

**WORKERS OF ALL COUNTRIES, UNITE!**

**THE  
AUTOCHTHONOUS  
FORMATION OF  
THE ALBANIAN  
PEOPLE**

*Reports submitted to the  
National Conference on the  
Formation of the Albanian  
People, their Language and  
Culture*

*(July 2-5, 1982)*

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The National Conference on the Formation of the Albanian People, their Language and Culture was organized in Tirana on July 2-5, 1982, by the Academy of Sciences of the People's Socialist Republic of Albania in collaboration with the University of Tirana and the other higher institutes and scientific associations of the country.

The Conference, which was opened by the Director of the Institute of History of the Academy of Sciences, Prof. Stefanaq Pollo, heard three reports and 45 papers. It was attended by historians, linguists, archaeologists, ethnographers, working people of scientific and cultural institutions of the country and foreign scholars from various countries.

Present in the proceedings of the Conference were also leaders of the Party of Labour of Albania and our state.

The Conference treated one of the most important problems of our social sciences, that of the genesis of the Albanian people and its fundamental aspects, the Illyrian-Albanian continuity, the autochthony of the Albanians on their territories, and the formation of

the Albanian nation with its language, culture and territory in the Middle Ages.

Our sciences, like all other fields of life in our country, have always found support, inspiration and encouragement in the teachings of the PLA and the leader of the Party and Albanian people, Comrade Enver Hoxha, which have put the students of our country on the right road of the materialist treatment of the problems of history and social phenomena, opening up new paths for them.

Powerfully assisted by our socialist state, Albanian science has achieved notable results, becoming an important active factor for the building of the socialist culture in the country. Today it has its say especially in the solution of the problems of Albanology and makes its valuable contribution to the Balkan and European studies.

The Conference marked a new step forward in the studies in this field. It evaluated the results achieved hitherto by Albanian and foreign students and scholars, throwing light on the difficult and complex problem of the genesis of the Albanians. It summed up the studies and interdisciplinary treatment of this problem, to which historiography, archaeology, linguistics, onomastics, ethnography, folklore studies, anthropology, and the history of culture, etc. make their contribution.

At the centre of all this work is the Marxist assessment of the role of the people's masses as the producers of material and spiritual blessings and makers of their own history. With the level achieved in the economic and

social development, with their resistance in the centuries to the assimilating pressure exerted by the empires of Antiquity and the Middle Ages, and with their ceaseless struggles against social and national oppression, the Albanian people have been the decisive factor for historical progress, and have preserved and further developed their identity, have created their Albanian nationality with common cultural features and have developed into a modern nation.

The problems treated at the Conference cover both the Late Antiquity and the Early Middle Ages. However, their study has not only historical importance, but also present political importance, because the problems of the formation of nationalities and of their ethnic-cultural features are in the centre of attention in the struggle of nations for identity and the right to self-determination. From this point of view, the work of this Conference stands in opposition to the imperialist ideology which denies the peoples their great national traditions and negates the active and positive role of the ethnic factors, labeling them as "anachronistic," "myths of the past," etc. Our historiography has been opposed to all those tendentious and chauvinist anti-scientific views which, created for ulterior anti-Albanian political aims, contradicting or even distorting historical facts, negate the Illyrian-Albanian continuity and the autochthonous character of the Albanians on their historical territories, as well as the unitary and original character and the ancient roots

of their national culture.

Led by the Party of Labour of Albania and carrying out its teachings, the Albanian people make a high assessment of their positive historical traditions, the national and popular culture and art, which have been preserved and developed against the innumerable storms of the time, and constitute their contribution to the treasury of world culture. These traditions have become part of our new socialist life and a source of inspiration to build it.

After the analysis and summing up of the achievements made, the Conference outlined the main directions for research in the future to take up problems that have not been treated until today.

The closing speech of the Conference was held by the President of the Academy of Sciences, Prof. Aleks Buda.

This volume comprises three reports and summaries of certain papers not included in the volume.



**Prof. ALEKS BUDA**

## **THE GENESIS OF THE ALBANIAN PEOPLE IN THE LIGHT OF HISTORY**

This Conference has set itself the task of dealing with an important and complex scientific problem, one of the fundamental problems in which Albanology, as an international science and as a purely national science of the Albanians, has been engaged from its beginnings.

