in Durrës, who, according to Çelebi, had about one hundred and fifty troops under his command. The castle also had eleven small cannons for protection.

After having dwelt on the geographical and demographic aspects of the city, now let us go deeper by looking at the institutions, objects and other components of the political, administrative, social and cultural life of the city. Of course, at the center of these developments was the castle of Durrës. Çelebi also gives us information on the physical aspect of the castle of Durrës at the time when he visited this city. In addition to the information about the construction of a fortress inside the castle during the period of Bayezid II, Çelebi also tells us about other buildings he had seen inside the castle. As such, he writes that the castle had two doors, one facing east towards Elbasan and the other facing west leading to the port. All houses inside the castle were low and covered with tiles.²⁶ Because the underground had a lot of salt, Çelebi says that there were no gardens and much greenery.

The castle was especially important because first it was a fortified point, which was more difficult to attack and, secondly it was populated. For this reason, with the establishment of the new rule, other buildings had to be built there, which would be in the use of the leaders of the city.

²⁵ *İşkodra Vilayeti Salnamesi (1310...)*, p. 109. Only two years later, in 1895 we notice that the population of the city had grown to 4800 inhabitants: 3,112 Muslims, 1,478 Orthodox, 210 Catholics and 43 foreigners. (apparently, the foreign population is not counted as part of the overall number of inhabitants in the city). See: *İşkodra Vilayeti Salnamesi (1312)...*, p. 114.

²⁶ *Ibib.*

Thus we learn that one of the main institutions of law and order, the court, was located inside the castle. What proves this is a request of the inhabitants of Durrës in 1040 Hijri (1630-31) which implies that until then the court had been inside the castle, but now it had moved to another place outside the castle. As a result, people found it difficult to go there whenever they had work to do, so Istanbul ordered the Kadi of Durrës to move the court to its former location, i.e. inside the castle.²⁷

The mosques are another type of building that we encounter inside the castle after its capture by the Ottomans. Historical sources tell us about the existence of two mosques inside the castle of Durrës, the Fatih Sultan Mehmed Han Mosque and the Kaça Hanim Mosque.²⁸ We have no information on the latter mosque save for what Ayverdi refers to us, while we encounter the Mehmed II Mosque in the archival documents. In a letter dated March 25, 1866, permission was given for the renovation of this mosque. The expenses would be borne by the waqf of Sultan Mehmed Fatih.²⁹

There is no doubt that the garrison of soldiers in charge of protecting the castle was the strongest point which provided for the security of the castle and inhabitants.

In the correspondence with Istanbul we notice many orders issued for the defenders of the fortress of Durrës to be vigilant against the attacks of pirate ships.³⁰ Therefore the payment and the reward for the defenders took on a special importance. From the sources we learn that they were paid in different way. In addition to money or property and concessions, in some instances, in the absence of money, they were given salt, which they then traded for income.³¹ Moreover, to avoid the

²⁷ 85 Numaralı Mühimme Defteri (1040, 1041, (1042)/ 1630-1631 (1631)) (Özet, Transkripsiyon ve İndeks), Başbakanlık Devlet Arşivleri Genel Müdürlüğü Osmanlı Arşivi Daire Başkanlığı, Ankara: 2002, p. 285.

²⁸ Regarding the other ottoman monuments which Ayverdi evidenced within and outside the castle of Dures, i.e. in the Outskirts, see: Ekrem Ayverdi, *Avrupa'da Osmanlı Mimari Eserleri*, c. IV, İstanbul Fetih Cemiyeti, İstanbul: 2000, p. 409; see also: Aleksandër Meksi, *Xhamitë e Shqipërisë: Historia, Arkitektura, shek. XV-XIX*, Tirana: AIITC, 2015, p. 162.

²⁹ *Osmanlı Belgelerinde Arnavutluk*, T. C. Başbakanlık Devlet Arşivleri Genel Müdürlüğü, Osmanlı Arşivi Daire Başkanlığı, İstanbul: 2008, p. 394-395.

³⁰ 85 Numaralı Mühimme Defteri..., p. 286.

³¹ In 1630 we notice that a request was made that the salt be bought at double the price from the soldiers of the castle of Durrës, who were doing an important job guarding the city, so that this would be a kind of reward for them. However, Istanbul had ordered that the salt of these soldiers be bought at the market price. See: 85 Numaralı Mühimme Defteri..., p. 286.

dissatisfaction or rebellion of the soldiers, in case their payments would be delayed, which was normal considering the fact that these were suburban areas, letters were sent to the *Kadis* stating that the payments are arriving.³²

On order and security in the city

Like all Mediterranean coastal cities, Durrës had always been under the threat of pirate ships. For this reason, the defense of the city was a priority for its Ottoman governors. In addition to the fortifications of the existing castle, a second fortification was built within, which housed mainly the headquarters of the administrative institutions and the garrison of guards. Because Durrës particularly and the Albanian territory in general was located on the outskirts of the Ottoman Empire bordering with an important economic and military rival such as the Republic of Venice, Istanbul and the Ottoman administrators of Rumelia were forced to take additional steps to secure the coast, in this case, Durrës.

As such, in addition to the troops of Elbasan, on which the Kaza of Durrës depended, in case of wars or major threat, other sanjaks were ordered to send troops to protect this coastal point. For example, in 1565, at a time when the Ottomans were engaged in the military campaign of Malta, and in order to be prepared about a potential enemy attack on the fortress of Durrës, the defense of the city was entrusted to the sanjakbey of Elbasan and the Spahis under his command.³³

In 1530 we learn that 255 troops were engaged for the protection of the fortress of Durrës. The troops consisted of a dizdar (leader of the castle), a custodian, an imam and hatip, 20 cannoneers and supporters, 32 guards, an aga and 199 soldiers.³⁴ As we will see below, they were paid differently but during the XVI century we notice that most of them had profited timars. Thus, the troops of the fortress of Durrës had 9

³² 7 Numaralı Mühimme Defteri (975-976/ 1567-1569) (Özet, Transkripsiyon ve İndeks), III, Başbakanlık Devlet Arşivleri Genel Müdürlüğü Osmanlı Arşivi Daire Başkanlığı, Ankara: 1999, p. 114.

³³ 6 Numaralı Mühimme Defteri (972/ 1564-1565) (Özet, Transkripsiyon ve İndeks), I, Başbakanlık Devlet Arşivleri Genel Müdürlüğü Osmanlı Arşivi Daire Başkanlığı, Ankara: 1995, p. 217.

³⁴ 367 Numaralı Muhasebe-i Vilayet-i Rum-ili Defteri ile 94 ve 1078 Numaralı Avlonya Livası Tahrir Defterleri (926-1520/ 937-1530), III, Başbakanlık Devlet Arşivleri Genel Müdürlüğü Osmanlı Arşivi Daire Başkanlığı, Ankara: 2008, p. 32-33.

villages as timars in the Kaza of Elbasan, 2 villages and a hamlet in the Kaza of Shpati and 36 villages in the Kaza of Durrës. Together with their salary and bonus this body of guards had a total annual income of 451,948 akçe.³⁵

Apparently, the failure of the siege of Malta would make the Albanian coasts more exposed to attacks from the sea. In 1570, Istanbul ordered the *Kadis* of Ioannina, Vlora, and Durres to take measures to secure their settlements near the coast because they had received information about the movement of enemy ships near the coast.³⁶ Even the bey of Kyustendil was ordered to send 200 experienced Spahis from his sanjak, with the task of defending Vlora and Durres.³⁷ This was because enemy ships now posed a serious threat and had attacked the port of Lezha (Shengjin) taking hostage the *Emin*, The Scribe and some soldiers.³⁸ The information obtained was accurate. On April 12, 1571 a large number of ships would appear in front of Durrës and some of them targeted the perimeter wall of the castle.

The defensive troops reacted and hit two galleys of the enemy with cannons.³⁹ About two months later, in June of the same year, the Agha of the *azefs* of Vlora sent a letter to Istanbul writing that about 110 galleys, 60 boats and two Spanish galleons had headed for the shores of Vlora while a number of Venetian ships had attacked Durrës, stressing that they remained vigilant in the face of the new developments.⁴⁰

Apparently, despite the ever-increasing danger, in a letter sent from Istanbul to the sanjakbeg of Ohrid, Hasan Bey, he was ordered to remain on alert and, if the need arises, to go to the defense of the fortress of Durrës.⁴¹ Not only the protective troops of the fortress of Durrës and the military troops of the sanjak of Elbasan, but also the agents and the

³⁵ 367 Numaralı Muhasabe-i Vilayet-i Rum-ili Defteri..., p. 33.

³⁶ 12 Numaralı Mühimme Defteri (978-979/ 1570-1572) (Özet, Transkripsiyon ve İndeks), I, Başbakanlık Devlet Arşivleri Genel Müdürlüğü Osmanlı Arşivi Daire Başkanlığı, Ankara: 1996, p. 61.

³⁷ Orhan Paşazade, 9 Numaralı Mühimme Defteri (977-978/1569-1570) (Özet ve Transkripsiyon), Marmara Üniversitesi, Türkiyat Araştırmaları Enstitüsü, İstanbul: 2006, p. 113.

³⁸ 12 Numaralı Mühimme Defteri..., I, p. 62.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 211. The document does not refer the country that the ships belonged to but, in the following letter sent from Vlora to Istanbul, it was stated that they belonged to Venice. This information makes sense as the period in question coincides with the Third Ottoman-Venetian War.

⁴⁰ 12 Numaralı Mühimme Defteri..., I, p. 362.

⁴¹ 12 Numaralı Mühimme Defteri..., II, p. 230.

craftsmen of Elbasan were tasked with the protection of this coastal fortification. We learn this from a letter of complaint that they wrote to the sanjakbey of Ohrid, who in 1604 had tried to gather and take them in the military campaign, while the groups in question claim to have imperial orders, which have tasked them with defending the fortresses of Bashtova and Durres in the event of a possible Venetian attack.⁴²

About three decades later, Spanish troops led by Marquess of Santa Cruz, on the night of August 3, 1606, with about 26 Neapolitan galleys set out from Brindisi, would organize an attack on the city of Durrës, burning it and taking, according to sources, 155 prisoners, 40 heavy cannons, weapons and ammunition. Western sources state that the flames of the burning city were visible 4 miles away.⁴³

These data not only show that economic and demographic development was impossible in this city but they reveal also the improper condition of the castle, which was fragile in the face of the attacks from outside.⁴⁴ This condition of the castle was even noticed by the external and internal actors, who, as we see in Bartl's work, had made this city the center of their plans for the liberation of Albanian territories from Ottoman rule.

In addition to the Spaniards, who were the main rivals of the Ottomans in the Mediterranean during the XVI-XVII centuries, even the Venetians would try again to attack the city. Thus, in September 1690, the Venetian fleet led by Captain Cornaro, with a combat unit comprising Maltese and papal ships, after conquering Vlora and Kanina, tried again to take Durrës but, as the sources emphasize, a strong storm at sea had prevented them from landing on the shore. Consequently, the Venetian

⁴² For more see: *Qëndresa e popullit shqiptar kundër sundimit osman nga shek. XVI deri në fillim të shek. XVIII (dokumente osmane)*, prepared by Selami Pulaha, Tiranë: 1978, p. 103.

⁴³ Sources indicate that 3,600 soldiers came ashore attacking the city. While the Ottoman troops did not resist but retreated to the castle and, after the first cannon balls, surrendered. See: Peter Bartl, *Ballkani Perëndimor midis monarkisë spanjolle dhe Perandorisë Osmane: Mbi çështjet e luftës antiturke në kapërcyell të shek. XVI dhe XVII*, translated by Pëllumb Xhufi, Tirana: Dituria, 2011, p. 50-51; Pëllumb Xhufi, *Arbërit e Jonit*, second edition, Tirana: Onufri, 2017, p. 708-709; Z. Shkodra, *Esnafet shqiptare...*, p. 48.

⁴⁴ Western sources say that at the time of the attack there were no people inside the city, as it was the season of work and people had gone outside the castle to work. See: *Dokumente të shekujve XVI-XVII për historinë e Shqipërisë (1603-1621)*, volume III, prepared by Injac Zamputi, Akademia e Shkencave e RPS të Shqipërisë, Instituti i Historisë, Tirana: 1989, p. 63-64.

captain had withdrawn from attacking the city.⁴⁵ On the other hand, after the attack in Vlora, the Ottomans also seemed to have taken appropriate measures in Durrës. An order sent from Istanbul put the defender of Shkodra, Sulejman Pasha, in charge of defending Durrës against a Venetian attack.⁴⁶

All the reasons mentioned above had made the authorities not only repair and take measures to protect the city, but also leave a permanent protecting unit in the castle. The food for the local janissaries, at least for a time, was provided by the sanjak of Ohrid sanjak by order of Istanbul. Supply was not interrupted even in abnormal situations. For example, documentary sources inform us that during 1567 the export of products was banned outside the Ohrid sanjak. But, the supplies that had to go for the janissaries in the castle of Durrës, there was an exception and necessary materials were sent there.⁴⁷

Not only the attacks and threats from the sea but also the problems of order within the Kaza of Durrës provide us with interesting information on the problems that this area encountered during this period. We can divide these problems into two categories: the first category includes the revolts of the population against the payment of taxes, robbery and ordinary crimes, while the second category includes the violations of the government officials.

Starting from the second half of the XVI century, the economy of Albanian cities, located more specifically in Central Albania, would revive and develop. This would be naturally followed by a revival of commercial activity in the port of Durres. At the same time, danger would increase along the roads leading to the port, which the caravans constantly used to transport the goods. Based on the concerns arising regarding this issue, we note that Istanbul took appropriate measures by communicating various orders. Thus, in July 1560, an order was sent to the sanjakbey and Kadi of Elbasan that bandits from the sanjak of Ohrid were constantly entering the jurisdiction of the sanjak of Elbasan, kidnapping people and traders along the axis leading to the port of Durrës

⁴⁵ On this campaign see: P. Khufi, *Arbërit e Jonit...*, p. 908-911.

⁴⁶ *Qëndresa e popullit shqiptar...*, p. 189-190.

⁴⁷ *7 Numaralë Mühimme Defteri (972/ 1564-1565) (Özet, Transkripsiyon ve İndeks)*, II, Başbakanlık Devlet Arşivleri Genel Müdürlüğü Osmanlı Arşivi Daire Başkanlığı, Ankara: 1999, p. 183.

and Lezha.⁴⁸ In 1566 we learn that bandits from the village of Bastar had looted the roads leading to the port of Durrës.⁴⁹ An order similar to the above was issued at the end of December 1567. It was sent to the sanjakbey of Ohrid and the kadi of Dibra, informing that looting and attacks had taken place on the roads leading to the port of Durrës and Lezha, which endangered the goods and lives of traders who went through these ports to go to Tetovo and Skopje. In order to address this issue, all necessary measures had to be taken to protect these roads.⁵⁰ In April 1566, a request was made to arrest a person named Muhamed Kyçyk (junior) from village of Ndroq, near Durres.

He had constantly been engaged in violence and stealing. Therefore, the sanjakbey of Elbasan was asked to arrest him and keep him in solitary confinement until the arrival of the fleet, when he would board a ship and be sent to Istanbul.⁵¹

Securing roads and keeping order seems to have forced the Ottomans to take even more drastic measures. One such measure was the relocation of some villages, which were in mountainous terrains and often rebelled or attacked different places. The inhabitants of these villages were displaced and having them settle on the fields. For example, in October 1564, Istanbul ordered the sanjakbey of Elbasan to take action against the leaders of the inhabitants of the four villages that depended on the Kaza of Durrës. The village of Katesh was one of these four villages and its inhabitants were fleeing the area where the new settlements had been set up in order to go to the previous settlement⁵². While doing so, they were organizing attacks and raids in the surrounding areas, going as far as the Myzeqe.⁵³

⁴⁸ 3 *Numaralı Mühimme Defteri (966- 968/ 1558-1560)*, Başbakanlık Devlet Arşivleri Genel Müdürlüğü Osmanlı Arşivi Daire Başkanlığı, Ankara: 1993, p. 596; *Qëndresa e popullit shqiptar...*, p. 52-53.

⁴⁹ *Qëndresa e popullit shqiptar...*, p. 73-74.

⁵⁰ 7 *Numaralı Mühimme Defteri...*, I, p. 280.

⁵¹ 5 *Numaralı Mühimme Defteri...*, p. 234.

⁵² According to a document dated February 5, 1565, the inhabitants of these villages refused the order to move out of their former settlements. This time, the sanjakbeg of Elbasan, Shaban Bey, is ordered to force the inhabitants to move out, and if he deems it necessary, take hostage the children and wives of the leaders of the resistance. See: 6 *Numaralı Mühimme Defteri (975-976/ 1567-1569) (Özet, Transkripsiyon ve İndeks)*, I, Başbakanlık Devlet Arşivleri Genel Müdürlüğü Osmanlı Arşivi Daire Başkanlığı, Ankara: 1995, p. 383.

⁵³ 6 *Numaralı Mühimme Defteri...*, p. 143.

The village of Vrap was another insurgent village that depended on the Kaza of Durrës and, as the documents show, had been a major problem for the authorities providing order. In a letter dated July 3, 1568, it was stated that persons who had long been rebels raided the houses and the estates of the area, stole sheep, ambushed and did not obey the orders of the Shari'ah. For this reason, the sanjakbey of Elbasan was ordered to take the necessary measures to punish the leaders of this rebellion.⁵⁴

The prevailing uncertainty on the roads connecting the inland with the port of Durrës would force the Ottomans to repair the old fortresses or build new ones. One such case is the castle built in Ishëm around 1570. Another case was the sending out of soldiers to the castle of Peqin, which was also located at an important road junction. Two orders coming from Istanbul in February 1574, asked the beylerbey of Rumelia to provide soldiers for the castle of Peqin, and the beylerbey of Ohrid to gather 300 soldiers from the surrounding forts and settle them in the fortification of Ishm. 50 soldiers would come from the fortress of Durrës and another 50 from that of Lezha.⁵⁵

In addition to the problems mentioned above, tax evasion was another aspect that constituted a violation and which we encounter in the documents. One such example were some residents of Luz and Gosa, who had not paid the taxes they had been paying for thirty years and were inventing various ways to evade the payment of taxes. In this case, Istanbul ordered the kadi of Durrës to take the necessary measures for verification and, if necessary, give these persons the appropriate punishment.⁵⁶

As a coastal city, piracy posed a major problem to the order and security in Durres. In the Ottoman documents we encounter cases when the inhabitants of the city board the boats, go out in the open sea and attack various merchant ships. We encounter such a case in 1536 when the Venetian ambassador in Istanbul, Tommaso Mocenigo had complained to the Sublime Porte that two pirates had attacked and taken hostage the Venetians in the Adriatic, bringing and holding the hostages in Durrës. Therefore, Istanbul ordered the sanjakbey of Elbasan and the

⁵⁴ 7 Numaralı Mühimme Defteri..., II, p. 247.

⁵⁵ Qëndresa e popullit shqiptar..., p. 88-90.

⁵⁶ 85 Numaralı Mühimme Defteri..., p. 168-169.