Over a long period the Party of Labour of Albania and Comrade Enver Hoxha have frequently pointed out the phenomenon of the indomitable resistance of the Albanian people who, through the centuries, have faced up to the most difficult situations in which their very existence, their ethnic and cultural identity were endangered. They charged our Albanological sciences with the task of carrying out systematic interdisciplinary studies to throw light on this phenomenon which is neither a "miracle" nor an accident, but the result of the operation of various objective and subjective factors that underlay the historical processes which determined the antiquity and the youth, the continuity and unity of the Albanian people.

Striving to sum up the results achieved in an activity carried out over many years, the scholars of the PSR of Albania are happy to come before the scientific opinion of their own and other nations with results which

are in full accord with those achieved by our colleagues and brothers in Kosova (the University of Prishtina), Macedonia and Montenegro. Many of these results are attracting ever greater attention and interest from international Albanological science.

We think that with the wide range of themes selected, our Conference has taken up a key problem for Balkan studies, too, since the problem of the formation of the Albanian people, their continuity and autochthony, the formation of their historical territory, language and culture, is connected by many threads with analogous problems of the history of the neighbouring Balkan peoples, with whom the Albanians, as one of the most ancient peoples of this ancient peninsula, have lived for centuries with continuous relations of mutual economic, cultural, linguistic and political exchanges. These inter-Balkan links are obvious, and not only to the keen eye of the specialist. Equally clear and distinct is the individuality, formed many centuries ago, in the ethno-cultural and ethno-psychological physiognomy of these peoples. In their study of these common and individual phenomena, the Albanian scientists do not raise problems concerning ethnic and cultural, let alone "biological-racial," priority or superiority, nor do they approach the problem from the positions of a romantic nationalism in order to proclaim their contribution the only element of high value. In presenting for study the problems connected with the history of the formation of the Albanian people, their language and

culture, we recall, amongst other things, the saying of the famous Croat Albanologist and Balkanologist, Milan Šufflay, that the whole of the Balkan macrocosm, in its historical stratification from the most ancient times, is reflected better than anywhere else, as in its ultimate unit, in the history, language and culture of the ancient Albanian people. In this sense, the Albanian ethnos with its history, like a giant oak with its annular rings, reveals the historical growth of this ancient Balkan world.

In the present-day political and even scientific language of a series of Balkan archaeologists, historians and anthropologists, among whom the Yugoslavs are prominent, we encounter a doubt, which goes as far as *a priori* negation of the scientific value of the term ethnos.

It is regrettable that such well-known archaeologists and historians as M. Garašanin, S. Cirković and others declare today that science should renounce the study of problems connected with the formation of ancient ethnic groups, their territories and cultures, because, according to them, this is a field in which "biological-racial" concepts prevail, and that such formations, as the ethnos and the ethnic territory in general, are connected with primitive society, hence are an anachronism in contemporary society. According to them, science has abandoned or must abandon the study of such problems as that of ethnogenesis.

In support of this they put forward the

opinion that the main constituent factor of the ethnos is the biological and racial factor: at most they give the term ethnos the significance of a mere cultural-linguistic community, for the existence of which neither the factor of relations of exchange, however loose, amongst people, nor the basis of a common territory on which these relations can develop, are necessary. Obviously, such a definition divests the concept ethnos of its objective, concrete historical content which is generally accepted by modern science — a social community formed historically on the basis of coexistence, with a common or cognate language, with identical or similar material and spiritual culture, with inter-relations of production and exchange, all this on the basis of a definite territory without which these factors cannot operate. Hence, the ethnos is an historical product, neither given *a priori* nor unchangeable, which cannot exist without connection with the social formations which, in the last analysis, determine it. So, the ethnos exists in embryo both in tribal and slave-owning societies, in the respective characteristic forms, and in the people and the nation as forms of organization of feudal society, as well as in the nation of capitalist society and in socialism, but always with a new content, corresponding to the respective socio-economic formation. In all these social formations the ethnos invariably has those components which are always present, regardless of the fact that in primitive society, for instance, the territorial factor, and especially the economic factor, are much

more weakly developed, whereas in the more highly developed societies these are precisely the factors which assume greater importance, although never eliminating the other factors, among which language is one of the most important criteria in the formation and definition of the ethnos.