Kadi of Durrës to investigate the event in question and take the necessary measures to avoid such cases.⁵⁷

As a matter of fact, such cases of piracy are commonplace in other coastal cities. For example, when Çelebi writes about the city of Ulcinj, he points out that brave Albanians come and board boats to go in the open sea and, after looting valuables from ships, return and give the sanjakbey a tithe.⁵⁸ A similar case we encounter also in the case of Durrës. Thus, in a document in March 1565, Istanbul wrote to the sanjakbey of Elbasan, Shaban Bey, that a relative of the Dizdar of Durrës, Mustafa, had taken people with him and had gone out in the open sea committing piracy. It was also proved that he was engaged in these acts because of the protection he enjoyed from his relative, who happened to be the dizdar of the castle consequently, the sanjakbey of Elbasan is asked to arrest Mustafa together with the responsible persons.⁵⁹

The violations of the officials seem normal, because Albania was in the periphery of the Ottoman Empire. In this case, if we take into account the means of communication that existed at that time, the ability of Istanbul to keep surveillance and intervene became more difficult. Consequently, the case of the dizdar of Durrës is not the only one. Thus, in September 1565, we learn that a person named Mehmed had obtained forged documents and had managed to use these documents to give himself the position of the Agha of the *Azebs* of Durrës. After spotting the forgery, the center asked the bey of Elbasan to arrest him and send him to Istanbul.⁶⁰

In 1630 we encounter again a complaint from Durrës towards Istanbul, according to which some people, without an authorization from the leader of the castle, had prepared certificates as if they were the defending troops of the castle of the city and, although not performing this task, they had benefited from the concessions given to the defenders of the castle.⁶¹ On this occasion, an order was sent to the sanjakbey of Elbasan and the Kadi of Durrës to take measures for the situation.

⁵⁷ I "Documenti Turchi"..., p. 100, 104.

⁵⁸ Evliya Çelebi, *Seyahatname*, cilt. 6, Ahmet Cevdet, Dersaadet İkdam Matbaası, 1314, p. 115-116.

⁵⁹ 6 Numaralı Mühimme Defteri..., p. 430; *Qëndresa e popullit shqiptar...*, p. 63-64.

⁶⁰ 5 Numaralı Mühimme Defteri (973/ 1565-1566) (*Özet ve İndeks*), Başbakanlık Devlet Arşivleri Genel Müdürlüğü Osmanlı Arşivi Daire Başkanlığı, Ankara: 1994, p.38.

⁶¹ 85 Numaralı Mühimme Defteri..., p. 286- 287.

Another violation is encountered two years later. In another letter dated October 1567, sent from Istanbul to the sanjakbey and Kadi of Thessaloniki, an order is given that they themselves take charge of an inspection body and go to Elbasan where the Kadi of the city but also the rayahs of the Kaza of Durrës had complained that their sanjakbey and the people under his command had violated the people.⁶²

Another misuse of the official position was in the case of a spahi named Mahmud Hasan, a member of the 35th regiment with a salary of 30 aspres. All the high-ranking officials of Durrës, including the imam, the preacher, the agha and the custodian of the castle, complained in July 1615 to the sultan about the spahi in question stating that he had abused, looted and stolen the poor population, and several years ago had murdered two other Spahi brothers as well as many other crimes.⁶³ The sultan himself ordered the capture of the person in question and have him send to Istanbul to serve his sentence.

On the economy of Durres during the first two centuries of the Ottoman rule

As we saw above, Durrës had crossed the beginning of the XVI century and had started the XVII century with attacks, riots, diseases and many problems, which had also affected the economy of the city. With an unsuitable climate, small population, the anxiety of an attack that could come from the sea and constantly subjected to looting⁶⁴, Durrës was not following in the footsteps of the Albanian cities of the time such as Elbasan, Berat, Vlora, Shkodra, and even Korça, which had entered a rapid phase of economic and urban development.

Although the pier was constantly damaged by attacks, the archival documentation indicates that import-export in the port of Durrës had

⁶² 7 Numaralı Mühimme Defteri (975-976/ 1567-1569) (Özet, Transkripsiyon ve İndeks), I, Başbakanlık Devlet Arşivleri Genel Müdürlüğü Osmanlı Arşivi Daire Başkanlığı, Ankara: 1998, p. 177-178.

⁶³ I "Documenti Turchi"..., p. 311-312.

⁶⁴ This element is best presented by Shuflaj, who states that during a period spanning four centuries (992-1392), i.e. until the capture of the city by the Venetians, Durrës had changed 31 Lords. See: Milan Shuflaj, *Qytetet dhe kështjellat e Shqipërisë, kryesisht në Mesjetë*, prepared for publication by Luan Malltezi, Tirana: Onufri, 2009, p. 9. This is reinforced by a draft report by Nikollë Mekajshi sent to Clement VIII in 1603, in which he states that the capture of Durrës was easy as the city had been looted earlier by the Spaniards and that the close proximity with Puglia and Sicily enabled the protection of the city. See: *Dokumente të shekujve XVI-XVII...*, p. 45.

continued to be functional.⁶⁵ For example, in a document dating in 1607 we learn that a knight sailing with two small ships had set out for the eastern shores of the Adriatic, especially Durrës, under the pretext of bringing here the captives captured during an attack the year before, and, on return, had loaded his ships with grain and corn.⁶⁶ Another documents informs us that in 1612 ships were loaded with stones on the mouth of the River Erzen.⁶⁷

Regarding foreign trade in Durrës during the first half of the XVII century, a document from 1626 contains a decision of the senate of Venice proposing the simplification of the procedures for the purchase of fabrics from the Ragusans. This is due to the fact that if they did not make these purchases in Venice, then the Ragusans would smuggle these goods out without paying the customs tax, and sell them later in Durrës or Vlora.⁶⁸

We do not have much data regarding domestic trade and the crafts practiced in the city of Durres. Durres is not mentioned in historical records to be among the Albanian cities with guild groups, making us think that local production and the handicrafts were not very developed in this city. Apparently, such demands were met by the guilds of the surrounding towns. Thus, in 1606 the jewelers of Elbasan complained to the Kadi that some of their colleagues, contrary to the relevant regulations, practiced this craft in different areas and cities, and Durres was one of those cities.⁶⁹

Around the middle of the XVII century, Çelebi mentions Durrës as a place where a large amount of salt was produced and exported in the Balkans and beyond. In fact, when he started explain the castle, he pointed out that this castle was built on top of a “sandy plain⁷⁰.” In addition, the port of this city had a special position. The great merchants of the sanjak of Elbasan anchored the ships with the products they traded.

⁶⁵ However, we notice that the port did not have any significant economic activity. This aspect is also noticed in the Statute of the sanjak of Elbasan in 1568 in which the customs tax of the port of Durrës pier had the same value as that of Bashtova. For more see: Dritan Egro, *Ligji osman ndër shqiptarët e mesjetës së vonë*, Qendra e Studimeve Albanologjike, Instituti i Historisë, Tiranë: 2012, p. 174.

⁶⁶ *Dokumente të shekujve XVI-XVII...*, p. 179.

⁶⁷ I “*Documenti Turchi*”..., p. 333.

⁶⁸ *Dokumente për historinë e Shqipërisë (1623-1653)*, transkriptuar e përkthyer nga Injac Zamputi, Faik Konica, Prishtinë 2015, p. 57-58.

⁶⁹ Z. Shkodra, *Esnafet shqiptare...*, p. 229.

⁷⁰ E. Çelebi, *Seyahatname...*, c. VIII, p. 711.

This was in fact, the reason for the development and operation of the Durrës pier, which, taking advantage of the great growth of the economy of Elbasan, not only absorbed the products of this market but also the products of a larger commercial-economic axis which went as far as Bitola and Ohrid.

Following the growing ottoman hegemony in the Adriatic and its expansion along the coast of Dalmatia, and the increase of the number of products in Rumelia, the economic activity with Europe increased, and as such the role of the city of Durres increased slowly, becoming an important port for import-export. According to the sources of the time, the warehouses of this port collected the goods of the merchants from Ohrid, Korça and Voskopoja, including the merchants of Elbasan and other centers of Central Albania. At the end of the XVII century we find anchored in the port of Durrës ships from Ulcinj, France, Netherlands, Ragusa, Venice and English.⁷¹

The products exported through this port were mainly goods related to livestock such as leather and wool, but also wax and other materials. Now the port of Durres was competing with the port of Thessaloniki. Sources emphasize that during the second half of the XVII century about a hundred merchants from Shkodra worked in the port of Durrës.⁷² If we take into account that, in addition to those we mentioned, there were traders from other cities, then the economic and trade potential of Durrës had reached a great development. Apparently, this rapid growth of Durrës had ruined the plans of Ragusa, which gave 300 *talents* to the Pasha of Bosnia, who would try to intervene at the High Gate to close the port⁷³, but this did not happen.

The first two centuries of Durrës under Ottoman rule end with the some very important developments which will be important milestones in the economic, cultural and political development of this urban center: the establishment in Durres of the consulates of England, France, the

⁷¹ For more see: Z. Shkodra, *Esnafet shqiptare...*, p. 80-81.

⁷² *Historia e Popullit Shqiptar...*, vol. I, p. 557.

⁷³ "... and if the port of Durres is not closed in time, it will be not only to our detriment, but also to the detriment of the Excellent Lord (i.e. lord of Bosnia) because he had would not generate the incomes that he would in Ragusa by the many competitive goods in Durres...". See: *Burime të zgjedhura për historinë e Shqipërisë*, vol. II, prepared for publication Injac Zamputi, Stavri Naçi, Zija Shkodra, Universiteti Shtetëror i Tiranës, Instituti i Historisë dhe i Gjuhësisë, Tiranë: 1962, p. 153-154. In addition to the port of Durres, Ragusa had requested the closing of the port of Vlora as well. See: Z. Shkodra, *Esnafet shqiptare...*, p. 81.

Netherlands, and Austria. The scope and the political and economic impact the consulates had in Durrës is best described by a letter that the French consul in Durres, Comte, sent to Paris:

“Your Highness please allow me to make as small service to the commerce of this country. Here there are 100 merchants who are all Turkish (Muslims) or Greek (orthodox) living in Wallachia, Shkodra, Elbasan, Voskopoja, Saqisht, Ioannina and Thessaloniki. All the merchants together load once a year the goods that they ship to Venice, where they have their counterparts...

... 3. 000 quintal of wax, 15. 000 quintal of soft wool and then a batch of cow or ox leather; in exchange they receive once a year about 1.500 bundles of Venice cloth ... and regarding the silk fabrics, 5 to 6 boxes are imported every year which are then shipped to Edrene and none is sold in this region of Albania.”⁷⁴

⁷⁴ *Burime të zgjedhura...*, p. 154-155.

Grigore BRÂNCUȘ

THE DIALECTOLOGICAL ATLAS OF ALBANIAN LANGUAGE
SHARED ELEMENTS WITH RUMANIAN

In 2007 and 2008, the first two volumes of the Albanian Language Atlas¹ were published at the Institute of Linguistics and Literature of the Albanian Academy of Sciences in Tirana. It was a work by a group of professors from the University of Tirana: Jorgji Gjinari, Bahri Beci, Gjovalin Shkurtaj and Xheladin Gosturani; with the collaboration of Anastas Dodi and Menella Totoni. J. Gjinari coordinated the preparatory work the development of the language atlas. He is also the author of the data-rich introduction. This study (published in Albanian and Italian) points out the general problems of Albanian dialectology, provides insights on the history of the preliminary research done for the atlas Atlas, on the preparation and organization of research, on material classification and maps editing. Indeed, the Atlas begins with an *Introduction* by Mahir Domi, an older generation albanologist, who has always supported since the middle of the last century, just like Eqrem Çabej and Al. Xhuvani, the attempt of young linguists to observe all the dialectal provinces of the country.

The Atlas Maps present the constituent features of shared Albanian and the geographical differences today together with their intermediate scales. The location of the isoglosses shows the archaic, more conservative areas, and the areas where innovations become apparent, be them integral, or, sometimes, the innovations caused by the contacts Albanian had with the neighboring languages. Gjinari notes the Atlas surveys discovered not only new phonetic variants, but also some grammatical forms and words hitherto unknown to Albanian linguistics. Therefore, the Albanian Atlas is not only an accurate description of the language dialectal composition but also a rich pool of data regarding the development of the language from the shared period to the modern era.

¹ *Atlasi dialektologjik i gjuhës shqipe*, volume I, 2007, volume II, 2008, published in the Università degli Studi di Napoli "L'Orientale", Dipartimento di Studi dell'Europa Orientale.

In addition, this work is helpful for those studying contemporary Albanian and the history of this language.

Both main dialects, *Tosk* (spoken in the south) and *Gheg* (in the northern region), with basic distinguishing features from the old period of the language, have been considered being the standards of literary writing since the early nineteenth century. The first Albanian text, *Meshari*, is a translation Buzuku did in 1555 in the northern dialect. To mention briefly, Gjergj Fishta, one of the greatest poets of the country, wrote in the Gheg dialect at the beginning of the last century. He was very much familiar with the folklore of the Albanian highlanders. In the past, many collections of literary folklore, grammar books and dictionaries were published in both dialects. Some linguists have also developed monographic studies on a series of very interesting aged dialects. However, after the Second World War, an official decree established the literary norm based on the Tosk dialect.

The idea of developing a dialectological atlas is quite old in Albanian linguistics. Driven by the rush in Europe to research linguistic geography in the first half of the twentieth century, Eqrem Çabej drafted in 1943 a questionnaire for future dialectological surveys in Albania. After 1950, a very large number of monographs and descriptions of dialects were published in Albania, as well as some synthesizing studies and university courses in dialectology. They include as well the results of the research carried out on the Albanian dialects abroad: Kosovo, Macedonia, Montenegro, Greece, southern Italy, Sicily. Particularly well-preserved points on the Atlas maps have linguistic materials from these areas

The proper surveys lasted almost six years (1980-1985), over a very dense network of 171 cartographic points. The distance between the localities where the surveys were conducted (not only villages but also cities) – very suitable for the detailed study of spoken language - is approximately 17 km (longer in the mountainous areas, less so in the flat areas). Not without reason the elderly were the one that were asked the most.

The essential questionnaire, which has more than six hundred questions, was published at the end of the first volume and in general it contains predictable phenomena. It should be noted, therefore, that researchers intended to establish these phenomena on the ground as real facts of spoken language and, in particular, the presentation of isoglosses which limit dialectal units. In addition - an important fact - the linguistic

features provided for in the questionnaire were considered under the perspective of their function in the language as a whole, such as, for example, repetitive phonetic phenomena, or suffixes and endings in the morphological and phonetic structure of words.

It should be noted that the phonetic and grammatical "questions" were formulated in a professional language based on a detailed description of the phonetics and morphology of Albanian dialects. The researchers studied the real manifestations of sounds to words, as well as the structure of forms with possible variations of morphemes.

The first volume, with 360 maps, is partially devoted to phonetics and phonology. Let us mention the maps which contain typical phenomena: pronounced vowels (with quantitative opposition: long in Gegh and short in Tosk Albanian), nasalized vowels in Gegh (and lack of nasalization in Tosk Albanian effectuating the rhotacism of *n*), the development of vowel clusters *ua* (*thua*), *ye* (*fyell*), *ie* (*dielli*), laryngeal consonant *h* being in different positions in a word, the opposition of the vibrants: *r*: *rr*, *ll* (Laryngeal, with the variations) the fricatives *th*, *dh*, the affricates (*ç*, *xh*), the palatals (*q*, *gj*), clusters *ng*, *nd*, *nb*, *ngj*, the palatalization of consonants *p*, *b*, *f* (followed by *l'*) and *m* (+ *j*), the development of *u*- (followed by *ll*, *r*), depending on the closed or open nature of the syllable (*hekur* – *hekri*), accent variations (*ái* – *ái*, *pará* – *páre* etc.).

Regarding grammar, most maps contain elements that are related to these facts: neutrality², gender of collective nouns, the wealth of plural endings (with changes in root structure), the signs that distinguish between cases (accusative, derivative), posterior definite article, nominalized adjectives, the variety of forms with possessive pronouns, the present tense of demonstrative auxiliary verbs and a series of more frequent verb classes, the forms of auxiliary verbs in the past, types of future, the past participle, the imperative of the reflexive/passive diathesis, the syntax of inchoative verbs, the values of a string of prepositions, the subjunctive in the structure of intentional sentences etc.

The second volume is devoted entirely to the lexicon, mostly folk lexicon, organized according to these semantic criteria: natural phenomena, agriculture, fauna, flora, kinship, body parts, house, crafts, users and tools, time, space, numbers. At the end of the volume there is a very useful index of the words that are on the maps. The phonetic and

² It is about the phenomenon of gender reassignment in the plural or ambiguity (publisher's note)

grammatical variants of basic words are recorded in the special index developed for each map (on the right page) and their synonyms are listed separately in a box. On the actual map, the different variants have symbols (lines and colored geometric figures). These technical details facilitate search on the Atlas.

In some places, there are synthesizing maps that represent a larger group of phenomena, for example: the series of stressed vowels, the synonymous words for "koçan", etc.

To the history of the Romanian language, the Albanian Dialectological Atlas is of special interest, because the great similarities between Romanian and Albanian are shown on the maps with their real geographical location. It should be clarified from the beginning that the structural, phonetic, grammatical and lexical units of both languages have been observed for a long time in the Balkan linguistics. They have a have, on the Albanian dialect level, a limited extension in the Tosk dialect.

One could draw the historical conclusion that the Romanians had their initial connections with the Albanians from the Tosk area. In all likelihood, the Tosk Albanians could have descended, as the *Frashëriote* Romanians, from the northernmost territories, where they might have had contact with the Romanians. In Romanian, the similarities with Albanian have, in most cases, a general nature. This fact allows for the hypothesis that the contact between Albanian and Romanian could have taken place in the period of joint Romanian, before its dialectal division. Both languages, inherited directly from the Thracian-Illyrian substratum, some tendencies that materialized at the time of their union. This is what information provide on this regard the distinguished maps of Albanian dialectology.

1.a. In phonetics, the similarities between Albanian and Romanian are many. The vowel *ë* (rum. *ă*), regardless of its position, is a general sound (phoneme) in the Tosk dialect. For example, the final *-ë* is kept in Tosk, while in Gegh, the disappearance of *-ë* brought about the lengthening of the vowel of the antecedent syllable: (h. 1.a), t. *plakë*, g. *plāk*. In addition, unstressed *ë* in the first open syllable is kept in the southern dialect, but it disappeared in the northern dialect: t. *gëzim*, *këpucë*, *përrua*, g. *gzim*, *kpūc*, *prrū* (h. 47.b). Regarding its nasal properties, *ë* remained unchanged in Tosk and became *ā* in Geg. Both variants are clearly separated (h. 38a, *zë - ri*, *lëmë*, *běj* and h. 38b/1, phoneme / *ë* /

pronounced in *zë, lë*: reflexes *ë* (and *e*) in the south and *ã* in the north).

Thus, many maps in the first volume show the preservation of the central vowel *ë* (= *ã*) among all possible neighbors. This is the situation not only in Dako Romanian, but also in Arumanian, a dialect which develops near to the Tosk dialect.

1.b. The rhotacism of the simple *n* between the two vowels in the old words, before the Slavic influence, is a general phenomenon in Tosk, as well as in the dialect of the localities of Sicily and southern Italy, where the Tosk Albanians moved early. In M. 64, the Gegë area, with the *-n-*, is clearly separate from the Toskë area, with *-r-*, such as in the following examples: *dimër -i, bri -ri, pleqëri, veshur* (in Gegh: *dimni, brini, pleqni, veshun*). The rhotacism of *n* occurred and developed in Albanian under the same circumstances as those in the northern territory of Romanian language. One important fact is that in Map 64, in between the areas with *-n-* and *-r-* (down Tirana, following the line Kavaja, Peqin, Librazhd, Pogradec) mixed forms were recorded: *-rn-*, *-nr-*, of the same type as those that are present in the old Romanian texts north of Ardeal and Maramureş.

1.c. The laryngeal consonant *h*, frequent in the Geg dialect, appearing in all positions (I, M. 8). In Tosk Albanian there is a fluctuation, similar to Romanian: it exists either at the beginning of the word, or within it, positioned amid the vowels, or it disappears altogether. This fluctuation in the pronunciation of *h* is also present in other Balkan languages. Over a wide area in the center of Albania (as well as to the south and in the Albanian dialects in Italy and Greece), *h* has been replaced by *f* in the verbs as *leh, shoh, njoh, ftoh* (I, M. 57a, b).

In Tosk Albanian, inter-vowel *h* disappears constantly: *lahem* becomes *laem* (I, m. 57c). Cluster *hm* is simplified over the entire Albanian territory to *m*: *ndihmë* is pronounced *ndimë, ndim*. In the center and in the northeast, *h* attached to *m* might transition to *f*: *nifem, nifm* (I, M. 57c).

As it is possible to see, *h*, a fricative with a poor pronunciation, develops similarly in Albanian and Romanian.

1.d. In a limited, more conservative area, in the south of Albania, as well as in Greece and Italy, the palatal *q* appears to be as it was in its early (ancient) stage, *kl* (pronounced with *l*) in such words as: *qaj, qumësht, quhem* (I, h. 59a); see M. 59a/2: *kl* in *qenë*).

1.e. In the same southern province, the parallel cluster *gl* (pronounced *gl'*) developed in the same way as well (I,mh. 59b, the ancient cluster *gl* in *gju*, *zgjua*, *i gjatë*). We have made this special note regarding the appearance on maps of consonant clusters *kl*, *gl* because they have been preserved especially in the villages inhabited by the Aromanians from Frashëri, who pronounce the *cl cls gl, gl*, as *cl', gl'*: *cl'aie*, *gl'emu*.

1.a. In the Tosk regions it is easy to note the palatals *nj*, *lj* (= *ń*, *l'*), which in the north transitioned to *j*, I, m. 61b, *thonj*, *të rinj*, m. 62a, *laj*, *punoj* (in a wide tosk region: *lanj*, *punonj*; I, m. 62b, *vaj*, *gojë*, *bijë*, *fëmijë*, *shkëndijë*) (in southern tosk, the variants with *l*, the same phonetism as among the Frasheriotess)

1.a. As we know, in Albanian there is a discrepancy *r*: *rr* (simple *r* and strong *r̄*, with a supplementing apical vibration) *ruaj* and *rruaj*. This contradiction dissolves in some Tosk dialects and in the northeastern Gegh (I, m. 9, *rruaj*: *ruaj*), i.e. it becomes generalized as a simple *r*. We note this to show that a *rr* (from the *rn* cluster) developed even in the Arumanian in Albania; there was also a strong *r̄* in the Dakoromanian of the old texts.

1.b. From the point of view of the great similarities between Romanian and Albanian, we note from the Atlas maps a series of phonetic details in some words which have a shared autochthonous origin.

For example, dialect of the Albanians in Zadar, on the coast of Dalmatia, still has the ancient cluster *rd* (which transitioned into *rdh*) in such words as *erda* (= *erdha*), *gard* (= *gardh*) etc. (I, h. 11b). Therefore, rum. *gard* belongs to the ancient stage of the common Romanian-Albanian words.

In the northernmost Gegh area and in the Podgorica area, the fricative vocal dental *dh* is incidentally pronounced even as *ll*, a lateral sonant which equivalent in Romanian is *r* (for example: *mură*, alb. *Mullë*); henceforth the hypothesis that *mare* mb. will be explained by the Albanian dialectal form *malle* (< *madhe*).

Throughout the northern part of Albanian, the palatal *q* (= *ǰ*) turned into an affricate (I, h. 13a, b; *q*, *gj* in *qafë* and *gjak*), hence rum. *ceafă* will be compared to an identical form of Albanian.

The cluster of the sounds *va*, in *vatër*, belongs to the Tosk dialect, which is compared to rum *vatră*; in Gegh it corresponds to *vo*: *votër* (I, m. 56)

2. In grammar, the similarities between Albanian and Romanian shown in the Atlas maps are numerous and of great importance.

3. Summary nouns, that is, those denoting uninterrupted, indivisible matter, have neutral determinants, similar to some equivalents in Romanian. The cartographic points where such names have a neuter gender are mostly common in the Tosk region (including southern Italy and Sicily), see I h. 68/1 – 68/6, the gender of nouns *újë, mish, djathë, lesh, dyllë, mjaltë*. In Rumanian: *cărnuri, brânzeturi, lânuri*, plural summarizing forms, with suffix *-uri* which is typical for neuter nouns.

3.a. As it is known, Albanian is distinguished for the wide use of different markers that show the number of nouns. This appears in many volumes I maps (h. 71a and the following maps). (h. 71a and subsequent maps). For example, *gysh* becomes plural by *-ë, -a, -ër, -re; grusht: -e, -a, -ë (ø), -ër; nip: -a, -ër (-ën), -ëra (-ra, -na), -e, nîp; gisht: -a, -ërinj, -inj, -ri, -ër, -ra, -re, -e*. In addition, there are numerous forms of plural in: *prift: -ërinj, -in, -a, -ër (-ën), -ra, -re, -e; përrua* (comparable to rum. *pârâu, -aie, -ăie, -uri*): *përenj (prenj), prej, përon, -oj (proj) (-oja), pronje (-oje), projna, pronjëre, prora; gardh* (comparable to rum. *gard, -uri*): *gardhe, -a, -na, -ni, -e, -ice, -ie, -inj, -inie; gierdhe, gardhje*.

The number of a noun is sometimes shown even with changes in the structure of the root: *dash – desh, djalë – djem, yll – yje, kulaç – kuleç, thelb – thalb, lepur – lepuj, kërmill – kërmij, kalë – kuaj, vëlla – vëllezër*.

In other cases the word does not change: s. *nxënës* – p. *nxënës*; it reappears during the inflection.

We did not consider the variants with the forms with articles, for example *mulli, mulliri, and mullirin dhe mullinë; sy, syri, and syrin, synë* etc.

Therefore, the examination of the Atlas maps proves the fact, which the Albanian grammars have always shown, that this language has a very rich nominative inflection. We do not exaggerate by saying that Romanian, a Romance language, stands out because of the large number of morphemes which show the number of the nouns.

2.a. In Albanian, there are some non-human nouns that have masculine determiners in the singular and plural feminine. These are of the so-called neuter gender, having the same characteristics as neuter nouns in Romanian. In map 137 (volume I), this gender is further illustrated with the word *mal* in the phrase *mali i nalt* (masculine) and plural *male të larta* (feminine adjective), such as for example, rum. *cătun*

frumos “beautiful village” (masculine) and plural *cătune frumoase* “beautiful villages” (fem.). “The neuter” is specific in Gegh dialect; however, there are some “neuter” nouns even in Tosk language.

2.a. Maps 89a, b show the process of how the front article of the adjective attached to the structure of the name standing before the adjective; for example, *lopa e kuqe* is present in points spread all over the territory with no adjective article as it has been taken by the suffix of the name: *lopa kuqe* ose *lope kuqe*.

Similar to how *viçi i zi* becomes *viçi zi*. These manifestations in spoken language point out that even though the names in the given phrase have an article (*lopa, viçi*), that article merges with the nouns in Albanian and Romanian: *vacă a neagră u* becomes *vaca neagră* “*lopa e zezë*”, *vițelu al negru* > *vițelul negru* “*viçi i zi*”. This hypothesis, with regard to the merged article, has been known for long in Rumanian linguistics.

2.a. The perfect tense of motion verbs is formed with the auxiliary verb *kam*, as in Romanian: *kam shkuar: am mers*; *kam dalë: am ieșit* (I, h. 125a). The dialect of Kosovo is an exception to the rule of the uniformity of the auxiliary verb in all verb categories. In this dialect, the non-transitive verbs have *jam* in perfect tense: *jam shkue* (as in western roman languages), probably modeled according to Serbian language.

2.b. The future demonstrative is formed as in Rumanian.

α. *do* + subjunctive: *do të shkoj*; *do* does not change and it is probably with no grammatical person, such as *o* (lat. *volet*), the corresponding element in Romanian, which has entered the written texts relatively late. Phrase *do* + subjunctive is responsible for both main dialects of Albanian language (I, h. 126);

β. *kam* + lidhore: *kam të shkoj*, it is still present in south Italy and Sicily (I, h. 126); the auxiliary verb *kam* changes according to grammatical person and number, and so does the corresponding verb in Romanian. The phrase *am să merg*, general and popular, reflects the Balkan process of replacing the infinitive (*am a cânta*) with the subjunctive. Probably, even in Albanian the formation of the structure with the subjunctive, limited until now to peripheral dialect, can be explained with in the same way;

γ. *kam* + *për të* + participle: *kam për të shkuar = am de mers* and *kam + me* + participle: *kam me shkue = am de mers* (and *am a merge*). In both constructions, very frequent in Gegh, denoting the future (a future of

necessity), only the auxiliary verb changes according to the grammatical person and number (I, h. 126).

2.c. The Albanian infinitive is expressed analytically, through a construction with a participle: *për të + pjes.* (*për të punuar*), frequent in Gegh and *me + pjes.* (*me punue*), general in Gegh. In south Albania, in Greece and in Italy, “the infinitive” does not exist and instead the subjunctive is used (I, h. 130). Indeed, the Albanian infinitive, formed by the participle preceded by the preposition is equivalent to the Romanian word *supin*, a construction with the same structure and infinitive value. The comparison with the Albanian language is proof that the Romanian *supin* has emerged because of the disappearance of the real infinitive.

2.d. In southern Albanian, the prepositional particle *u* in the second person plural and imperative form is between the root and the ending, such as for example *uluni* (*ul - u - ni*), *lahuni* (*lah - u - ni*) (I, h. 135a, b). Verb forms with an inserted *u*, denoting a passive-*vetvetor* meaning (s.: *lahu*), can be compared with the Rumanian types: *duce-vă-ți* (from *duceți-vă-ți*, with dissimilation).

2.e. In Tosk dialect, inchoative verbs form within sentences that have the subjunctive and in Gegh dialect within sentences that have the infinitive: Tosk *filloi të pijë*; Gegh. *filloi me pī* (I, h. 142). The analytic construction with the subjunctive is a typical Balkan construction, known even in Rumanian.

2.f. The semi-auxiliary verb [with the characteristics of modal verb] *duhet* – corresponding in Rumanian to *trebuie* – formed by a participle, is marked with only one point, in Labëri, south Albania: *duhet punuar*, rum. *trebuie lucrat*. Nevertheless, *duhet* + participle is usually used in spoken language. According to the Atlas data, most common is the form with the subjunctive: *duhet të punosh*, with an overall subject, expressed as in Rumanian (*trebuie să muncești*), in second person singular.

We should point out the equivalent construction in Gegh, with the infinitive: *duhet me punu* (as in the western *roman language*, for example: fr. *il faut travailler*).

2.g. The intentional sentences form with the subjunctive in Tosk dialect and in Rumanian: *vete të pres dru*, rum. *mă duc să tai lemne*. The phrase with the infinitive *për të + participle*: *vete për të prerë dru* has the same syntax values as the romanian phrase *supin*: *mă duc la tăiat lemne*.

In Gegh dialect, the intention is expressed through the infinitive: *vete me pre dru* or *vete për me pre dru* (I, h. 145), which equals in Romanian also with *supin*.

We have paid special attention to the dialectal material found in the maps of the first volume of the Atlas to show that there may be additional evidence that the similarities between Romanian and Albanian appear not only in lexicon, as is commonly thought, but also in phonetics and grammar, where there are also numerous phenomena. These essential similarities do not seem random, nor to have been developed later. Both languages carry the genetic kinship (connection) to the common substrate.

During this time, we have researched the phenomena presented here: vowel ă, consonant h, rhotacism, neuter gender, imperative, *supini*, retraction of the article etc. We have published the research in *Studii de istorie a limbii române*, I, II, Editura Academiei Române, 2007, 2009 ("Studies in the history of the Romanian language", I, II); Many works can be found in the volume *Cercetări asupra fondului traco-dac al limbii române*, Institutul Român de Thracologie, Bibliotheca thracologica, VIII, 1995 (*Kërkime mbi fondin trako-dak të gjuhës rumune*, the title of the book, Albanian in Tirana, translated by Luan Topçiu)

3. The second volume of the Dialectological Atlas of the Albanian language contains organized lexical subjects, as we have already shown, in semantic fields, more precisely, in popular terminology. Many maps include a wealth of synonyms

4. For Albanian language researchers, these are source materials (ancient, dialectological, folk) for onomastic research of great interest in Balkan linguistics.

Here we focus, as above, on the ancient words that Albanian and Romanian share together. The observations we make (dialectal extent, archaic variants, etc.) can be considered to supplement the monographic research we have published in *Vocabularul autohton al limbii române*, Editura Științifică și Enciclopedică, 1983 ("Autochthonous Dictionary of the Romanian Language"). We have put the words in the order of the maps in the Atlas.

gjëmb (h. 166), similar word in rum. *ghimpe*, it comes up only in our Tosk dialect and central Gegh dialect. A record has been made in the Tosk dialect of the older variant *glemb*, *glem*, with *gl*.

mace (h. 178) It is a word with a general prevalence, hence the comparison with rum. *mâță* should not be excluded, especially because in the area of Shkodra variants *mitsë* and even *mâtse* (with a nasalized *a*) have been recorded. The male equivalent (m. 176, *maçok*) comes up with variants that differentiate because of the final segment: *maçok*, *maçek*, *maçor*, *maçur*.

gomar (h. 182) it is known in the Gheg dialect, and in the Albanian language in Kosovo and Macedonia. The variant in Romanian is *magar*, in the same provinces, and the feminine derivative is *magaricë* (: rum. *măgăriță*) (m. 183).

mëz, *-i* (and variants *mës*, *mãz*, (m. 187) It is found throughout the map of Albania, with few synonyms in the Tosk dialect and in the dialects of southern Italy. In the south, in Himara (point 121), where many Aromanians live, is *the mëndz*, *-i* variant and, also south (points 119, 139), fem. *mëzë*, *-a*, similar to rum. *mânză* (see also m. 205, *mëzat*).

mushk(ë), *-a* (m. 188) It is known in all Albanian dialects, also in those spoken outside Albania. *Mushkë* coexists with m. *mushk*, *moshk*; hence, a root identical to that found in *muşcoi*, fem. *muşcoaie* (arom. *muşcu*).

berre, *-t* (and *berra*, *-t*) Alb. “small cattle”, synonym of the word *dhen*, *-t* (h. 189), is occasionally encountered in Durrës, in Mirdita and especially in the area of Podgorica and Montenegro. Alb. *berre* is equivalent to rum. *bâr* (especially in the phrase: *bâr*, *oaie*), an interjection to call on the sheep.

dash, *-i* (h. 190) it is present wherever Albanian is spoken; it is an inherited word; the equivalent in Romanian is *daş* “lamb”, found unexpectedly in the province of Muscel, north of Wallachia (a province in the south of Romania) (*daş* is, however, common in the Aromanian and Megleno-Romanian dialects, meaning “lamb”)

shtjerrë, *-a* (variants *shqerrë*, *shqjerrë* and m. *shterr*, *-i*, *shter*) “lamb” it has been encountered only in the Tosk dialect in Pogradec and Korça where many Arumunians live (h. 191, *qengj*, *-i*, and h. 193, *milor*, *-i* “a lamb one to two years old”, general term). Research shows that the “sterile” meaning (for animals and females) is not in the map; it came to be known from other lexical sources.

(*shtirë* n. “sterile cattle”, rum. *ştiră*; see, however, m. 351 *djerr*, *-i* “uncultivated land”, with synonyms *shtaire* (= *shtirë*) in Myzeqe and *shtjer*, *-a*, *shterp*, *-a* in Macedonia.

cjap, -i (h. 196) It is a word that is spread over the entire area of the Albanian language. However, near Korça, it is isolated, and the word *përç* (: rum. *pârçi*) is more common, a Slav word.

kec, -i "The little goat less than one year old" (h. 197), a general word in Tosk Albanian, which we would compare to rum. *cheț*, an interjection to bring back the goats and their little ones. In the north of Albania (and in Kosovo, in Montenegro, in Macedonia) only *edh* is used (and *kedh*, mixed with *kec*) originating from lat. *haedus*, which could have been assimilated because of the contact with Romanian shepherds.

ftujë, -a "female goat, one to two years old" (h. 198), and *ftunj, ftujk, ftujëz, ftule, vetule* (see and m. 199, *ftujak, -u*). We mentioned this word because there are linguists who consider the rum. *vătui* "little goat or a rabbit cub" as an element of substrate.

shytë, -a (h. 200) is a general term. The known variants from the other sources, *çutë* and *sutë*, do not show up.

mështjerrë, -a "a big female calf before it has given birth" (h. 234), a term with a general prevalence, except for the regions of Elbasan and Korça, where it is recorded as *mëzore*, originating from *mëz*, similar to rum. *mânzare* "a shee producing milk" from *mânz*; it is possible that *mështjerrë* to be the result of the mixture of the words *shjtjerrë* and *mëz*, *mëzore* (h. 191).

mëzat, -i "calf from one to three years old; young bull" (h. 205) it is known in the Gheg dialect and in isolated dots in southern Tosk Albanian. It belongs to the family of derived terms from the noun *mëz*, with the same lexical structure as the Rumanian *mânzat* (see even m. 187 *mëz*).

sorrë, -a (h. 210), a general word similar to rum. *cioară*; in eastern tosk language: *galë* "raven" (equivalent to rum. *gaie*).

gjon, -i (h. 218) a predatory bird smaller than the owl, which sings at night in summer". It is a word known only in Tosk Albanian and among the Arbëresh of Italy. In Myzeqe it is known as the "night bird", while in Dalmatia as the "bad bird". Rum. *ghionoaië* is an internal development.

rosë, -a (h. 226), a word which can be compared to rum. *rață*, is all over the territory. In Gegh language, the word *rikë* is less common (in Rumanian, *rică* is an interjection to call on the goose).

këpushë, -a (h. 232), a word which can be related to rum. *căpușă*, it is known only in tosk Albanian.

kopile, -ja “girl” it is only in one point, among the Arberesh of Italy (h. 245).

It has an identical meaning to the rum. *copil*.

gjysh, -i “the father of mother or father” and *gjyshe*, -ja “mother of father or mother” (h. 253) are common words in all Albanian dialects. In Rumanian, *ghiuj* has a limited use meaning “plak” and it is only in masculine (today is very rare).

kurm, a synonym of the word *trup*, it is only in the Albanian of Greece and Italy (h. 267 “trup”). This term of Slavic origin is almost universal. It can be noted that in the northern dialects, it coexists with the Latin synonym *shtat*. The word *kurm* became the origin of the verb *kurmoj* “cut a wood through the middle”, which can be related to the rum. word *a curma*. The presence of the alb. word *kurm* in the southern area speaks more of a relation with Greek.

fyell is used as a metaphor in *fyelli i këmbës* similar to romanian: *fluierul piciorului* (see m. 279, in the area of Korça, but even in the North, in Mirdita). In the dialects of Greece, a form closer to Romanian emerges: *flojer e këmbës*.