We think that progressive opinion in modern science is quite right in devoting ever greater attention to the investigation and study of the formation of ethnic communities and their cultures, and of national territories, seen as a result of a socio-historical formation. Carried out on an objective scientific basis, these studies constitute a powerful theoretical weapon in the hands of the peoples, nationalities and nations, either oppressed or on the road to their liberation, for the affirmation, on the basis of historical laws, of their national political identity, of their aspirations to a democratic progressive culture which responds to their ethnic-historical physiognomy and demands for social progress, and to their struggle for freedom and independence against any form of exploitation; these are major problems and tasks which have been put forward for solution and to which the science must strive to supply the answers.

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The initial Illyrian ethnos, with its vast territorial extension from the Sava River down to Epirus, provides the example of a very loose unity, which according to the circumstances, split, regrouped, mingled with

other ethnoses, or was assimilated. However, precisely because of its separate territory with more favourable conditions, one group of this great ethnos, the southern Illyrians began to differentiate as a separate ethnic-cultural entity with common characteristics. In the sources of that time they are described as “the Illyrians proper” (*Illyrii proprie dicti*). The coexistence of a people with the same or similar language and spiritual and material culture, living near the coast within the radius of the civilization of a number of cities on the great routes of communication, in an environment which favoured their economic development, their inclusion for a relatively long period in the most important political formation of the eastern coast of the Adriatic — the Illyrian Kingdom, all these factors led to the crystallizing of the southern Illyrians on this territory as a separate ethnic community comprised of a group of tribes headed by the Albans in present-day Central Albania, where Claudius Ptolemy mentions them in the 2nd century of our era. These circumstances, taken together, explain why this ethnic community, with its main distinctive features, lasted beyond Antiquity, even though it was exposed to the language-cultural pressure of the Roman and Byzantine Empires which left their imprint, and later, to relations with its Slav neighbours. With its ancient roots, but with a new social content, this community continued in the Arbër people of the Middle Ages, who are mentioned in the same territory from the 11th century on.

This and other similar examples show that none of the factors which play a part in the formation of these communities, would suffice, on its own, to explain the formation of an ethnos.

Hence, it follows that none of the historical-cultural sciences on its own is able to say the last word in explaining ethnogenetic processes. On this issue, the results of linguistics must be compatible with those of ethnology and archaeology, and all of them together with those of history. These sciences can and must assist one another; only when their results are in conformity can it be said that the conclusions drawn are really soundly based; but none of these sciences has the right to disregard the results achieved by the others or to impose its own opinion one-sidedly.

Unfortunately, there are whole periods for which the lack of materials compels scholars to work with inadequate arguments drawn from only one field. However, the lack of written sources, as for example in the case of several centuries of our medieval history, must not lead the scholar to simplistic solutions, or absolve him from the obligation to seek other auxiliary arguments. In a number of instances, the absolutizing of one circumstance has led to theses which give an extremely distorted picture of the historical reality, the more so when non-scientific factors interfere, as they frequently do.

Here we are referring to those notorious theses that in the period between Late Antiquity and the Middle Ages in the Balkans

there is allegedly an interruption, a complete gap, caused by the major political, social and ethno-cultural transformations which characterized the period from the 5th to the 10th centuries. According to this opinion, the more or less complete Romanization of the Illyrians was followed by the equally complete Slavization of the Romanized Illyrians. This denial of the Illyrian continuity cannot explain the presence of the Albanians on their medieval and present-day territories, except by means of later migrations from different directions — from Thrace in the Eastern Balkans, or even further away beyond the Danube, or from the erstwhile Illyrian territories in the Central-Western Balkans south of the Danube, and ludicrous though it may seem, even from today's Scotland! However, the timing has still to be defined: to suit the occasion, the Albanians are presented as coming to their present territories through an immigration of which no shred of evidence exists in the historical sources, driven by the Slavs, or together with them, or even after them, from the 5th century to the 11th century of our era.

This fundamentally wrong thesis gave rise to two additional theses; on the one hand, the thesis of the late, violent Albanization of the territories found by the incoming Albanians, and on the other hand, that of the very low level of socio-economic development of the medieval Albanians, in order to explain this immigration as the movements of nomadic shepherds who came from some secret mountain fastness, from the most isolated and backward



areas of a territory in which these dispersed fragments of an ancient, semi-assimilated population had managed, to some extent, to escape complete Romanization in conditions of extreme primitivity. All this was a complete fabrication, built with a kind of logic which tried to base itself on facts and arguments, but more on a series of theses taken at face value, but full of contradictions with one another, and especially with the facts. We cannot help thinking that behind these arguments lurk not only weaknesses of method and methodology, but also more or less camouflaged political ambitions in a number of instances. It is not accidental that the most outspoken champions of these theses come, with few exceptions, from the ranks of the Slavists with pronounced concepts from the old Pan-Slavism (A.M. Seliščev, I. Popović, I. Zaimov and others).