Shkrep, verb, it is present in some southern points with the meaning of “stir (fire)”: *shkrep zjarrin* (h. 292).

gudulis fol. (rum. *a gădila*) it is a general word in Tosk Albanian (h. 293). There are linguists who relate both words etymologically.

shkrum (and *shkrump*, *shkrumz*, -a) with the meaning “soot; wood fire” (h. 312 “soot”) is a rare term: one point near Tirana, another in Labëri (south) and two points in Kosovo. *Shpuzë* has the same meaning at one point in the south of Kosovo

krunde, -t pl. “waste of sifted flour, bran” (h. 315) It is known in almost all areas of Albanian language (and in the provinces of northern neighboring countries where there are Albanians living). The equivalent in rum. *grunz*, ar. *grundă*, megl. *grunj*; see also m. 364 “plis, -i”, in which *grund*, -a in Kosovo and Macedonia has the meaning of “clod”.

ajkë, -a (see variant *alkë*, m. 328) It is a general word in the Tosk dialect. It can be compared to *aică* in Old Dako Romanian (today *arichiță* “what remains of milk whey after the curd is extracted”, “Dictionary of the Academy” = DA, s.v.). It should be noted that *ajkë* shows up in Gegh Albanian (together with Albanian dialects in Kosovo, Macedonia and Montenegro) with the meaning of “wool fat; oily sweat

on cattle skin and on human hair”, see m. 392, *lyrë, -a* (e *leshit*), a meaning known also in the Albanian of Greece.

mullëz, -a “a ferment for cheese; a ferment extracted by soaking in water the dried abomasum of a lamb, goat or calf” is known in Tosk Albanian, but also in Kosovo (p. 331). It is a word comparable to rum. *murzã*. It is present in other areas spread out over the two dialects as *rrëndë* (*rrãn*, compared to rum. *rãnzã*).

këpucë, -a “a man’s footwear” it is in both dialects (m. 335). Some linguists (Miklosich, Philippide, Jokl etj.) draw an etymological connection between this word and the romanian *cãputã*, ar. *cãputã*.

sumbull, -a (var. *sumull, sumell, sumbë, thumbi, thumbëz, thumbuz*) “a tiny button” (h. 339, *kopsë*), which can be compared to rum. *sãmbure*.

stan, -i (h. 340) it is all over Albania (synonymous with *kasolle* in Montenegro and *këlive* in northern Greece, in Aromanian areas. Many linguistics advocate the autochthonous origin in rum. *stãnã*, alb. *Stan*).

tsark, -u “earrings” and var. *thark* (h. 341). The word can be compared with the word rum. *țarc* and it is spread especially in Myzeqe.

shtrungë, -a “a narrow passage near the barn door, a barnyard” it is a general word (m. 342), similar to rum. *strungã*.

shterp, -a “uncultivated land” (h. 351). It has this meaning (more frequent are *djerr, lëndinë*) only in some points of Macedonia (compare to rum. *sterp*, for uncultivated land).

grep, -i “hoe” (h. 352, “adze”), with the general meaning “a tool to catch fish; gaff, hook” (along Pogradec, in the south, it means “fork”, h. 376), may be etymologically related to rum. *grapã*.

grihë, -a “Hard stone to sharpen scythes” (m. 381) is a general term, etymologically related to the verbs *grih* “sharpen with grihe”, *grij* “cut into very small pieces; erodes, burn”. In the same family is the verb *gërryëj* “itch, scratch”, from which the name *gërresë* is formed “tool that serves to scoop or to grate with” (a word not found in the Atlas). It can be compared to the rum *greasã, gresie* (with change of inflection).

argali, -ja (var. *argëli*), in southern Albanian, in that of southern Greece and Italy, with the meaning of “vessel, loom”, compared to rum. *argea* “vessel, loom”. The Albanian term (see m. 382 “loom”) can also be identified with gr. *αργαλειός*, id.

kërig, -a (*krriga, -t, krrigëz, -a*) “needles for knitting”, in Mallakastër (southern Albania), m. 386 “knitting needle, -a”. We took in

consideration this provincial word because there are linguists who consider it similar to rum. *cârlig* as a substrate temr.

kurth, -i (*kurth*, -a) "a tool for catching wild animals, snare, trap", rum. *Cursă*; it comes up in northern Gegh and, in almost the same areas, *hekura*, -t, sh., a term comparable to mean with rum. *fiare* sh. "Trap" (m. *çark*, -u).

vatër (I, h. 56), rum. *vatră*, it is known in tosk; in Gegh: *vatër*.

As you can see, there are 40 words in the Atlas that Albanian and Romanian have in common. We have done a monographic research of these words in the volume mentioned above; here we have limited ourselves to a brief description. We have left out the words found on the maps because of their phonetic features or because they belong to clusters of metaphorical value: *qafë*, *përrua*, *gardh*, *shterp*, *tsapë*, *bukël*, *bukuroshë*, *brez*. We did not even consider the words that are comparable to Romanian in terms of semantic features or lexical structure, such as *vëllam* (: rum. *fârtat*), *tambël* "qumësht" (: rum. *dulce* "food (dairy) prohibited by fasting"), *lyrë* (: rum. *usuc în lână*), *shkues* (: rum. *mergător* "shkues"), *fejoj* (: rum. *încredințez*), *këlysh* (: rum. *căluș*), *nusez* (: rum. *miresică*, *nevăstuică*), *God's belt* [: rum. *brâul lui Dumnezeu* "rainbow"], *shark* (rum. *sarică*) etc. Their number is very large. In conclusion, it should be said that, from the Romanian point of view, the popular lexical collection placed on the maps of the Albanian Atlas, together with the phonetic and grammatical elements, gives a very clear picture of the genetic connection between these two languages.

* * *

In 2011, Titos Jochalas published in Athens two volumes of research on the Albanian dialects spoken today in Greece³. The first volume contains various texts (tales, stories, memoirs, folklore or spoken language excerpts, etc.), followed by notes, explanations, comments, while the second has a rich vocabulary extracted from these texts.

In Tito Jochalas's dictionary, we focused on those Albanian words that have the same or very similar responsible words in Romanian. Some also appear in the points found on Greek soil in the Dialect Atlas of the Albanian language. For this reason, the list we provide here should be viewed as an appendix, supplementing the material we uploaded to

³ T. Jochalas, *Η αρβανιτιά στο Μοριά (χρονικά πορείας)*, I-II, Athinë, 2011.

Atlas⁴. We used author transcription; we give the respective Romanian words in parentheses; in some cases, we also give the respective Greek words.

alkë, aljkë (*aică, arichiță* “what remains of milk whey after the curd is extracted”). *baljtë-a* (*baltă* “pool, lake, pond”), gr. *η λάσπη*: *Shtëpinë e bënjëm me baltë nga botë edhé me gurë*.

bardhë (*i, e*) (*barz, bardz* “whitish, gray”), derived words: *zbardhënj, i zbardhur*. Other var. *barxë*, me [dz], “variegated, half white and half brown” (for goats). It is possible that the var. with *x* [= dz], deriving pastoral speech, to have been influenced by the Aromanian dialect.

barsë (: *borț* “large or swollen abdomen”, *borțoasă* “pregnant, pregnant woman”), derivative word: *barsem* “conceives, becomes pregnant”; comparable to *barrë* : rum. *sarcină, greutate, povară*: *Ishtë me barrë*: rum. *e însărcinată, e cu sarcină*.

berr-i, sh. *berra* (*bâr*, exclamation to bring back the sheep or goats; derived verb *bârâi* “send out and bring the sheep”, derivative noun: *bârâiac* “lamb”) (gr. *το γιδοπρόβατο*).

bisht-i (comparable to rum. *păstaie* “pod”).

brez-i (: rum. *brâu* “brez”); *brezi i kallogresë* (: rum. *brâul călugăriței* “rainbow”).

bredh-i (rum. *brad*), derivative noun *bredhjonë-a* “fir”.

brúshtullë-a (rum. *brusture*).

bukur (*i, e*) (comparable to rum. *bucur* “beautiful” (supposed meaning: a human name *Bucur*), *bucuros* “joyfull”, *bucura* “enjoy”).

buzë (*buză*), derived *buzalla-i* “with thick lips”; many compound words (with different meanings): *buzë e kaut* (: *buză boului*), *buzëkuqe* (: *buză-roșie*), *buzëbardhë* (: *buză-albă*), *buzëzi* (: *buză neagră*), *buzështrëmbëre* (: *buză strâmbă*).

cark-u [= *tsark*], a more ancient variant than *thark*, similar to rum. *țarc*

and gr. *τσάρκος*.

cjap [= *tsjap*]: *țap*.

çoke [= *çoke*], *cok-u* “small bell on the neck of a goat” (comparable to rum.

cioc).

dash-i (: *daș* “id”).

⁴ For detailed remarks on the etymology and geographical distribution of common terms between the two languages, see, inter alia, Gr. Brâncuș, *Vocabularul autohton al limbii române*, București, 1983.

flojërë-a (: *fluier*), comparable to gr. *φλογέρα*.

fleturonj, fljutëronj (comparable to rum. *fluture* “butterfly”).

gardh-i “garden” (rum. *gard* “fence”), gr. *ο χήλος*: Hyri dhia ne *gardh* edhé më hëngjëri domátatë (The goat went into the garden and ate all the tomatoes).

gáti (: *gata*).

glim-mbi; glëmbe (: *ghimpe*); var. with *gl-* is older than *gjëmb* (also: *gluhë*

> *gjuhë, glisht* > *gjisht, glju* > *gju*); The fish have *gljëma*.

gushë-a (: *guşă*) “chin, neck; sheep disease”, gr. *αρρώστια προβάτων*; *gushëkuq* “bird with red feathers on the neck”.

gropë-a (: *groapă*).

gjon-i (comparable to rum. *ghionoaie* “woodpecker”).

hudhrë-a, hurdhë-a (comparable to rum. *urdă* “a type of cheese”), gr. *το σκόρδο*. *kaçullë-a, ksulje-lja* (: *căciulă*), derivative noun *kaçuljer-i* “the laurel male”; the var. with *ç*, like in Rumanian should be observed.

kalbëtë (*i, e*), derivative adjective from verb *kalb* (comparable to rum. *câlbează*)

and

qelp-qelbi, qelbem “emit a heavy odor”. *këpucë-a* [këputsë], *kupucë* (: rum. *căpută*). *katunt-ndi* (: *cătun*).

kopil (: *copil* “child”) “servant”, *kopilje-lja* “girl” (in common albanian *vajzë*, gr. *η κόπη*).

kurm-i “trung” (: rum. *curma* “interrupt”): *kurmi i lisit*, gr. *το κόρμι*. *kründe-të* “residues of sifted flour, bran” (: *grunz* “grain”). *maç-i, máce-a* (: *măţă*).

mal-i (: *mal* “coast”).

madh (*i*) (: *mare* “i madh”). *mëzore-a* (: *mânzată*). *miljor* (: ar. *mil'or, mi'oară*).

mullëzë-a “ferment” (: *mură* “stomak, rrëcok, ferment”, ar. *amură*).

mushk-u and f. *mushkë-a* (: *muşcoi, ar. muşcu*). *nëpërtë-a* “viper, asp” (: *năpârcă*). *qafë-a* (: *ceafă* “nape”), gr. *τράχηλος*.

sembri-a “company” (*sâmbră* “id”; ~ oilor “joining herds of sheep to pasture”).

sorrë-a (: *cioară* “raven”).

strigëzë “witch”; gr. *η σπρίγκλα*; rom. *strigă, strigoi, strigoaie*

“bogey”; it might even be *shtrig-a* “jetim”, gr. *ο ορφανός*. *shterpë* (: *stearpă*), gr. *η στέρφα γίδα*.

shkrep(u) “radiation” (: *scăpăra* “shine, shoot”): *i shkrepurë* “splendid”.

shtrepa-të (: *strepede* “cheese worm”): the cheese has *shtrepa* (ar. *štrepu*, with a reconstructed form according to the Albanian word).

shqërra-të, shtjërrë “lamb, lambs” (*štiră* “barren”).

shtrungë-a (: *strungă*): *shtrungë*; gr. *στρούγκα*; derivative noun *shtrungulíth* “stone on which the shepherd sits when milking”, gr. *ο στρογγόλιδος*; The shepherd sits on a stone *shtrungulíthi* and stays above and milks. Therefore, *shtrungë* (*strungă*) it is the door to the sheepfold where the sheep are milked. We should add speaking *shtrungulisinj* “bring the sheep in the door to milk”.

shutë-a “1. lumps in the neck; 2. kërrutë” (: *ciută* “sutë”), *krrutë* “horned sheep” (: rum. *cornută*); in Albanian there is no variant with *ç*. *trastë-a* (: *traistă*).

vatrë-a (: *vatră*), gr. *εστία*.

vjedh, vjedhënj (comparable to rum. *viezure* “badger”).

xhapí-u [= *ğapî*] and *xapí-u* [= *dzapî*] (comparable to rum. *șopârlă*) “large and yellow lizard”; we should add *zhapë* [= *žapë*] “stuffed meat; hard bark”.

49 of these terms are certainly part of the joint Albanian-Romanian fund originating from the substrate. We also added the words *bisht, këpucë, mace, sembri, strigëzë*, which some linguists think may belong to the pre-Romanian fund; the noun *milor* originates from the dialect of the Aromanian shepherds

As it is possible to see, the number of common words matters, as does the number of words we find in the Atlas maps, a fact which proves that, in the entirety of the popular lexicon, they represent approximately a set of 60 terms, very important in the experience of common elementary, basic communication.

The texts that Titos Jochalas took from different places in Laconia, Argolida, Corint, there are many constructions, expressions, sayings, special meanings common to Romanian and, often, Greek and other Balkan languages. We present here, without a certain order, a part of this valuable material, supplemented with Romanian equivalents:

di arbërishtë: știe românește (and with the borrowed version from the Greek: *arvanitiqe*).

java e madhe: sãptãmâna mare, java djathit: sãptãmâna brânzei (me gjinoren); *java mishi: sãptãmâna de carne* (Albanian derivative, construction with Romanian prepositions).

bithëpulje: cur de gãinã (the folk word of a skin disease). *sa bën peponi: cât face pepenele* (= how much).

cë bën?: ce faci? (a waiting phrase).

të të marrë djallëthi: lua-te-ar dracul (in curses).

dalli djelli: a ieşit soarele.

menate: de noapte.

morratë më hëngre krietë: më mănâncă păduchii în cap. pucë [putsë]: puşã.

bre: bre (gr. $\beta\epsilon$, $\beta\beta\epsilon$).

burrë: bãrbat “the husband”: That woman lost her husband *burri* : acelei femei i-a murit

bãrbatul.

i marrë: luat, apucat “crazy”; gr. $\tau\rho\epsilon\lambda\acute{o}\varsigma$. *mbecë mirë: rãmâi cu bine.*

i bie mirë: îi cade bine.

misërdhe (= welcome): *bine ai venit. dorëzë* (zvog.): *mãnuşã* “peg”.

tata: tatã; mëmë: mamã.

keq e bukurë: frumoaşã rãu “very beautiful”; was very ill *keq = e bolnav rãu* (*keq, rãu* with a superlative value).

më muar malli (go in the village): *mã apucã dorul* (sã merg în sat).

kljumështi u prish: laptele s-a stricat “clotted”; dhe: *kljumështi u pre: laptele s-a tãiat* (la fiert).

mirë-a, sh. mira-të: bunele (mit.)

na: na (gr. $\nu\alpha$), Balkan words.

allarghu: klisha isht allarghu, me a- perhaps after the arum.

alargu (comparable to dhe gr. $\alpha\lambda\acute{\alpha}\rho\gamma\alpha$).

nusezë: nevãstuicã, gr. $\nu\phi\acute{\iota}\tau\sigma\alpha$.

Evalda PACI

**ON THE ECDOTICS AND PHILOLOGY OF THE EARLIEST
ARBËRESH TEXTS, AS A NECESSARY APPROACH FOR THE
RECOGNITION OF ALBANIAN LITERARY STUDIES**

The issues of the study and recognition of the earliest Albanian texts have been the subject of a healthy tradition of studies that were gradualized in important periods and for the tracing of such a field of research, along with the increased interest in this direction and in the literary and cultural heritage preserved and cultivated in Arbëresh lands. A clear connection between the two lines, supported by a number of circumstances and factors, is evidenced in any endeavor that can be oriented to the investigation of the emergence of research interest around the beginnings of writing and the development of literature in these areas, without leaving aside the elements that further originate from the particularity of the respective historical and cultural contexts.

The premise of the research of the above-mentioned context, as well as the necessity of the continuous recognition of documentary evidence that contains materials for which philological competence remains a *conditio sine qua non*, are among the basic components in delineating the traces on the study areas of the written Arbëresh literature, of the sources that enrich it, of the themes contained in the corpus of texts, manuscripts, and works published in important centuries, and of the development of book culture and other disciplines in Europe. Studies that shed light on such a history while also preserving critical dimensions on what could be done more in subsequent writings and deeper archival research, are a valuable guide in the recognition of a rather rich panorama, without which Arbëresh heritage cannot be conceived and studied.¹

The circumstances in which, centuries ago, the Arbëresh populations migrated massively and settled on the shores of the Italic lands remain to this day an argument of interdisciplinary observations, together with

¹ Çabej E., *Histori gjuhësore dhe strukturë dialektore e arbërishtes së Italisë*, në *Studime filologjike*, n.2, 1975.

other studies that prove the evolution of dialectal and linguistic features, but also special manifestations of the culture and customs of these populations. The connection with the motherland is evidenced in various ways, including song lyrics with the presence of a prominent figure such as Gjergj Kastrioti, after whose death the drive to migrate to the Italic Peninsula was even stronger and more motivated.

This context that every researcher faces – both in history and in other disciplines close to the latter – precedes the developments in more specific fields of study, precisely those that continue to be the focus of studies on the philology of the earliest documented texts in the country's language.

The recognition of the culture of language cultivation, especially that of the liturgy in the centuries that coincide with similar developments in Europe and in areas more defined in terms of connections with our country, cannot fail to take into account the documentary writings that in the Arbëresh territories constitute a component of their complex linguistic and further literary heritage.

A natural impulse of knowledge that arises from the alignment with texts and summaries containing creations of these lands is also reinforced by the interest to find connections between facts and circumstances close in time, which also include reflections on similar contributions in territories where Albanian is spoken. The history of the practice and preservation of certain rites in these territories not only marks the successful progress of special traditions that are discussed in many thematic and scientific studies, but also constitutes a necessary premise for the recognition of reality and the aspects of their spiritual and cultural heritage.

On the other hand, this wealth that includes a series of elements and trends constitutes an opportunity to appreciate the uniqueness that the compendiums of the time presented in the Arbëresh territories, in which we will be able to find more data about the history of writing and literature of the entire relevant area. For researchers of specific fields, the itineraries of research work and research into certain texts and specimens of works intertwine the continuous and persistent tracking in archives and funds, as well as the identification and further categorization on the basis of a scientific knowledge of the materials related to such a history, as well as the institutions that nurtured and conceived them.

The existence of such specimens – which, in addition to the precious linguistic wealth, represent in our days relics in the literal sense of the word – is evidence of the tendency to cultivate with a clear sense of linguistic and national affiliation compositions with an approach to liturgy, folklore, and literary texts, which in the summarized way they were found reinforces the idea of a complex cultural being. It should be pointed out in this case that, since the beginning of ascertaining the existence of a documentation that contained precious data on literary, ecclesiastical, or popular heritage texts, the need to specify biographical elements on the authors and custodians of such a wealth remains a premise that, despite the conclusions, accompanied later recoveries and returns for the purpose of its complete and philological publication. And with regards to works that, in addition to being specific for the textual configuration and thematics that is closely related to the context that prompted the initiation, the approach with written documents close in time aligns researchers to a common tendency that projects them in a perspective of similar geocultural areas and their linguistic and literary streams. The fragments of Matranga's work has a special history, which has sparked a series of related research and effort to correct certain indications, as well as biographical and chronological data.

The writings of later authors of Arbëresh literature also constitute a part of a history that interests interdisciplinary studies, including church texts of interest for the relevant rite and the influence of the liturgical traditions of the time but also parts and elements of a popular heritage with, with creations and examples from rare literary genres in terms of subject matter and nature.

The philological and analytical study approach to this documentation, the generation-to-generation transmission of the values they contain, the endeavour to resolve issues of authorship and further, the studies that gradually and methodically approached the appropriate models of reproduction and textual analysis, are among other things, advantages in the method of researchers who devoted themselves to this linguistic wealth.

Previous studies, relative to the degree of knowledge of the source materials related to the work of Matranga, but also to the way of interpreting the data from one researcher to another, remain part of a research tradition that serves as an impetus for further observations and analyzes of available variants on this work, as well as genuine

philological research that culminates in facts and concrete evidence of value on specific parts of it.

The existence of several variants, the corresponding differences in content elements and graphic features, the necessity of knowing the history of the approach of researchers in different circumstances to Matranga's work remain fundamental components of a mosaic that, viewed after many interpretive analyzes that followed in the years, attracts attention to the study values it carries and the duration of research interests on it.

The best connoisseurs of this framework remain the researchers who, being involved in a context of studies that includes Matranga and all the complexity of the issues related to the period in which he lived (16th century), made it possible to reflect in the most recent publications of the work, a series of elaborations and analysis on the entire study panorama that sheds light on the recognition of the latter.²

Necessary reflections on this work and the historical circumstances that accompany its realization will also be reflected in the most recent studies on it, which repeat previous achievements that, despite the approach to this study object, are part of a gradual journey towards its more and more objective recognition.

An accomplished philological publication, preceded by the evidence and critical observation on the previous contributions and writings, is presented as a necessary premise and a didactic and scientific instrument for the presentation of philological analyzes on passages of the work and its variants.³

The entire history of the compilation and possession of the latter is reflected in the thematic studies that are evidenced in an analytical panorama that will be found among others in the elaborations that accompany its most recent critical and philological edition.⁴

² Matranga Luca, *E mbsuame e krështerë, (a cura di M.Mandalà)*, Salvatore Sciascia editore, 2004; Mandalà M., *Gjurmime filologjike për letërsinë e vjetër arbëreshe*, Botime Çabej, Tiranë, 2006.

³ Matranga Luca, *E mbsuame e krështerë, (a cura di M.Mandalà)*, Salvatore Sciascia editore, 2004.

⁴ Due to the fact this writing of Matranga, the object of interpretations from the point of view of several linguistic subsystems, contains parts that are likely to be the fruit of a literary inspiration motivated by its own predestination, the latter is included in a history of the emergence of literature in the Albanian written literature of the equivalent century, which is also marked by complex developments throughout the second half of the sixteenth century.

We can trace and follow precisely a genuine profile in terms of studies carried out by Albanian researchers, in academic contexts closer to the heart of the development of this literature, if we approach the modality of recognizing Matranga's work and its equivalent variants, interpreted in mainly philological views from those interested in the latter as an author.

Not a few researchers of the history of Albanian writing have approached the latter, contributing with scientific writings, with mainly linguistic observations on the texts that were available to them, with writings on the reconstruction of the history of the work and other elements that at the time served as study arguments, while a genuine philological and critical publication would constitute, in the eyes of the researcher, a satisfactory finalization for deepening the knowledge of this author, and furthermore, for the awareness that a number of factors are called to attention through this knowledge, which have to do with his specific life journey.

Matranga remains an author who – thanks to the period in which his catechism was created, with a clear connection to the objectives of the time and attention to the doctrinal teachings of the Christian faith – was treated at length in time, making it possible to gradualize the views and ways of the preparation for publication of his work, up to the latest ekdotic editions. Further research on the entire historical panorama related to the coming to light of the publication of the catechisms elaborated in the original version by the Jesuits and, in the case of Matranga, by I. Ledesma S.I., also leads to more in-depth judgments on the relevant influence of the church hierarchy role in this direction.

A complete and necessary conception of the authors and works of a specialist literature such as the ecclesiastical one in the Albanian language and in the Arbërisht variants needs to be elaborated extensively following the realization of the above-mentioned critical and philological publications, which in our days are gradually and efficiently turning into means of a fruitful daily life for the researchers of the period and its fundamental moments.

The interweaving of study lines through the engagement of researchers and pioneers of the basic disciplines of the knowledge of Albanology is a clear trend that needs to be pointed out in this article, since this unfailing contribution also constitutes the foundations of studies on the most important works and essential evidence that we have

on our language and identity, as well as the constant persistence of the prelates of the Arbëresh world, with a progress that intensifies from century to century, being characterized by a concretization of achievements in several areas.

Being part of an interesting and deeply significant mosaic, the biography itself, the individual formation and the contributions of prelates like Guzzetta and Parrino, accompanied by efforts to shape and consolidate educational institutions that remain an important part of the early history of the cultivation of a unique culture like that of Arbëresh on an italic substrate, brought through works and publications that testify reasoned inter-institutional connections in the 18th century.

Despite the difficulties that arise in the process of consulting and systematizing an immeasurable cultural and archival wealth that remains behind such figures, as a testimony of data and documentation that speaks of the respective journey of each one, a number of study perspectives open up after tracing them, taking into account their vital objectives and complex activity, with a clear tendency to prioritize the Albanian world and the Arbëresh populations settled in Italian territories.

More attentive traces to the history of these monuments of Arbëresh culture reinforce the idea that there was a strong and fully motivated connection between prelates and clerics of that time, in particular as regards the finding and interpretation of documents of Albanian writing that dated earlier in time, but thanks to the circumstances in which their discoverers found themselves, they became the object of exchanges and interpretations that to this day constitute the first thoughts about them.⁵

Due to the fact that these regions were the cradle of the shaping of important personalities for certain periods, but also due to the interest

⁵ Mandalà M., *Paolo Maria Parrino e le origini dell'ideologia albanista*, in *Aspetti della cultura bizantina ed albanese in Sicilia, a cura di Pietro di Marco, Alessandro Musco*, Palermo, 2005, p.13. In this article, among other things, we find interpreted circumstances of the consultation by M. Sciambra of the exchange of letters between Monsignor Gjon Nikollë Kazazi and G. Guzzeta regarding "Meshari" and its specific texts. As we know, essential facts entered and became part of this history thanks to this exchange of letters: the name, however close to the nature of the book itself, but which survived and continued to be used as such in the following centuries; the selection and categorization of texts that had a clear sacramental value; the nature of the work, clearly predetermined for use in function of liturgical practice. Both clerics were very clear about what it was about, even more so in the case of a complex work like that of Buzuku, which was witnessed in all its complexity (including the physical conditions) to a good connoisseur of the liturgical tradition (Guzzetta) that the latter embodied in its textual and content components.

that quite a few works aroused in the observations of the best researchers and dialectologists of our time, there is an on-going curiosity to research more and to push further arguments that found impetus in observations based on their construction, inner structure, content, relevant conception, stylistic and linguistic features.

As for the impact that the contributions of the personalities of the Arbëresh world, with a clear connection to the Italic one, have had on a scholarly tradition related to specific fields of research, it would suffice to recall a special trend such as that of the observations on Byzantium, which was enriched immensely thanks to the dedication of the Basilian Monks of Grottaferrata, who showed a prominent interest in the earliest written evidence of our language, in particular the fragmentary ones, treating the latter in specific scientific articles, or making them parts of thematic works that are still an inseparable part of the history of their recognition.

Thanks to their dedication, research bulletins of considerable longevity were outlined, which constantly reflected genuine contributions to the fields of study related to the Byzantine world, liturgy and related calendars, its musical and iconographic traditions, texts of sacred writing, and the peculiarities of their research and recognition.⁶

It is not inappropriate to remember, in this case, that thanks to the research of the Basilian monks of the Greek rite of Grottaferrata we have serious contributions in the field of paleography, codicology, hymnology and Byzantine musicology, all of which are of reference value even today, together with a series of writings that in the most specialized periods of the first decades of the previous century are devoted to written documentation and the earliest works of Albanian written literature. Such contributions follow each other precisely in this period and highlight several fields of study, including the issue of recognizing the written tradition of the Albanian language, an argument also addressed in journals of the same period, with a clear tendency towards studies on linguistics and comparative linguistics.⁷

⁶ Subsequent publications of special issues of the Bulletin of the Basilian Monks of Grottaferrata are another valuable testimony of the above-mentioned contributions. In this way, a clear continuity is traced in terms of contributions that constitute evidence of studies on issues of the history of the Byzantine liturgy, the Holy Scriptures and the relevant books, which from the philological point of view remain monuments of a precious memory for the researchers of the relevant tradition.

⁷ Borgia N., *La questione della lingua albanese*, in *Studi albanesi*, no.1, 1931, p.5 v.

Meanwhile, in the valuable contributions of the Basilian monk Nilo Borgia (1870-1942), as well as in further writings of philological transcription and interpretation of Skiroi and Petrotta, we will be able to find both the expression of views on the ecdotic reproduction of the earliest works of old Albanian literature, and concrete models of the realization of such a trend, being the most appropriate methodical view for this wealth of publications that were published several centuries ago. Such data is presented as valuable facts in writings on the reconstruction of the periods which raise such an interest and a gradualization of the corresponding will along with understandable technological advances that later brought not only more complete publications, but also more arguable in the eyes of the researcher of the philology of old Albanian texts.

We shall see that the above-mentioned personalities will continue to pay attention to the written monuments that serve the reconstruction of a diachronic panorama on Albanian studies, but also historical traces on the liturgy, the Holy Scripture and the typical languages in which the latter was transmitted, and in the period in which the latter concretized writings and contributions that are valuable even today.

Nowadays, in a climate of continuous enrichment of cooperation projects, but also with a permanent attention to the treatment of the most important periods of the history of Albanian written literature, there comes to our attention a whole heritage made up of contributions given in a systematic way in archival funds, acts of scientific activities, thematic and monographic publications, precious writings that served from its beginnings the question of recognition and affirmation of a culture shaped in the Italic territories, but with a clear trace of an early connection with the motherland and the Albanian territories. The attention to this legacy results in articles and views clearly elaborated and related to the return of these facts to the attention of the researcher and the generations that should be informed about the latter in the best possible variants, made possible, in these cases, by philological competences expressed in complete ecdotic publications.

Valuable data for dialectal studies, for observations that shed light on the earliest stages of linguistic developments that included the Arbëresh territories and that were reflected in the works of the authors of the relevant literature, are still a good premise to evaluate other researches that are first enabled by interdisciplinary approaches to these arguments.

The whole context cited above, in the complexity that characterizes it and, what is more, for the clear study interests that had the impetus in the circumstances of the migration of Arbëresh populations towards the Italic coasts since the Four Hundred and later, but also in the delineation of new linguistic and dialectal profiles as a result of the stabilized presence in these places of the Albanian-speaking element, remains an inexhaustible object of observation due to the approach to a rich documentation that sheds light on a series of facts that will further complete the panorama discussed above.

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**A (MATERIAL TECHNICAL) STUDY FOR THE
CONSERVATION OF THE FLAG OF THE CONGRESS OF
LUSHNJA**

The Congress of Lushnja

The Congress of Lushnja was a national Congress of particular importance, which took decisions for the recovery of the Albanian state, to ensure the independence and protection of territorial integrity (Albanian encyclopedic vocabulary, 1985). The Congress was opened on January 21, 1920, while it took place from January 28 to 31, 1920. Fifty delegates representing all provinces within the borders of the Albanian state in 1913, participated in the Congress. The Congress of Lushnja was held when Albania was still suffering under occupation of the foreign armies, while the *Peace Conference* was plotting plans on the territorial truncation of the Albanian state. In December 1919, the Great Powers had agreed to satisfy the claims of Italy and Greece: Italy would put Vlora and the surrounding province under its sovereignty and would also take the mandate (protectorate) over the crippled post-war Albanian state; Greece would occupy the province of Gjirokastra, as a first step to embark on annexation. In January 1920, the European powers plotted a greater partition of Albania among three neighbouring countries: Northern Albania would be ceded to Yugoslavia, Southern Albania to Greece, while Italy would take possession of Vlora province as well as the mandate over what remained of the Albanian territory. On the other hand, the provisional Albanian Government emerged from the *Congress of Durrës*, while following a policy of submission to Italian invaders, was demonstrating itself incapable of coping with the situation. These circumstances pressed for the necessity of a national Congress. Convening of the Congress was proclaimed by Albanian patriotic circles who were utterly aware of the great threat posed to Albania's future because of the Italian claims. A commission headquartered in Lushnja

would deal with the organization of the Congress. The news that a Congress in Lushnja had been convened, was warmly received and supported by the people. The Congress of Lushnja took decisions of such a great political importance. It repudiated the anti-Albanian plans of the Peace Conference and proclaimed protection, by all means of the Albanian state territorial integrity and independence under the borders established in 1913. It addressed a vigorous note of protest to the Peace Conference in Paris (chairman), which announced that Albanians were willing to “fight to the last drop of their blood, against any decision that would put their full territorial integrity and independence at stake”. The Congress also addressed notes of protests to British, French, Italian governments etc., among others, asserting that: “Albanians are ready to give their own lives rather than be viewed as a plunder thrown around like a flock of sheep and become a mere merchandise to be sold and bought by those who today run the diplomacy of Europe”. The Congress of Lushnja passed a constitutional act, which reaffirmed the full sovereignty of the Albanian state, as expressed by its elected high authorities. The Congress elected the *High Council* composed of four persons, which would collegially hold the functions of the head of state, until a constitutional assembly would eventually accredit the latter, and at the same time, it established a *National Council* of 37 seats, who would hold parliamentary functions. Apart from plans of the Peace Conference, the Congress of Lushnja repudiated also the decision of the Conference of Ambassadors which had put the Albanian state under the collective control of the Great European Powers.

The government of S. Delvina pursued a policy in defence of Albania’s national rights. It unified most of the country under a single central power, urging invaders to withdraw their troops from the Albanian state territories and supported an armed struggle for the full liberation of Albania. In line with the decisions of the Congress of Lushnja, the independent Albanian state undertook concrete steps to establish diplomatic relations with foreign countries and particularly with neighbouring countries requiring compliance with and respect for the full independence and territorial integrity of the Albanian state”.

The flag of the Lushnja Congress

According to the studies, the flag of Lushnja Congress (Figure 1) was owned by ex-deputy governor of Lushnja, Veli Vasjari. He had brought

the flag to the school where the Congress has taken place (Ferro, 2016). After the Congress finished, he took and saved it.

One of the decisions of the Lushnja Congress was the creation of the National Museum. The process of building began in 1922, and the museum inaugurated on November 28, 1923.

The Albanian state, the Ministry of Education, where the National Museum depended, and the National Museum itself called on the people to contribute to the enrichment of the National Museum by donating valuable items for museum to it. Veli Vasjari also responded to this call and handed the flag to the National Museum in 1928 (Central State Archive, 1930).



Figure. 1: The flag of Lushnja (image© Institute of Cultural Anthropology and Art Studies, Academy for Albanian Studies)

The composition of the flag

The flag is made of a red fabric on which the black eagle is visible on both sides. The main fabric is folded 1 cm on all edges and sewn with a sewing machine. The black eagle pattern is sewn all around on the red fabric with a black spun sewing yarn, again using a sewing machine. Three rings have been added to the flag, with which the flag can be hung or attached to a rope to mount it on a flagpole. The flag measures 121 cm wide x 70 cm high. Microscopic examination showed that the flag was made of silk. According to the weaving technology, the flag is classified

as an irregular warp satin weave (Figure 2). The weave diagram is given in (Figure 3). A weaving density of 496 threads per 10 cm for the warp, and 466 threads per 10 cm for the weft was found. The fibre and weaving analyses were done by MSc Riana Hida, at the Polytechnical University of Tirana, Department of Textile and Fashion, and the weaving density measurements by Dr. Olta Çakaj from the Faculty of Natural Sciences, Department of Physics, Laboratory of structure and properties of materials.

The black eagle pattern on both sides of the flag is also made of silk. Initially black fabrics were placed on both sides of the flag, fixed and a template was placed on the outlines of which the sewing machine "walked thru". The eagle's eyes have been created by two incisions, below which a white fabric fragment is present. These white fabrics have the form of two round stamps, about 2 cm in diameter. It was not possible to identify the type of fibre used or to determine how they have been sewn to the base fabric.

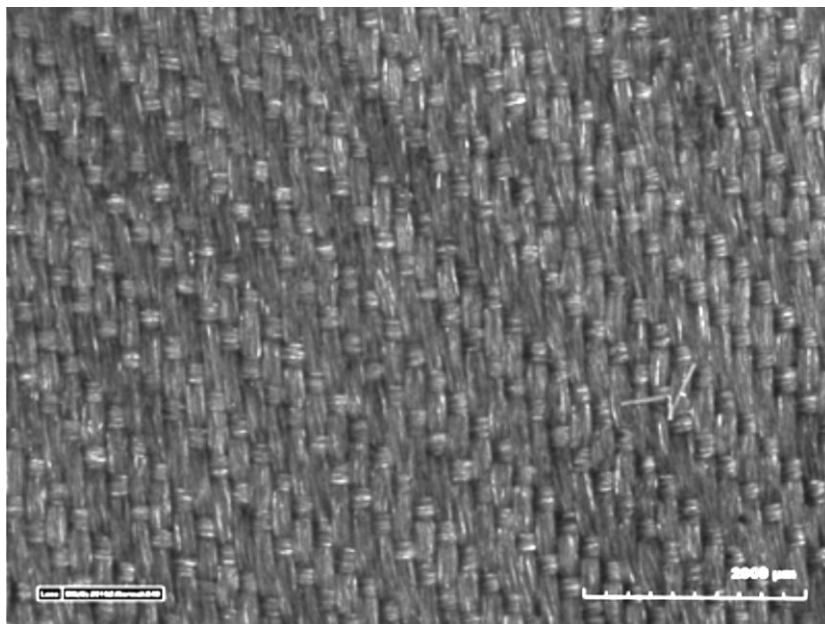


Figure 2: Weaving structure of the red fabric (image© KIK-IRPA Textile research lab)

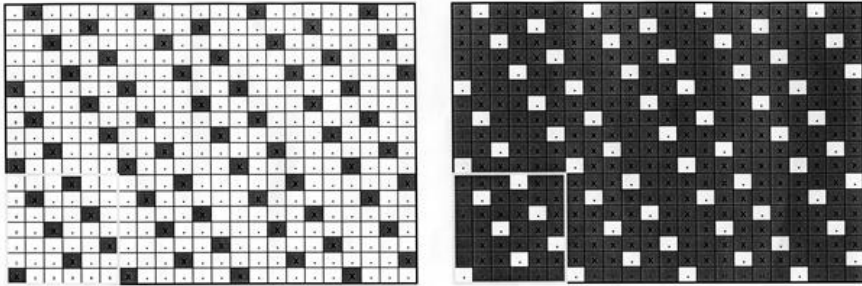


Figure 3: Weaving diagram of reverse (left) and front (right) side of the red silk fabric.

The condition and conservation of the flag

The silk flag is currently in a very damaged state. In longitudinal direction, the direction of the fabric preparation, a lot of tearings are visible. The largest tearings are present in the weft direction. At some areas complete parts of the fabric are missing, caused by the damage of the silk over the years.