To say this in no way implies negation of the scientific merits of a number of scholars of various nationalities, who, even before the conditions had matured, tried with sound judgement to carry forward their studies and to blaze new trails. The new Albanian science mentions their names with respect; let us remember one among many, the unforgettable Norbert Jokl, that zealous scholar of the Albanian language, friend of the Albanian people and their culture, and victim of detestable, barbarous fascism.

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We can say that the studies of the prob-

lems that interest us entered a new higher stage when, with the emergence of the new Albanian science, it was able to have its say about them. It bases itself on a wider range of linguistic, archaeological and ethnographic material which allows it, relying on a scientific methodology, to have a clearer and more complete view of a number of problems and argue them in a more balanced way, without claiming that it is going to say the last word about them. Our Conference, through the papers delivered here, will make known some of the results achieved in this work.

The picture which we can form today, with the interconnected achievements of the Albanological studies carried out after the liberation of our country, is entirely different from that presented in the well-known work of G. Stadtmüller *Investigations into the Early History of the Albanians* (1941, second edition 1966), which, we can say, is the first research work devoted entirely to the problem of the formation of the Albanian people in the Middle Ages.

Under the powerful impact of the reactionary German geopolitical concepts of the '30s, Stadtmüller saw the decisive factor that operated in the life of the society of the early Albanians in the "laws" of living space and the "demographic explosions" which allegedly characterized and determined the level of their social and cultural development. The law of violence, characteristic of a society of war-like migratory herdsmen, as Stadtmüller described the Albanians in an *a priori* and

one-sided way, allegedly operated especially under the conditions of the lack of a strong central political state such as Rome, Byzantium and the Serbian state represented at the climax of their power. It must be said that these were simply stereotyped constructions which, neither in their own time, nor even less today, had any more or less sound methodological basis in conformity with the historical-cultural reality of the time. Nevertheless, Stadtmüller republished his work without any alteration.

Undoubtedly, the linguists were bound to have priority in studies about the problems under discussion, for a long period. This was due not only to the strong tradition of the past, but also to the fact that most of the materials available were of a linguistic character, while the archaeological-ethnographic research was still backward. Hence, one of the conditions to overcome this situation was to carry out this research at accelerated rates, focussing attention on the study of the culture of the *autochthonous* inhabitants, breaking with the traditional orientation which recognized only the culture of the upper circles, the Roman-Byzantine "imperial" culture of the Illyrian territories. It was precisely this mistaken approach which had led to the idea of the complete Romanization of the Illyrians. The Albanian scholars applied this important new orientation, achieving a series of results which allow us today to present the question of the ethnical-cultural continuity and autochthony of the Albanians in their historical

territories from an earlier starting-point than was possible a few decades ago.

The linguists had been engrossed, first of all, with the problem of the parentage of the Albanian language, its continuity from an ancient Balkan language, Illyrian or Thracian. Undoubtedly, this was an important and proper question. However, as the progress of the studies shows, it could not be solved in isolation from other questions. In our opinion, the manner in which this question was posed at that time amounted to trying to explain the secondary before the primary, trying to solve the problem of the origin of the Albanian language *divorced from* and *prior to* the problem of the location of the ethnic-historical territory in which the phenomena of the continuity of this language should be sought. It is known that the territorial factor has always played the main role in this issue.

This manner of posing the problem resulted in a game of "tug of war" between "pro-Illyrian" and "pro-Thracian" linguists, the representatives of the Illyrian or Thracian theses of the origin of the Albanians and the Albanian language. Basing themselves on this or that Albanian-Illyrian or Albanian-Thracian isogloss, each of the contending parties tried to pull the solution of the question to its own side. Obviously, this was bound to go on for a long time without conclusive results, especially while a more profound knowledge of the internal laws of the Albanian language and its phonetics was lacking. Nevertheless, some results were achieved. It can be said that

thanks to protracted comparative work initiated by G. Meyer, N. Jokl and others, which continues to this day, the linguists succeeded in providing new convincing arguments about the connections of the Albanian with the Illyrian, which has been formulated clearly recently by the linguist R. Katičić, who concluded that no convincing linguistic argument exists to refute the Illyrian origin of the Albanian language and the Albanians.