The flag is most damaged on the opposite side of the rings that serve to secure the rope. Similar damage was previously found by Stamati on many flags on spears and ships in Albania and Greece. It likely indicates that the flag was hoisted on a flagpole and that wind waves have given the first impetus to damage the flag on the side where it blows out the most.

In general, the surface of the textile looks dirty. SEM images have been taken to examine the surface of the fibres as well as possible fibre damage (Figures 4-5). The SEM analyses were performed with a Zeiss Supra 35 instrument, by Prof. Dr. Maja Remškar at the Jožef Stefan Institute. Not only are various impurities on the fibres in the form of powders observed, but many "broken" silk threads are also detected. This clearly explains why the flag, when it has been lying on a table, leaves behind a red powder of broken fibres.

In addition, the colour persistence of the red and black fabrics in demineralized water is tested and shows that both colours are not water resistant. The dyes present appear to be not well bonded to the silk fibres. One of the fragments that fell apart from the red fabric over time was plunged into a container of distilled water. The pH of the solution obtained was 5.24. The pH measurement was done by Dr. Anisa Dhroso, at the Faculty of Natural Sciences, Department of industrial chemistry.

The impurities present on the surface of the textile, but above all the many 'broken' silk threads and the low water resistance of the dyes present, are very important indications of the fragile state of the flag. In order to get a better understanding of the cause of the pronounced fibre degradation, it is necessary to find out how and with which materials the silk was treated in the past. Therefore, in a next section a study is done to identify the organic and inorganic components present on the silk filaments of the flag.

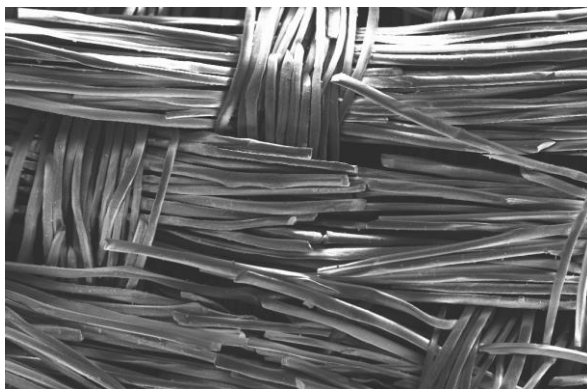


Figure 4: Broken threads in warp and weft direction. Secondary electron image Zeiss Supra 35 instrument, (image Dr. Maja Remškar at the Jožef Stefan Institute)

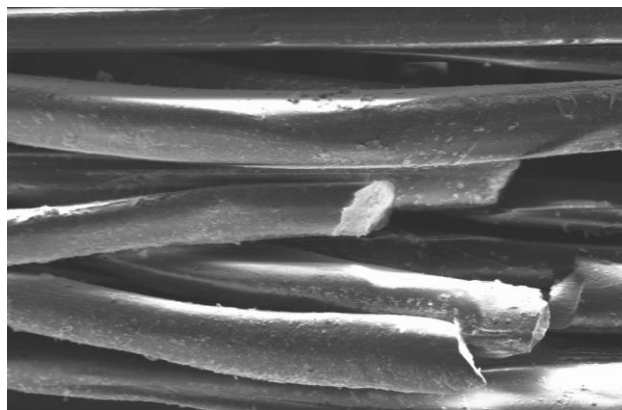


Figure 5: Detail of the broken silk filaments. Secondary electron image Zeiss Supra 35 instrument, (image Dr. Maja Remškar at the Jožef Stefan Institute)

The identification of the organic dyestuffs

A small sample of the red silk was tested for organic dyes. The analysis was performed with the high-performance liquid chromatograph and photo diode array detection (HPLC-DAD) system Alliance from Waters, on the dyes extracted from the fibers with hydrochloric acid (Vanden Berghe and Vandorpe, 2019; Vanden Berghe *et al.* 2009). A mixture of synthetic dyes was detected, containing acid red 9, basic violet 10, a dyestuff with spectral characteristics very similar to basic red 1 and an unknown synthetic red dye, as major chromophores. The last dyestuff, found at a retention time of 19.1 minutes, could not be identified based on the comparison with reference spectra from the in-house database. In addition, a minor compound is present at a retention time of 23.6 minutes, which is, according to the spectral data, likely a derivative of basic violet 10. The HPLC-DAD analysis of the red sample is given in Figure 6, showing the max plot (top), the chromatogram at 520 nm presenting the peaks of the detected dye chromophores (middle) and the absorbance spectra of all detected compounds (bottom). An overview of the detected compounds characterised by retention time and the visible absorbance maxima, is given in table 1, together with their name and number according to the Colour Index Classification system, their common name and the year of discovery.

Table 1: Detected dyestuffs

Retention time (min)	Visible absorbance max.(nm)	Colour index name (where applicable)	Colour index number	Common name	Year of discovery
16.2	533	basic red 1	45160	rhodamine 6G	1891/1892
17.3	526	basic red 1 derivative	-		-
19.1	410-542	unknown red dye	-	-	-
20.7	557	basic violet 10		rhodamine B	1887/1888
21.2	498	acid red 9	15635	carmines for silk or silk scarlet	-
23.6	559	basic violet 10 derivative	-	-	-

The identification of inorganic elements

The silk fabric was furthermore analysed with X-ray fluorescence spectroscopy (XRF) by Prof. Dr. Niko Civici in the Institute of Applied Nuclear Physics, using a Micro-XRF spectrometer ARTAX 800 (Bruker

Gmbh). The analysis showed the content of the elements tin (Sn) and calcium (Ca), as well as a little phosphorus (P), silicon (Si) and potassium (K). Analysis of demineralised water in which a loose fragment of the silk was immersed also showed that none of the elements identified by XRF migrated from the silk into the water.

Impact of the silk weighting and dyeing on the conservation status of the flag.

It can be concluded that the red silk fabric of the flag from Lushjna has been dyed red with synthetic dyestuffs. Silk scarlet, rhodamine 6G and rhodamine B are identified, together with another red synthetic dye from unknown composition. The first fully synthetic dye made from coal tar, has been discovered in 1856 though most advances in dye synthesis were done in the last quarter of the 19th century (Barnett 2007). In 1887, the synthesis of rhodamine was first described in a patent by Maurice Ceresole working in the laboratories of the *Badische Anilin und Soda Fabrik* (B.A.S.F.). The described procedure referred to the dye later known as rhodamine B. It was a basic dye, fast dyeing and with particularly vivid red fluorescent color. A derivative of this dye was created in 1891, which became known as rhodamine 6G (Cooksey 2015), later on followed by multiple variants. The detection of both rhodamine B and 6B more in particular in the red flag, implies a *post quem* date of the red dyeing of the silk fabric after 1891 (Colour Index 1971). Carmine for silk (or silk scarlet) is a monoazo dye discovered by Durand & Huguenin. There is no information about the year of discovery in the Colour Index (Colour Index 1971).

All three identified synthetic dyes have been reported among the series of sixty-six Important Early Synthetic Dyes (dated between 1856-1892) by the Smithsonian institute based on the work of Helmut Schweppe and known as the 'Schweppe collection' (Schweppe 1987; 1991).

By the time of the production of the flag in the beginning of the 20th century, synthetic dyestuffs are applied more commonly, and with them, a number of shades have become available that far exceeded in brightness and intensity to the natural dyes. Possibly, the enthusiasm for these new vivid dyes caused the lower attention to the poor colour, water or wash fastness of most of these dyes (Eiland 1999).

In the case of the flag, the bright yellow red color of carmine for silk was likely tempered by the addition of the blue-red rhodamine dyes, to obtain the final brilliant scarlet-red hue of the flag. The poor light and wash properties of these dyes as detected in the preliminary conservation tests, unfortunately confirms the earlier study of Schweppe that reported a light fastness of 2 and wash fastness of 3 (using ISO testing methods) for each of the dyes (Schweppe 1987).

This newly acquired knowledge about the dyes present explains the migration of the dyes from the red silk during the colour persistence test and gives a clear picture of the risk associated with performing some form of wet cleaning during the restoration treatment of the flag.

In addition, however, the dyes themselves are not the reason for the extreme degradation of the red silk fibres, which led to the cracks and the complete fibre loss. This deterioration is the result of the weighting procedure of the silk fibres. Silk weighting was done in the past, in the first place to compensate the weight loss of the silk after degumming. By this treatment, a more lustrous appearance of the silk was obtained though it had the negative consequence of a weight loss up to 25%. Silk weighting afterwards, by the addition of weighting agents, increased the silk volume and improved the drape and handle of the silk. Since silk was very expensive and sold by weight, one can imagine that adding weighting agents to silk far above its original weight was a very lucrative business (Hacke 2008). Silk weighting was initially mainly done with tannins. From the second half of the 19th century onwards however, metal salts became more popular, in the search to obtain higher and higher silk weights.

The detected elements tin, phosphor and potassium indicate that the silk of the flag was weighted with tin salts, combined with sodium phosphates and silicates, a treatment better known as the “Neuhaus” or “dynamite” silk weighting process. This method was developed by Neuhaus in 1892-1893 and allowed a weighting of up to 167% (of the initial silk weight) for white and light- coloured silk (Hacke 2008).

The extreme conditions of these tin salt treatments, which were quite common at the end of the 19th and the beginning of the 20th century, have a negative effect on fibre strength (Garside et al. 2010a). In the case of the flag, this results in the many broken filaments and the loss of silk yarns in both directions. The far-reaching degradation often observed on historical dynamite-weighted silk in historical collections is mainly

caused by damage incurred during the tin weighting process itself, possibly in combination with the effects of the previous bleaching, and not by the use and preservation of the textile afterwards. The different pH conditions (from 1 to 10) used in the successive baths during the different steps of the weighing process, and not the weighting agents as such, cause an immediate reduction in the tensile strength of the newly made weighted silk yarns. Apart from the initial weaker condition of the silk immediately after the dynamite weighting, the long-term stability appears less problematic than previously considered. (Garside et al. 2010a; 2010b).

In addition, no relationship is found between the inherent acidity and the mechanical properties of tin-weighted silk, contrary to what is observed from unweighted or other than tin weighted silks, where the mechanical properties are affected by fibre degradation, accompanied by an increase in acidity. Dynamite weighted silk has a lower acidity (around pH 7) regardless of its condition. Hence, the degradation of tin weighted silk determined by acidity measurements alone might wrongly give the impression that such silk degrades 'less' than others (Garside et al. 2010b).

The pH value of 5.24 detected for the red silk of the flag is lower than what can be expected from the earlier study. However, as the silk was still dyed after weighting, the pH value is rather determined by the latter.

The new gained insights into the materials used for weighing and dyeing the red silk of the flag and their possible influence on the preservation and degradation of the object can be very useful for the conservation strategy to be followed for the restoration, future display and storage of the Lushnja flag. A neutralising treatment can eliminate concerns about acidic silk peptide hydrolysis but will not restore the already degraded protein. In addition, a wet treatment of the red silk may involve a high risk of decolourisation and migration of the red dyes. To conclude, it will be necessary to consider whether an active wet treatment is desirable at all and can provide added value compared to a more preventative conservation of the flag.

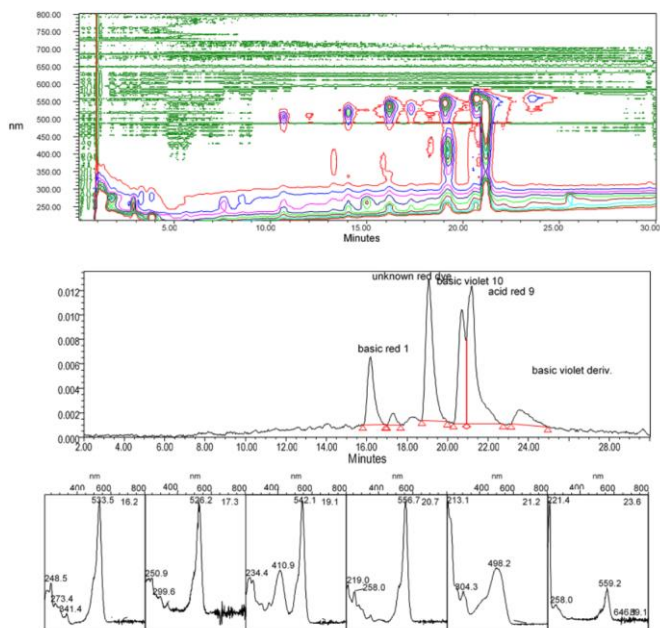


Figure 6: HPLC-DAD analysis of the red dyes from the silk. Max plot spectrum (top); chromatogram at 520 nm (middle) and spectra of the detected chromophores (bottom). (image KIK-IRPA Textile research lab).

Acknowledgments

The authors owe a debt of a special gratitude to all the people involved in this interdisciplinary study.

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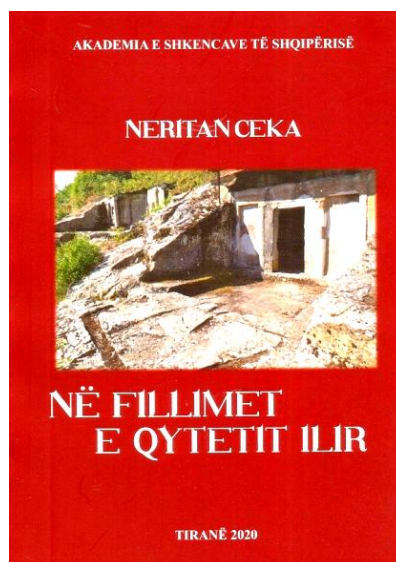
REVIEWS

Gëzim HOXHA**NERITAN CEKA, *The origin of Illyrian city*, Tirana 2020
– a review**

The monograph *The origin of Illyrian city* authored by Professor Neritan Ceka could be considered at first sight a contribution to a subject that has been widely part of archaeological investigation. But once one gets familiar with the content of the book, understands that the author after the investigation of data provided by the ancient authors, archaeological excavations and exploration of a wide area in South Illyria paves the way for new consideration of time, taking into account the origin of the Illyrian city.

This multi-dimensional perception is a starting point for a deeper insight into the origin and development of Illyrian city, not only as an urban phenomenon, but also as a social, political and cultural one. This contribution not only fosters our knowledge on the physiognomy of life in South Illyria during the IV-I century B.C.E, but also represents an infinite source of information about archeology in general, and archeology in Albania, in particular.

The monograph has a total volume of 322 pages, a rich bibliography of 27 pages, illustrated with 128 figures, and 16 tables of the relevant addresses of origins representing a synthesis of many years of research focused on this topic. In this form, it was submitted in 1992 as a post-graduate dissertation seeking a Doctor of science degree. This scientific



enterprise has kept its consistency and recalls its importance even three decades later. This could be explained by the fact that Professor Neritan Ceka, an eminent personality in the realm of archaeology, has been engaged in infield investigation, facts documentation and exploration of a wide literature in the area. Currently, in Albania there has been for many reasons a slowdown in archeological research in this field, focusing in other topics of archaeological research.

The notion 'city' could be early found in the archaeological literature, but always either in the context of the Greek civilization, or under its influence. The Albanian archaeological thought has experienced a continuous evolution while dealing with the problems related to the urbanization process in Illyria. Since the first traces, the genesis of Illyrian cities has had from different perspectives. Some have considered it closely related to the influence of the Hellenic colonies of the coast. While others have treated it as an autochthonous phenomenon, related to local development, since the settlements of the first iron period.

The characteristics of Illyrian cities have been widely described in the archaeological literature. Publications, or even syntheses about the Illyrian city, consider it mainly starting from the IV century B.C.E, — the time when it was fully formed. Meanwhile, the origin and the formation process of the city have been little studied. This monograph aims to fill this gap.

The book is based on three directions of the author's research work, and elaboration of the results provided by his fellow archaeologists.

The first direction is the in-field investigation through the surveys. This process is related to the observation, records and publication of the information about the fortified settlements dating in the Bronze era, architectonic and social-economic and cultural phenomenon of the future cities. The main contribution of the author, in addition to the publication of unknown fortifications, is the original explanation of the fortification characteristics and the shift from the traditional scheme of the evolutionary connection with Illyrian cities. A new assessment of excavations carried out in the 60's in Gajtani and Treni allowed the author to clearly distinguish for the first time a type of pre-urban settlement, in which the conditions were prepared for the development of civic life in Illyria. The difference with previous views lies in the form and time of the transition from the Gajtan type to the real city of the Amantia or Klos type, which happened during a proto-urban period.

The second direction is the systematic archaeological excavation addressing the earliest forms of development of urban life in South Illyria, proving the existence of a proto-urban phase, which preceded that process in the VII-V century B.C.E. Further excavations were carried out in Belsh, Selcë, Klos, Margelliç, etc., to this purpose, clarifying the existence of an entire historical period, as transitory, proto-urban phase between the Gajtan-type settlements, typical of an undifferentiated pre-antiquity society, and the real cities. This period was archaeologically evidenced in the cultural layers, dating from the second half of the VII century B.C.E to the V century B.C.E, and from a certain type of settlement, which in terms of archaeological forms was clearly distinguished from the Gajtan settlement, and the cities that followed it chronologically. The existence of the proto-urban phase in the development of cities was also proven by the archaeological research of his colleagues in Klosi, Mavrova (Olympe), Kanina, etc.

The third direction is closely related with the period that has been identified as the flourishing time of the ancient Illyrian civilization, when cities served as centers of production of goods and sketched the Illyrian culture. It has also been clarified the extent of the Illyrian civic culture in most of the territory that was inhabited during the antiquity period by the Illyrian population. A more complete argumentation of the above phenomena is closely related to the explanation of their beginning, the genesis of the civic life in Illyria.

It is a complete and clear illustration of the formation process of the Illyrian city. The work carried out some time ago has been updated reporting not only new archaeological data, but also providing contemporary records and current aspects of historical processes.

I would take the opportunity to affirm that it is necessary for this work to be published in English. It is a genuine scientific work, and this makes it be part of the international scientific discussion. It would be enough to mention the fact that a good part of foreign researchers, archaeologists or historians of antiquity, engaged in the last ten years in Albania or neighboring countries, have an increased interest and are scientifically committed to enhancing research in the field of urbanization in South Illyria. There is a long history realm of publication in the archaeological journal *Iliria* that teaches that the libraries of the most prominent archaeological scientific institutions in Europe welcome such publications.

In the end, I wish Professor Neritan Ceka have a good health and a more active life, committed to enhancing the tradition in archaeological research of the Ceka family. I hope that members of this family will make efforts to foster intellectual pursuits in the area through the publication of scientific papers, books etc.

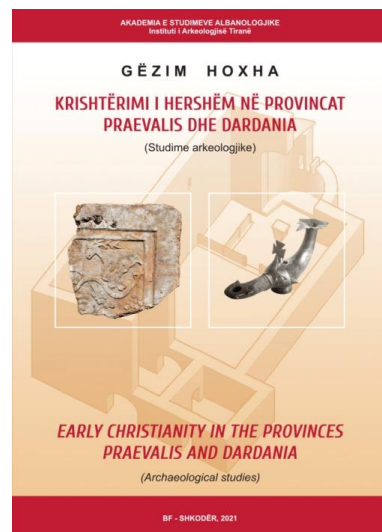
At' Flavio CAVALLINI

Gëzim HOXHA - *EARLY CHRISTIANITY IN THE PROVINCES PRAEVALIS AND DARDANIA* (ARCHAEOLOGICAL STUDIES), TIRANA 2021

Through a monograph packed with information, Prof. Gëzim Hoxha presents and analyzes from an archaeological viewpoint the issue of the spread of Christianity in the late roman provinces of *Praevalis* and *Dardania* of 4th - 6th centuries A.D. For this reason, we note that the paper addresses the issue of the origin of Christianity in this region by mainly concentrating on its archeological aspect. Actually, this process can be traced back to the period of apostolic preaching in *Illyricum* and *Dalmatia* from Paul of Tarsus, from Titus and his companions (**Rom 15,19; 2 Tm 4, 10**).