But the history of the Albanian language, as the ultimate reflection of a compact ethnic-cultural development of the people who speak it, required, apart from the inclusion of the language factor, the inclusion of the equally important cultural factor, as well as the territorial factor, that is the historical and geographical territory in which the Albanian ethnos, with its ancient roots was formed.

This was a course on which Thunmann, Hahn, Jokl and others had already set out. They, and recently Katičić, saw an additional proof in favour of the thesis of the Illyrian-Albanian continuity and the autochthony of the Albanians in these territories in the fact that the present-day Albanians live precisely in the territory of the ancient Illyrians. Even some of the supporters of the Thracian thesis, such as Weygand, Skok and Barić, eventually adhered to this viewpoint and were compelled to recognize the autochthony of the Albanians in these regions prior to the coming of the Slavs.

Eqrem Çabej dedicated his many years of activity to the central problem of the autochthony of the Albanians. With a series of stud-

ies in the history of the Albanian language and the historical place names of the Albanian territories, E. Çabej laid the foundations for a scientific explanation of this great problem. It was clear to him that the Illyrian-Albanian coincidences, in fact, proved the generic links between the Albanian and the Illyrian, but these coincidences in themselves were insufficient. Only the location of the place in which the transition from the ancient Balkan language to the medieval Albanian occurred could give the decisive answer to this question. This required a comparative linguistic analysis of the historical place names of the ancient territories of the Western and Central Balkans. On the road opened up by Jokl, but with new materials and a more precise and improved methodology, Çabej defined the territory of Southern Illyria, which approximately coincides with the present-day area of the spoken Albanian, as the historical territory on which the formation of the Albanian language and the Albanian people took place. We can define the period in which the first phases of this important ethno-genetic process took place as the centuries of Late Antiquity, when the formation of the Albanian within the Illyrian began. In fact, from the now-unified manner in which Albanian responded to the ancient influences of Latin it appears as a unit, with a formed fundamental structure common to all its dialects. Its contact with the Slav language was unable to affect or alter anything in this structure. True, a series of toponyms of Southern Illyria show they have

passed through a foreign linguistic environment of a Slavonic character — the result of ethnic changes that came about in the second half of the millennium all over the Balkans, but, along with them, we distinguish a great number of toponyms, mainly names of rivers, mountains and cities, which through the phonetic evolution characteristic of the Albanian language, show that they have been used continuously by the same Albanian-speaking population and have passed from this population into the language of the neighbouring Slavs in a number of cases. Placed on a map, the names *Ulqin*, *Shkodra*, *Drin* and *Buna*, *Sharr Mountain*, *Nish*, *Shkup* and *Shtip*, *Mat* and *Pult*, *Drisht* and *Ishëm*, *Durrës*, *Shkumbin*, *Vlora*, *Ohri* and *Çamëria* outline a territory which in the pre-Slav period was inhabited by an ancient Illyrian population which, through a complex ethnic-cultural process, produced the Arbëreshi, the medieval Albanians. The findings from our archaeological research, which provide clear evidence of the presence of a medieval material culture formed on the basis of an autochthonous culture, which retains pre-Roman Illyrian elements, and which, on the other hand, was developed under the influence of the Roman-Byzantine culture of Late Antiquity, are in conformity with this territory.

The positioning of the territory of the formation of the Albanian language and of the Albanians in this manner explains the ancient interconnections and factors which have played their part in the formation of the Al-

banian ethnos and the Albanian language. In early medieval times, the easternmost extensions of the Albanian-speaking territory were in contact with the westernmost extensions of a Romanian-speaking territory. Thus, ancient Dardania, inhabited by Illyrians, was no longer the westernmost outpost of the Thracians, but a constituent part of a linguistic and cultural territory extending to the Adriatic and Ionian coasts. The borrowings from ancient Greek and Latin which clearly linked this centre of ethnogenetic formation with the coast are evidence of this; the borrowings of the Albanian from Latin, with their archaic character and origin from literary Latin, with their central position between the eastern Balkan Roman vernacular of Dacia, the north-western Roman vernacular of Dalmatia and the western Roman vernacular, show that this language area had a particular place, both as regards its ethnic-cultural location and the time sequence of its formation. In comparison with the Latin vernacular of the late Roman period, the Albanian language had begun its course of formation at a relatively ancient stage. All these circumstances allow us to fix the time limits of these ethnogenetic processes in the first centuries of the first millennium.

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As we said above, these conclusions are in conformity with the archaeological findings. The fact that up to the 6th century Latin and, to a smaller extent, Greek had a limited use as languages of inscriptions, especially for the



upper strata, does not imply any ethnic change involving the whole population but shows only the process of the cultural assimilation of a given upper stratum of society, especially of the urban population of Southern Illyria. The open resistance of the exploited masses to the imperial power was the decisive factor which operated for the preservation and even the consolidation of the Illyrian ethnos in the conditions of Roman and, later, Byzantine domination. This was expressed especially in the preservation of the culture of the lower strata, with elements, features and tendencies inherited from the pre-Roman period, which, like the language, were developed further even under the pressure and influence of the dominant culture of the upper strata, as well as the changes brought by the new populations, which did not leave Southern Illyria unaffected. In these conditions, there can be no talk of a break in the continuity of the language and the material and spiritual culture or of the territorial unity of the ancient inhabitants of these lands.

The medieval Arbëreshi culture, with a series of common features and with its regional variants, proves, to the contrary, that in the conditions of the disintegration of the slave-owning order and the decline of the Roman Empire of the West and of the East, the local ethnic element experienced a phase of revival, not only in material production, but also in the new forms of its culture. These artistic elements survived beyond the 6th-8th centuries as important elements distinguish-

ing the Arbëreshi ethnic-cultural community.

The silence of the contemporaneous Greek-Latin sources about the successors to the ancient Illyrian population, while, on the other hand, they record in considerable detail the various phases of the great ethnic disturbances and changes which begin from the middle of the millennium, does not invalidate what has been said above. The very logic of the historical situation explains why Roman and subsequently Byzantine imperial historiography records all the invasions, devastations and changes, the events of a political and military character which posed a threat to the state, as is exemplified in the case of Constantine Porphyrogenites. However, the same author is silent about the ancient autochthonous population of Southern Illyria which in these circumstances did not constitute a threat, and therefore, a reason for it to be mentioned and singled out from among the mass of the population going under the general political denomination of the subjects of the Empire. For this population he uses the traditional names of the ancient provinces or the new terms of the Byzantine administration. Only when this population of Illyria, which constituted a separate ethnic community, became an active political factor with its uprisings against the central state power from the 11th century on, is it mentioned continually in the Byzantine sources, and it can be understood why.

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In some of the literature the stereotyped

claim is made that the characteristic features of Albanian society from ancient times to the Late Middle Ages were those of a society of nomad herdsmen who lived outside the sphere of operation of the laws of normal socio-economic development and unconnected with a given territory. The argument that this population did not know higher forms of civic and state life has been misused by some authors to the point that they deny, for instance, an extremely important argument for the Illyrian-Albanian continuity: the continuity of the ethnic name Albania from the 2nd-11th centuries. According to Stadtmüller, this passage in Ptolemy cannot be authentic but is a later interpolation, precisely, because the Illyrian-Albans could not have had cities. (Let us mention here that a number of sources and place names from Late Antiquity present authentic endemic forms of the root *arb* and *alb* in the western zone of the Balkan coast and in the territories of Southern Illyria!)

Analysis of the ancient heritage of the Albanian vocabulary and of its elements borrowed from Latin, together with important information from medieval archaeology and paleo-ethnography show that in the medieval Albanians we have to do with a population which *ab antiquo* leads a settled life with developed agriculture, livestock farming and handicrafts and is acquainted with life in an urban environment. The many archaeological discoveries, not only in the plains and hilly zones, but also in the mountainous zones of the hinterland are evidence of this. They

prove convincingly that the process of formation of the Albanian people took place, not in conditions of socio-economic stagnation or regression, but in conditions of a relative development, despite the destructive consequences which the foreign invasions and occupations brought about. All the facts speak of the extension of the land under cultivation, of the old inhabited centres being preserved and new ones being built in regard to which not the slightest doubt can be raised as to the urban character of their economy, or the Albanian ethnic character of their population. Let us mention the example of the city of Kruja, with its Albanian name which is mentioned as early as the 9th century, undoubtedly a metastasis of a city of Late Antiquity, probably Albanopolis. A number of other inhabited centres, monuments of culture and necropolises retain evidence of the cultural continuity, their own names, topographical positions, fortifications, etc. They are included in this general framework of the ethnic continuity.