Apart from their founding work, there is also a need to consider the activity of the subsequent missionary groups, who were often traders or soldiers that delivered and spread the evangelical message from the Adriatic coast all the way to the most important urban centers.

However, apart from some memoirs in the New Testament, only a few hagiographic and ecclesiastical stories remain from this first evangelism and it is sometimes impossible to extract their effective historical value. This situation would be explained more thoroughly if the first three centuries of the history of Christianity would have been taken into consideration, characterized by humble beginnings and often full of rough persecutions. However, these early periods, which have left an everlasting impact on the souls of people of later generations, did not



produce such monuments that establish the religious identity of the analyzed territory.

The general situation changed during the first half of the 4th century A.D, when the peace of Constantine marked the beginning of a period, characterized by a more favorable tolerance. This is the exact period when our archeologists find fertile land for outlining a general framework for the faint yet very significant start of the relevant Christianization process. Based on the rare material sources available from the archeological excavation, clearly identifiable as Christian, the author perceives signs of a changing world and the gradual rhythm of this transformation process.

During the period between the 5th and 6th centuries A.D, a quick development and prosperity of the Christian religion has been documented, whose hierarchic organization appears to be quite solidified. The quantity of findings illustrating this part of the paper surpasses the monitoring framework that would normally be expected, a framework focused only on the big urban centers along the coast or locations along major traffic axes. The presence of cult objects, ecclesiastical and monastic complexes, or paleochristian material culture could be traced more widely, even in the region's innermost parts or remote rural areas.

The interpretation of the material, provided to us through numerous data, with a profusion of findings, concludes on a territory not only marked, but also deeply changed by the new Christian religion reality, similar to what happened in a wide territory of the Roman Empire. After fully tracking the terrain, the author presents us with finely detailed archeological maps of Northern Albania, Montenegro, and Kosova, equipped with a considerable number of paleochristian sites, which are partially known, but entirely new.

In many cases, the presented archeological data indicates a situation rapidly changing. For example, traces of destructive fires that marked the end of the luxurious monuments, along with the entire relevant settlement have been often documented. These destructions started from the 7th century A.D., caused by foreign invasions against a region that was prosperous at the time.

The resulting monograph represents the synthesis of a long work of archaeological and historical research, elaborated and enhanced continuously and progressively, which describes a substantial portion of

the author's scientific activity. Gëzim Hoxha has achieved a significant milestone in his career as a scientific researcher with the publication of: *Skodra and Praevalis in late antiquity* (2003), where we can detect the main elements of his methodology.

Thus, this new and more extensive monograph constitutes a multifaceted *status quaestionis*, updated with a plethora of new data that have come to light from the field research of the last two decades. However, compared to the previous publication, here we can mark a few fundamental innovations that result from changing the region's political conditions and creating bigger opportunities of cooperation with the cultural institutions of the neighboring countries. The restoration of free circulation has allowed the author to carry out archeological activities in Kosova and archeological reconnaissance in Montenegro, which has enabled better data utilization, deeper recognition of the territory and the considerable selection of paleochristian sites, beyond the Albanian state borders. For these reasons, we have at our disposal a finely detailed panoramic view of the entire paleochristian reality of the provinces of *Praevalis* and *Dardania*, a territory, which definitely had many common features during the late imperial period.

The author's elaborate methodology, implemented since the aforementioned publication (Scodra... 2003), is a detailed description of archeological sites and findings, combined with historical data and mostly focused on technical data and measurements to scientifically document the results of the excavation or superficial monitoring. In some cases, the author distances himself from his colleagues and specialists' viewpoint, in order not to overwhelm the casual reader with incomprehensible intricate details or technical data. Of course, such an admirable purpose intends to make the paper slightly more divulgate by giving interpretative explanations, mostly related to the main elements of the Christian cult and with plenty of references from the Bible.

As it has already been mentioned, judging the entirety of this paper would be inadequate if we don't give proper attention to the fact that, apart from the written study text, a wide repertoire has been presented, rich in illustrations: maps, topographic and architectonic reliefs, object drawings, and many pictures. There needs to be a special appreciation for the author's commitment to the creation and presentation of the comparative illustrations, where we can find many pictures and drawings of findings, organized in such a way that highlights their reciprocal

relations and differences. In the eyes of experts, formulating such an illustrative paper cannot be considered a simple addition to the monograph but an extension and essential complement of the scientific content of the text.

By congratulating the work of Prof. Gëzim Hoxha in an absolutely positive way, there is nothing else left to say except to wish him to reach more milestones in this field of study, in order to complete as many *tesserae* as possible from the mosaic of the territory of provinces *Praevalis* and *Dardania*, which so far, has received only a marginal attention to the general framework of archeological research, organized in this region of the Western Balkans.

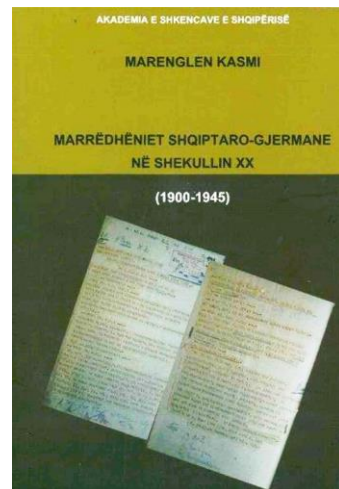
Irakli KOÇOLLARI

Marenglen Kasmi “Albanian-German relations in the 20th century”, Tirana, 2020

The historical path of Albanian-German relations in such a long time span (the end of the 19th century - the middle of the 20th century) and in such an interesting period of time, when the Albanians offered their efforts for finalizing, intellectual, political, diplomatic, educational, fighting for the creation of their state and its consolidation, until after the World War II, present not special but highly special interest, for this subject and chapter of the history of our people. From the point of view, the interests, mentality and with them the politics of a great power, like Germany, not only military, but also economical, political and diplomatic, the documentation, information, analyses, evaluations and interests of this country for the region of Southeast Europe as a whole and of Albania in particular, take special value.

As such, the material, documentation, analyses and all the work done in such a deep study, which draws such a large fund of archival dough, moreover from the German archives, in an integral, chronological way, even in most of its part not even previously cited by Albanian researchers, but unfortunately not even by German researchers, make this historical monograph, not only a valuable study but also essential to fill a still unfilled gap in the mosaic of the history of the Albanian people.

The book seems to schematically follow and outline three main periods in the history of relations between the two countries:



The first period includes the decades before World War I, when the German Foreign Ministry seems, as the author says, was oriented according to the interests of Viennese foreign policy.

The second period summarizes the years between the two World Wars, when Albania was dominated by Italian politics and as a result was considered by Germany as a zone of influence under Italian influence which made German policy towards our country moderate.

The third period, that of the World War II until its conclusion summarizes facts and events of great interest, especially those of the intentions of Albania's neighbors, as well as the German assessments or projects towards them and the territorial integrity of our country, seen under these interests.

The numerous documentary streams, unknown until now, starting from the events and projects of the Congress of Berlin 1878, the Conference of Ambassadors in London, their evaluations and analyses with the Italian interests and intentions towards Albania, with the Austro-Hungarian or Austrian attitudes, of Greece and the Slavic world, with the reports and information of German diplomatic and consular representatives in Albania, reports on commercial exchanges.

Conceived and structured in five chapters, the book which is based on the chronological flow of events, seems to fulfill its mission quite well for opening and presenting clearly, **both from a scientific and narrative point of view**, the entire inventory of political, diplomatic, and military developments that have dominated relations between the two countries for at least the last two centuries.

The First Chapter – “Overview of German policy for Southeast Europe 1871-1940”, offers a deep and special insight into this period of interest for this chapter of our country's history.

Chapter Two – “Albanian - German Relations 1912-1920” offers documents of interest to the International Control Commission and the Diplomatic Agency of Durrës, - the Xenocracy of the German Prince in Albania in 1914, etc., the arrest of Esat Pasha Toptani, the efforts of Wied to return to Albania, etc.

Chapter Three – summarizes Albanian-German relations during the years 1920-1943. In the loops of this chapter, issues of interest are listed, such as the establishment of diplomatic relations between the two states. German diplomatic missions in Albania after World War I. The problem of the opening of the Albanian Legation in Berlin. Economic relations

between Albania and Germany until the beginning of the World War II. Port relations between the two countries. Albanian-German economic and commercial relations 1920-1939 «Die deutsche Kultur» and Albania. The Franciscan Church and its efforts to spread the German language and culture. The return of German language learning in Albanian schools. Stabilization of the spread of “German kultur policy”.

Afterwards there is a historical overview about the political climate in Albania on the threshold of the German invasion, political formations or parties, Mukja or the union not to join, Legality, etc.

In the Fourth Chapter – Provides an assessment of the German foreign policy towards Southeast Europe 1933-1944. Economic relations, the use of Albanian national assets, the formation of the National Committee, the High Council of the Regency, the establishment of the “Skanderbeg” SS Division, etc.

In the fifth and last chapter - German occupation in the initial phase of failure, “Allied policy towards Albania”, “Crystallization of a concept supporting the organized Albanian resistance”, “British policy under the German perspective”, etc.

Historical monograph, *“Albanian-German relations in the 20th century”* by the author Marenglen Kasmi, both from the point of view of the historical-schematic organization, the topics that it covers with, the rich archival documentation that it brings and the analyses of issues and subjects unknown until now, enriches the fund of the chapters of the history of our nation and the index of the sources of the relations of our country with an important country, which has played and continues to play a significant role in the political currents during different periods in Europe and beyond. As such, the publication of this study is a valuable initiative and with interest for Albanian historiography.

CHRONICLE***The conference titled “Ismail Kadare, an Albanian writer in world literature”**

In January 28th 2022, the Albanian Academy of Sciences honored the 85th anniversary of academic Ismail Kadare by organizing a scientific activity titled “Ismail Kadare, an Albanian writer in world literature.” This anniversary also coincided with the Albanian edition of the work of the French scholar and professor of literature Jean- Paul Champseix, “Ismail Kadare: a literary dissidence”, translated by Irena Rambić and Bashkim Shehu and published by “Fan Noli” publishing house. The author himself and the translators were invited in this activity.

The activity was managed by academic Prof. Dr. Pëllumb Xhufi, Prof. Dr. Saverina Pasho and Prof. Dr. Ylljet Aličkaj.

The President of the Academy of Sciences, academic Skënder Gjinushi, who initiated the activity, presented the dimensions of Kadare’s figure by placing him at the top of the Albanian tradition of all time. Kadare is not only our greatest writer, but together with Mother Teresa, they have become the symbol of Albania and its emblem outside the country. “He promoted Albanian literature to the highest levels of its history. Every literature has its ups and downs, representatives of different time periods and those who make up the pantheon, and Kadare is undoubtedly the most prominent one in the pantheon of Albanian letters because he promoted it to such heights that are rarely experienced by any literature along the centuries.”

By presenting his work “Ismail Kadare: a literary dissidence”, Jean-Paul Champseix firstly emphasized that “by the start of the '80s in France, us, the foreign scholars, started to ask ourselves how the reader’s perspective has changed the work. At that time, I came into contact with Kadare’s work and then, from 1986 to 1989, I was lucky to be a French literature professor in the Faculty of Foreign Languages of the University of Tirana and that is where I got more familiar with the context of Kadare’s works. His work is a deviation from the norms of social realism. Western scholars are divided, and some readers appreciate his work as a literary dissidence, even subversive toward the regime, while others do not share the same opinion. “I have tried to argue”, he

* Some important activities from the activity of the Academy of Sciences of Albania in the first half of 2022

continued, “that Kadare’s work is a literary dissidence, not a political one.” Firstly, his work is characterized by gloominess, vagueness and sadness: this atmosphere opposes the light and pathos required by the propaganda. In all of his works, totalitarianism is put into question and his heroes are lonely people who are often confused.

Mateo Mandala, the arbëresh scholar analyzed, in a zoom meeting, Kadare’s narrative structure and showed special attention to the novel “The Great Winter”. Based on Eco’s semiology, in his assessment he specifically analyzed elements of narration by deciphering the “empty” dynamic, the diegetic intermission in narration and the dantesque architecture of character placement.

In his statement for French-Albanian readings of Kadare, **Bashkim Shehu** first showed Kadare’s work relationship with the best world literature and the similarities or analogies with Hemingway, inspiration from Shakespeare and then Kafka and Camus, to then conclude that his work belongs at the top of the world literature universe.

Prof. During his statement, Prof. **Ilia Lëngu**, who has been the editor of the Albanian edition, showed special attention to some of the values of this paper and to the translators’ scrupulous work. He highlighted in particular the author’s broad and extensive assessment of Kadare’s figure and emphasized the great importance of this work and that it should be brought to the Albanian readers and university and high school students in order to appreciate the role our great writer plays in world literature and culture.

Translator **Irena Ramb**i addressed the translators’ contribution as the main element of the work and seized the opportunity to acknowledge the excellent help from Jusuf Vrioni in the French translation of his work. After mentioning how Jusuf Vrioni begun to translate Kadare’s work, she emphasized this translator’s values and seized the opportunity to also acknowledge Kadare’s consideration for the translator in his work, a figure that is heavily evident on his prose. During his speech, National Library Director Mr. **Pirro Mishap** put an emphasis on two aspects of the writer’s life; the fact that Kadare made Albanian literature world-famous, “*which despite being recognized in Europe through distinguished authors of the Albanian literature of the '30s, such as Konica and Koliqi, did not manage to become that acclaimed*”, and the other aspect according to Mr. Misha was the fact that “*Kadare is a writer more widely read than the Nobel-Prize winners of the Balkans, with perhaps only Kazanzaqi having an equal popularity*”.

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Europe, did not manage to become that acclaimed”, and the other aspect according to Mr. Misha was the fact that “among all the Nobel-Prize winners of the Balkans, Kadare is the most widely read writer, and perhaps only Kazanazi has an equally wide popularity”.

Prof. **Bashkim Kuçuku**, coordinator of the summary filled with studies and reviews on the great Albanian writer’s work “**Kadare under the French criticism**”, during online meetings with the audience that participated in the scientific activity, furthermore highlighted that: the Kadarean metadiscourse or the criticism and studies on his work in other languages, are part of another system, perhaps even the most important one, rich, independent and diverse in terms of languages and the literary and cultural aspect. The richness and diversity of this coherent system is also solidified in the anastatic summary of Kadare on world criticism, in three volumes that are being published by the Albanian Academy of Sciences, with 2500 papers and different types of studies from 1971-2000, extracted from newspapers and magazines and not from study books. The first two French volumes, with approximately 1500 pages have just been published. The third volume in progress is available in German, Italian, Spanish, English, Portuguese, Swedish, etc. However, this summary of the volumes can only make up the largest part of the Kadarean metawork in these 7-8 languages of Europe and America. It does not comprise writings in the Eastern European languages or languages of other Eastern countries, not even in the languages of neighboring countries in the Balkans.

Scholar and journalist **Ilir Yzeiri** put an emphasis on the poem “The Political Bureau gathered at noon”, also known as “The red pashas”. “With this poem,” he says, “Kadare naively provoked Enver Hoxha, the author of the great text on communist narrative, and tried to challenge the communicate model with that of the reflexive chronicle by revealing the secret. This experiment shocked Enver Hoxha because, according to him, the modification of the text or the dogma that he had built and written was a conceptual annihilation of his existence. During the dictatorship, text subvariants that were a deviation to the dogma norm could never circulate, and the secret-holding building could not be destroyed.

Afterwards, the Vice President of the Academy of Sciences, academic **Vasil S. Tole** announced the nomination of writer and academic Ismail Kadare for the “Nobel” prize in literature. “The Academy of Sciences has proposed in continuity the nomination of writer and academic Ismail Kadare to the jury for “Nobel” prizes in literature, which is part of our sister academy in Sweden.”, said the academic V. Tole, emphasizing that with each passing year, Kadare’s work expands the territories in the world in which it is introduced for the first time, and at the same time, her reading languages multiply progressively.

Furthermore, academic Tole underlined that: “The number of published and republished titles beyond the native language has reached 1500! Long ago, the Albanian nizam-i would travel around the world, but today it is Kadare's work that promotes not only the author's name, but also the name of our Albania. This is why our re-proposal for Kadare's nomination is not a sign of the Balkans persistence and perseverance, but a reasonable and credible proposal, which we feel obligated to respectfully submit to the Swedish Academy and the Nobel Prize Jury.

The exhibition of the renowned photographer Roland Tasho shared with the participants beautiful moments from the writer's life, such as visits to his hometown and peak moments of his life and career in Albania and in the world.

“Being at the top of tradition”, a solemn activity on February 11th 2022

On the occasion of the International Day of Women and Girls in Science on February 11th, the Albanian Academy of Sciences in collaboration with the Albanian Network of Women in Science organized the solemn activity “Being at the top of tradition”, dedicated to the first Albanian academic, ethnologist



Andromaqi Gjergji.

On behalf of the Academy Headship, the activity was congratulated by its vice President, academic **Vasil S. Tole**. During his speech, he stated that the main purpose of this activity is to reaffirm and accept the role of women and girls in the communities of science and technology.

This statement of academic Tole is actually the essence of this activity. He highlighted that, based on the law approved by the Albanian Parliament three years ago, the Academy of Sciences used judicial terms for its responsibilities to make fast changes on the dignified presence of the less-represented gender element in its Assembly today. Within two years, the changes have been qualitative and quantitative. We embedded this responsibility in the law, not for the sake of the formal numerical adjustment of gender relations, but with the belief that Albanian women and girls have the same intellectual energy to be knowledgeable people, scholars and scientists. And I seize the opportunity to

assure you that even further, during the Assembly's regeneration process, we will stand by this priority, by providing relations within it.

This day encourages us to turn to history and find out what does it offer to honor or even contemplate the role of women and girls in philosophical, scientific, literary, artistic, and cultural movements. History proves that there haven't been any great philosophical or subject movements where Albanian women have not displayed virtues of knowledge and morals, worthy of being followed. Our national renaissance would be incomplete without the European-level presence of Dora d'Istria (Elena Gjika), which turned into a communication medium between patriotic and cultural Albanian societies in the East and West.

The history of the unification of the Albanian written language would not have been written without the contribution of the Qiriazhi sisters, who have been rightfully described as missionaries of the Albanian Illumination. The modernism brought to Albanian civilization by the spiritual developments of the period between the two wars is mentioned often. But these developments would be an incomplete constellation without Tefta Tashko and Androniqi Zengo, the first Albanian iconographer and painter; without Kolomba in Albania and Kristina Mandala of the arbëresh; the first poets that entered the gates of literary history; without the talented scholars Musine Kokalari and Sabiha Kasimati; without the antifascist women and girls like Ollga Plumbi, Dhora Leka, Ramize Gjebrea and Liri Belishova; without the generations of the general emancipation period during the second half of the previous century; and without our capable academics, from Andromaqi Gjergji to Kozeta Sevrani.

It is factual that in particular during the last two decades, the management work of scientific-university units and centers, from pulpits to the presiding leadership, are being deservedly managed by women and girls who are handling them successfully. The history of women's presence in Albanian science and culture is constantly being enriched with records and promotions. Yesterday, we learned that even in aviation, which has been historically considered a male profession, a young Albanian girl had won the piloting diploma.