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The period from the 7th to the 12th century constitutes a new and higher stage in the history of the Albanian people, expressed in their socio-economic and political development. It is also a new and higher stage in the development of ethnogenetic processes, in the crystallization of the medieval Arbëreshi-Albanian ethnos as the continuation, with a new content, of the ancient ethnic community and of its constituent factors. Along with the lin-

guistic unity, the cultural community was also consolidated and developed, first of all, as a culture of the autochthonous masses, enriched with new elements from contacts and relations with the contemporary neighbouring cultures of the Balkan-Adriatic basin. The characteristics which we recognize as the fundamental elements of our present-day national ethnic culture are now crystallized in the material culture, as well as in the spiritual-artistic culture, in the dress, ornaments, dances and music, customs, in the institutions of popular justice, etc. Amongst all these, components deriving from the old heritage supplemented with a new content can be distinguished as well as new features in a dialectical relationship of conservation and renewal.

Similar manifestations of conservation and renewal of the peculiar, the local, ethnic and the universal phenomena are to be found also in the "higher" culture, i.e., the culture of the ruling classes, in the monuments of architecture and art, as well as in some social institutions, etc., in which there is no visible complete break with the past which could be connected with the changes brought about in the second half of the millennium. Here, too, the characteristic features which testify to an autonomous development of the provincial culture become more conspicuous. Under the apparently uniform surface of the universal imperial culture, the culture of the autochthonous strata of the people begins to emerge as an important factor which imparts some common specific features to the provincial

culture, and, in some aspects, to the culture of the upper strata.

The convergent factors which are observed in the course of the development of a united Albanian society — the common ethnic heritage, the economic relations, although still restricted, the territorial community, also operate in the development of Albanian as a united language. The dissolving of the distinctions between tribes and their dialects, the creation of larger ethnic and administrative-territorial units, etc., find their reflection in the formation of two main dialect groupings on a territorial basis. Despite a number of specific features, these dialects have common fundamental features — the same structure of the language, phonetics, vocabulary, etc. This is a new higher stage in which the Albanian language is crystallized in the Middle Ages.

Although it remained compact and united in its fundamental outlines, the territorial component of the Albanian ethnos could not fail to reflect the consequences of the waves of migration and subsequent occupation of the Slavs in the Balkans. In these conditions, the phenomenon that took place was not one of expansion, as is claimed, but one of shrinking of the territories formerly inhabited by the ancient Illyrian-Albanian population, especially in their eastern part, in which the organized states of the Bulgarians and the Serbs established themselves.

Linguists (the Dutch Slavist N. Van Wije) have observed that in the Early Middle Ages the Serbs and the Bulgarians were separated

by a non-Slav population; as the Slavist E. Petrović points out, proceeding from the ancient phonetically Albanian toponymy mentioned above, this population could have been only the Albanian population. The fact that Albanian has had very extensive territorial contacts with a population which spoke a Bulgarian-type language, and on the other hand, with another which spoke a Serbian-type language, proves that initially, at a very early period, the Albanian territories must have extended over a very big area which formed a wedge between the Serb and Bulgarian territories.

Ethnogenetic processes cannot develop in an undifferentiated social environment. It was precisely the development and consolidation of feudal relations that created the conditions to promote the tendencies towards the development of unity in the Albanian ethnos.

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The extension of the territories of feudal estates, the expropriation and the continued process of alienation of the peasants from their communities led to the disruption of traditional links and the further mixing of the local population. This process was also aided by the continuous migration of the inhabitants of the highlands, where the arable land was insufficient, towards the lowlands and hilly zones and, on the other hand, by the seasonal migrations of herdsmen to summer pastures.