By honoring these traditions and evoking the fact that Albania is one of the first European countries to adopt voting rights with no gender distinctions, as well as the other fact of our country being among the countries that have a more adjusted representation of women in governance, we cannot leave out the existing problems, which belong to both men and women because together we need to give our best to contribute to greater changes. Starting from the decision to reserve to women one third of the seats in the legislative institution, which is often mentioned with an absurd enthusiasm, as a sign of progress and equality. This one third "equality" is a single step and we should not use it to escape reality. Allow me to say that women and girls should not expect to be given

anything or applaud small changes, let alone find peace under the reassurance of some numbers, though they are not meaningless in themselves, but they should be demanding, and even imposing to progressively strengthen their role in the society, not because of numerical privilege or positive discrimination but because of successful confirmation in every step and field.

Scientific forum: Effects of the infodemic on the perception of the pandemic caused by Covid-19

The Academy of Sciences of Albania, through its Section of Natural and Technical Sciences and its Commission of Medicine, organized on February 16, 2022 the Scientific Forum: "*Impacts of the infodemic on the perception of the pandemic caused by Covid-19*". The forum was held in cooperation with the Ministry of Health, QSUT, the University of Medicine and the Institute of Public Health and as well as in the presence of media.



In the organization of this Forum there were engaged representatives from cooperating institutions, as: acad. Shaban Sinani, Acad. Neki Frasheri, prof. Melissa Perry, Acad. Genc Sulçebe, prof. Alban Ylli, prof. Albana Fico, prof. Perlat Kapisizi, prof. Arjan Harxhi, dr. Ilir Alimehmeti, acad. Ilia Mikerezi.

The main focus of this activity were the impacts of the infodemic on the perception of the pandemic caused by Covid-19 and the complicating consequences when facing it.

The welcome speech of this Forum was given by the President of the Academy of Sciences, academician Skënder Gjinushi, who stated that the infodemic aggravates the pandemic. Therefore, - he emphasized – nobody shall hesitate to tell the truth in the name of science and for the benefit of the society. As facing the dangerous phenomenon Covid-19 has been a challenge for the government, for society, for the economy, for the health systems themselves and a challenge for science, the Academy of Sciences has organized many activities and meetings to confront the conclusions with the various institutions.

In the first session the speech was given to Mira Rakacolli, epidemiologist-Deputy Minister of Health; prof. Melisa J. Perri, George Washington

University; Briseida Mema, AFP reporter; Llazar Semini, Associated Press and prof. Silva Bino, Institute of Public Health.

They expressed that finding ways and means to transmit correct and reliable information, respecting free speech and different opinions, is an institutional and moral duty not only of the health system, but also of the written and audiovisual media.

Through the influence of the fourth power, the health system experts and academics in this field can convey to the public an objective assessment of information sources, and the results of scientific studies, significantly reducing the unwanted phenomenon of disinformation.

Public information strategies on the challenges of the media, science and public health authorities, in the pandemic circumstances would be appropriate. Such a strategy would be the establishment of an independent structure with the initiative of the state authorities and with the involvement of various political partners, doctors, public health specialists, anthropologists, sociologists, infectious disease experts, communication experts, with the aim of coherent information and in the health service.

As an example, the role of the media in informing the population about vaccination was mentioned.

In the second session the speech was given to prof. dr. Pal Nikolli, prof. assoc. dr. Sonila Xhafa, prof. dr. Romeo Hanxhari, dr. Enkela Begu from the Department of Geography, Faculty of History-Philology, University of Tirana, dr. Esmeralda Kolaneci from the international relations department, Faculty of History-Philology, prof. assoc. dr. Veronika Duci from the social work department, Faculty of Social Sciences, University of Tirana.

In this session, a platform was presented that enables the presentation of epidemiological data at the national level, as well as the possibilities to adapt ARC-GIS licensed by ESRI for spatial visualization and spatial analysis of epidemiological data.

Special attention was paid to the impact of information communication during the Covid-19 pandemic, on mental health and the response of international organizations to this problem.

At the end of this forum, the information and dilemmas of the media, science and public health authorities were analyzed, who, under the circumstances of the pandemic and the constant pressure, were put in the role of "broadcaster", but also of the audience. Such an analysis of the three corners of the information spectrum is based on the fact that the act of reading or receiving information is already named as an act of consumption, taking into account its impact.

In the face of the outbreak of a pandemic like Covid-19, the information was at risk to public health. The desire for good information often turned into a misinformation trap or an informational confusion. This happened as a result of

many social, psychological, cultural, geo-political, individual and collective, formal and informal factors.

Going after the information from all actors - regardless of the fact that "science is a truth in the making" - often created a "cacophony", where fake news, conspiracy theories found their way.

The analysis is based on concrete realities and experiences, suggesting the establishment of Cross Check networks that help Desinfox and communication to safeguard the public health.

In this activity, the Covid-19 Pandemic was seen in a broad perspective as a world phenomenon, with very important global effects. It was treated not only as a phenomenon of human health, which significantly increased its morbidity and other consequences. At the same time, it was viewed as a phenomenon that strongly influenced economic, social and political developments at the regional and global level.

National academic and scientific book fair

On April 22–24, 2022, the first national book fair for academic and scientific publications was held. This event was organized by the Academy of Sciences of Albania, the Academy of Sciences and Arts of Kosova, in cooperation with the National Book and Reading Center. It was held as part of celebrations for the Academy of Sciences

of Albania's founding on its 50th anniversary, and it was perfectly timed to open on "World Book and Copyright Day". Representatives from 35 publishing houses, scientific research institutions, and public Albanian universities from Albania, Kosova, North Macedonia, and Montenegro were present for the



celebratory occasion, which was held in the open areas of the Academy of Sciences in Tirana.

The opening ceremony was attended by academician Skënder Gjinushi, the head of the Academy of Sciences of Albania, academician Mehmet Kraja, the head of the Academy of Sciences

and Arts of Kosova, other academicians, professors, and researchers from all fields of science, as well as students and pupils from the capital city.

Academician Skënder Gjinushi, head of the Academy of Sciences of Albania, made the following points in his welcome address:

“The fair provides a fantastic possibility to forge new bonds between publishers and readers, and this is consistent with our strategy of broad openness to the scientific research system and all parties interested to participate... Never before have the writings of academicians, professors, central memory agency researchers, and independent researchers from Albania been so close to one another. This fair provides us the chance to personally witness what the scientific output of Albanians is.”

In his address, Mehmet Kraja, academician and head of ASAK, made reference to the unique characteristics of academic literature and their interaction with the readers. He emphasized that: *“Scientific literature comes out as a little distant and silent. As a result, it has to be widely publicized and interact frequently with qualified readers who fit a particular profile.”* The two respective academies in Albania and Kosova created this fair of scientific publications for this particular reason, among others.

The welcoming remarks were also read on behalf of the Ministry of Culture by Mrs. Alda Bardhyli - director of the “International Book and Reading Center”, and the welcoming remarks on behalf of the Rectors' Conference were delivered by Prof. Dr. Andrea Maliqari (TPU Rector).

22 higher education institutions, various institutes and scientific centers, as well as 8 non-public publishing entities, took part in this unique fair. More than 2000 published scientific titles were displayed in the many fair's stands, which attracted numerous visitors.

The expo was complemented by 52 promotional events that took place on the grounds of academic institutions and other buildings and were mostly centered on publications from the previous two years.

The said promotions were based on free participation, valuable discussions and debates on different academic, scientific, and university publications: scientific monographs, texts, documents and journals from different research centers and institutions. Due attention was given not only to publications from university and academic institutions, but to qualitative publications of private initiative as well.



The ceremony to present the Appreciation Award to the two most outstanding figures in Albanian science and philosophy in Albania and Kosovo took place on the second day of the fair. This award was granted to: Artan Boriçi (posthumous) “For the work: Contributions in Physics, Applied Mathematics and computer science/Contributions in the field of



physics, applied mathematics and computer science (vol. I-II)” and Ali Aliu with the motivation: “For remarkable contribution to the development of literary criticism, as an outstanding researcher of Albanian literature, and in particular of Albanian literary criticism”.

The Academy of Sciences of Albania also announced the competition for the national scientific awards for 2021: The national scientific award “Eqrem Çabej”, the national scientific award “Petrit Radovicka”, and the national scientific award “Aleks Buda”.

This was the first time that scientific literature brought together, in a unique experience, academicians, researchers, lecturers, and specialized readers from all around Albania at this Tirana fair. Direct opportunities for networking and efficient scientific experience exchange were provided. This occasion marked a substantial increase in interaction and collaboration for the advancement of scientific research being conducted in our academic and university institutions.

The Academies of Sciences of Albania and Kosovo hope to establish a successful history of nationwide scientific interchange by holding such national fairs on a regular basis in Tirana and Prishtina. Integrating scientific book publishers, specialized scientific research institutions, and higher education ones in a nationwide network will serve better to this purpose.

"Award of gratitude" for the work of the outstanding physicist Artan Boriçi (1965-2021)¹

In the framework of the 50th anniversary of its establishment, the Academy of Sciences of Albania organized on 22-24 April 2022 the first nationwide academic and scientific book fair with wide participation of academic and scientific institutions from Albanian and Albanian-speaking territories.



This activity was accompanied by presentations of publications from various publishing houses and the ceremony of "Gratitude Award". This award, which was awarded to the outstanding scientist Acad. assoc. Artan Boriçi, who passed away on 25th March 2021, for the work "Contributions in Physics, Applied Mathematics and computer Science" (vol. I-II) (Contribution to the field of physics, applied mathematics and computer science) with the motivation: *"Original work; the result of the author's most successful researches; qualitatively comparable to the most valued scientific achievements in the fields of elementary particle physics, applied mathematics and computer science, in the region of Europe; product-model of the well-known scientific researcher, inside and outside the country, and an example of encouragement for generations of young researchers"*. The award was delivered by acad. Mehmet Kraja, president of the Academy of Sciences and Arts of Kosovo.

This ceremony was opened with the speech of Acad. Skënder Gjinushit, President of the Academy of Sciences of Albania.

In his speech acad. Skënder Gjinushi expressed his deep gratitude for acad. assoc. Boriçi, for the traces he left in the field he researched, for his intellectual capacity, his uncompromising personality and his great patriotism. His acceptance into the Academy of Sciences was one of the most welcome for his

¹Artan Boriçi is known for his work in the field of numerical optimization of American-type contracts. He contributed to mathematics and the environment and the field had completed the process of supercomputing, reconciling classical computing systems with programming in artificial intelligence.

In Albania, he studied in depth the use of artificial neural networks in the prediction of big losses for re insurance companies. He is the co-proposer of a new formulation in the simple cubic network, which today is precisely cited under the name Boriçi-Krojc. His studies remain points of reference in the country and abroad.

hard work in the university's auditoriums, from university age to his work as a lecturer, with the students of the pre-university system.

His work will remain indisputably in the Golden Book of Albanian Science and his name is written in the Register of the Golden Book of Albanology.

The name he left in scientific circles, in elite science institutions such as CERN, well-known centers of physics and mathematics in Switzerland and Germany, Scotland or his presence in the evaluation and pre-evaluation commissions of the annual competition for the Nobel Prize in Physics, *honor* the scientific community Albanian. It also gained the trust and support of the most important international organizations such as NATO. Part of the tradition of *ad honorem* publications should undoubtedly be included in the country's scientific bibliographies.

Acad. assoc. Mimoza Hafizi started her speech with the status of the fellow student. In this prism, she made her assessment by moving to Borici's role as a lecturer in the physics department and then to his doctorate and work as deputy dean, for 8 years as head of the computational and high energy physics group in the department of physics

Continuous communications, exchanges of thoughts and ideas remain fond memory, where a special place is the organization of the international conference "*On LHC physics and related topics*", in cooperation with many international research centers and with CERN, the international school in Particle and astroparticle physics, in cooperation with European partners.

During his speech, acad. Rexhep Mejdani remembered the serious work of his student who then deservedly became his colleague. He did mention also the communications with him during the specialization courses in Switzerland and Scotland and then the return to the homeland and the awarded projects of international organizations such as NATO, the first lectures in the Albanian language (<https://sites.google.com/site/lectures/home>) in those fields where there was no previous scientific literature in the Albanian language, such as: field quantization or field theory simulations. Also, he is the author of the monograph titled "*Linear Numerical Algebra*", thereby expanding his fields of study. In 2006, he started writing and expanding software programs QCCLAB (<https://sites.google.com/site/artanborici/qcclab>) in the service of researchers of field network theory.

Artani was an active supporter of the "Education in Science" program of the Academy of Sciences through open lectures that served as a bridge to CERN.

Academician Mejdani closed his speech by recalling Artani's sensitivity to the problems of higher education and scientific research in the country.

The two-volume work entitled "*Scientific research contributions in physics, applied mathematics and computer science*", is conceived as a retrospective summary of academician Artan Boriçi's scientific works,

obtained from bibliographic and public archival sources (scientific journals where they were previously published), as well as from the deceased author's personal archive. This edition summarizes the articles published in the scientific periodicals of several European countries and the presentations presented at important scientific events abroad and in the country. This work will be followed by the academic publication of his university contributions

The first volume summarizes his articles published in prestigious international journals, dedicated to his fields of study.

The first part, entitled *Numerical algorithms for chiral fermions*, contains 15 articles, which are arranged according to the chronology of publication. In these articles, Artan Boriçi is mostly the sole author or first author. His collaborators are Albanian colleagues from the University of Tirana such as Alban Allkoçi and Dafina Xhako.



His collaborators are Albanian colleagues from the University of Tirana such as Alban Allkoçi and Dafina Xhako.

The second part, entitled *Numerical algorithms - Krilov subspace methods in lattice QCD*, contains 11 articles, which are also listed by publication chronology. Also, in these articles, Artan Boriçi is the sole or first author, with collaborator Philippe De Forcrand from the Interdisciplinary Project Center for Supercomputing (IPS), ETH-Swiss Federal Institute of Technology Zürich. In some articles, the collaboration is between a group of authors from the University of Cyprus.

The third part, entitled *Formulation of chiral and local fermion theories*, contains 12 articles, in which prof. Boriçi is the sole author or collaborator with colleagues from the University of Tirana such as Rudina Zeqirllari and Inva Koçiu.

The fourth part, entitled *QCDLAB, development of a numerical simulation software for lattice QCD*, contains 3 articles, where prof. Boriçi is the sole author.

The fifth part, entitled *Development and solution of new theories in particle physics Development and analytical solution of Yang-Mills theories*, contains three articles, where Artan is the sole author or in collaboration with R. Monnier, Laboratorium für Festkörperphysik, Eidgenössische Technische Hochschule Zurich, Hongerberg.

The sixth part, entitled *Simulations of Statistical physics systems*, contains an article, where prof. Boriçi is the sole author.

The seventh part, entitled *Research in Risk Management-Contributions in computational and mathematical finance*, contains 2 articles, where prof. Boriçi

is the first author, in collaboration with Hans-Jakob Lüthi, Institute for Operations Research, ETH Zürich.

The second volume contains his lectures as a guest at international conferences or presented in various public media; as well as presentations and lectures held in international schools.

The Academy of Sciences, in the role of the publisher of the professor's contributions, believes that this two-volume work is of special value for the education of the new Albanian scientists generation, because it serves not only as a rich source of knowledge, original results and bibliographic references, but also as an inspiration that stems from the philosophy, methodology and approach that academician Artan Boriçi has had towards scientific research.

IN MEMORIAM

PETER BARTL
(26.11.1938 – 29.3.2022)

Peter Bartl has shed his mortality. On the evening of March 29, the Albanian historian closed his eyes for the last time at the age of 84. The scientific and intellectual world of Albanology has lost one of its great scholars who dedicated his intellectual life and social commitment to the compact Albanian-speaking area and the Albanian historical diaspora.



Peter Bartl was born in Cottbus (Germany) in 1938, where he also attended elementary and high school. After moving to the Federal Republic of Germany, he continued his university studies in the fields of Eastern and Southeastern European history, Slavic studies and Turkic studies, first in Göttingen and later in Munich (LMU) under the famous historian Georg Stadtmüller, the Slavic studies specialist, Alois Schmaus and the Turkish studies scholar, Hans-Joachim Kießling. Working as Stadtmüller's assistant, scientific research and university activity determined, from the very beginning, his focus on the history and culture of the compact Albanian-speaking sphere and the Albanian world in general, always guided by the principle of his teacher's thesis, according to which "Albania is the fulcrum of Archimedes' lever, which helps us to penetrate the history and prehistory of the Balkan Peninsula" (Stadtmüller).

Peter Bartl remained faithful and obedient to this thesis, extending it to the mosaic of the history of spiritual culture among Albanians, with whom he was spiritually connected until the end of life. The interdisciplinary conception between history and ethnic culture together with the Albanian language, which he mastered thanks to perseverance and cooperation with his colleague and friend Martin Camaj, is further evidenced by his first works, with which he fulfilled the obligations of his professional career among them: „Die albanischen Müslime zur Zeit der nationalen Unabhängigkeitsbewegung“ (1968= The Albanian Muslims at the Time of the National Independence Movement), „Der Westbalkan zwischen der Spanischen Monarchie und dem Osmanischen

Reich“ (1974 = The Western Balkans between the Spanish Monarchy and the Ottoman Empire). The highlights of his intellectual activity are, besides the work „Albanien – vomMittelalter bis zur Gegenwart“ (1995, 1999, serb. 2001, etc. = Albania – from the Middle Ages to the Present), his five-volume masterpiece “Albania sacra”, which contains documentary-archival material for the entire ecclesiastical administrative area, from the XVI-XVII centuries to the end of the XIX century, the Archbishoprics and Bishoprics of Durrës, Lezha, Sarda and Sapa, Pult and Shkodra. These followed two earlier editions with archival material of the Archbishopric of Bar under the apostolic leadership of VincenzZmajevich (1702-1723). His colleagues have recently compiled a special volume of scholarly articles published over thirty-five years of scholarly activity in professional journals, popular magazines, and volumes of various vintages: “Peter Bartl. Die Albaner in der europäischen Geschichte: Ausgewählte Aufsätze“(edd. – B. Demiraj & R. Elsie: Albanian Studies, vol. 28, 2016 = Albanians in European History. Selected articles).

Peter Bartl organized the work, and the meticulous collection of the richest Albanological scientific library in the Western European Alps, which, after his retirement, was not adequately preserved by the structural changed made to the Institute of Eastern and Southeastern European Studies, and left to rot in the cellars of the Southeastern Institute for several years, until it finally made its tragic exodus to Vienna.

Peter Bartl took over for decades the entire management of the Albanien-Institute of Munich, turning it into a genuine center of academic-scientific meetings which gained a considerable reputation and respect for its Albanian studies research in Munich and Western Europe. In the capacity of publisher and editor-in-chief, Bartl directed the Munich-based "Albanische Forschungen" series, motivating and supporting the publication of 47 (+ 4) monographs of an albanological nature covering the fields of Albanian history, linguistics and culture in general. Peter Bartl has been a tireless contributor to a large number of series, periodicals and magazines in Germany, Italy, where we can distinguish, among others the magazine „Shêjzat – le pleiadi“ (in the 60s-70s of the last century – E. Koliqi) and „Shêjzat – le pleiadi. Series Nova“ (A. Ndreca), as well as „HylliiDritës“ (A. Ndreca, later V. Demaj).

Peter Bartl was also an external member of the Albanian Academy of Sciences. He has been honored, among others, by the President of the Republic of Albania with the "Medal of Gratitude" and by the University Urbaniana (Rome) with the "Gold Medal".

He was a friend of Albania and Albanians, who will always enjoy the respect and appreciation of all who are part of and in contact with the Albanian world.

Bardhyl Demiraj

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