Taken together, these socio-economic changes of a profound and all-round charac-

ter distinguish the period from the 7th to the 12th century as a new, higher stage in the ethnic-cultural development, as the stage of the consolidation and crystallization of the Albanian ethnos. Compared with the false brilliance of the final phase of the doomed slave-owning society, the new situation, in fact, marked a period of barbarity, which can be seen in our country, too. On the other hand, this was a situation pregnant with the new, rent with the "birth pangs" of a new society, as Engels puts it, which was emerging from an old world of collapse, confusion and dissolution, from new beginnings and transformations. Instead of the ethnic communities based on tribes and tribal federations, or the amorphous ethnically simple territorial units of slave-owning society, from the "clay of the decayed Roman world," the *peoples* of medieval Europe were emerging as new, higher ethnic communities, with their developed class organization and a new social content. The characteristic features of their common language, culture and territory in which continual exchanges took place, although confined within the integument of the feudal economy, still remained constructive factors on the basis of which these peoples were founded. It was precisely these more developed ethnic characteristics that made the people the embryo of the *nation*, the ultimate product of the ethnic-cultural development of feudal society.

The ethnic remnants left behind or established in these zones as a result of various migrations and occupations in the first mil-



lennium are now blended with the original ancient autochthonous population as part of the people inhabiting their own territories. Social and political factors play an important role in this blending process. Here we are referring, on the one hand, to the existence within the people of the class of dependent and exploited peasantry; this is a class with essentially the same social characteristics and interests over the whole territory which, in fact, included the bulk of the population, and on the other hand, the ruling class, likewise, united in its characteristics and interests, the Albanian feudal class which now rules an ethnically homogenous territory with which is connected by its class interests. Divided and, at the same time, united by the class struggle which goes on between them on the same ethnic territory, these two classes constitute a dialectical unity which, in fact, carries forward the process of ethnogenetic unification. They form a unity not only on the basis of their common language, territory, material culture and customs, regardless of the class differences in the content of their culture, but also on the basis of political interests, which, in given historical stages and circumstances, can unite these two classes for a time against the threat of foreign domination, as in the case of our country's resistance to the Byzantine domination and invasions from the neighbouring Bulgarian and Serb states, invasions and domination which, on account of their exploiting character, threatened and damaged the interests of the peasant masses, first of all, but also threat-

ened the interests of the upper strata of the local society, regardless of the fact that they had emerged initially from within the Byzantine Empire. For the new ruling class, which was growing stronger in the midst of Albanian society, these states began to become an impediment to the free development of its own political power and to the exploitation of the local peasant masses on its own account. These contradictions, which continued for centuries, made the external factor an important element contributing actively to the consolidation of the formation "people"; the objective tendencies now required the political separation of the Albanian territories within the framework of a separate state on the basis of ethnic peculiarities. "Once the language groups were determined," and, along with them the ethnic-territorial distinctions, says Engels, "it was natural that they would serve as a basis for the formation of states."

The process of the formation and consolidation of a people with their own language and culture has more favourable conditions generally when it takes place in the framework of a state with an ethnically homogenous population and politically independent. In these conditions, the socio-economic and political differentiation proceeds more rapidly and permits the local exploiting class to carry out more effectively its external function, defence of the country against foreign aggression, and its internal function, to extend and strengthen its domination over an ever more extensive territory, by including in it more and more re-

gions inhabited by the same people.

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The ethnic unification and consolidation of the Albanians as a “people,” as an historical-cultural phenomenon, found its expression also in the general extension of the ethnic name Arbër to all the inhabitants of this broad territory. This phenomenon had nothing to do with invasions, but with the creation of a universal socio-economic and cultural community comprising the historical territories of the Albanians. The fact that the same ethnic name “Arbër” is used in the same manner both in the Early medieval Greek-Byzantine sources (from the 11th century on), in the Western sources of the same period, as well as in the Serbian and Bulgarian sources in the East (the 12th-13th centuries), regardless of whether the inhabitants of the Albanian territories referred to were further south, further north or further east, already indicates the consolidation of the features of this ethnic community to its highest stage as a “nationality” — a process which is reflected precisely in this common denomination.

In his studies of the Early Medieval phase, Engels clearly showed the operation of those objective factors which prepare *the nationality* as the highest expression of the consolidation of the medieval people. Among these factors, the territorial factor continues to occupy an important place as an essential condition for the development of regular economic relations, and on the other hand, is itself an ex-

pression and result of these relations.

In the conditions of normal development, the nationality, with the relations which characterize it, becomes one of the active bases for the formation of centralized states or monarchies which in the Middle Ages represent the embryos of the future national states of Europe. In this process, the nationalities represent the precursors of the modern nation. The historical conditions of our country were an impediment to the normal development of the Albanian nationality and its embodiment in a national state. These circumstances had an inhibiting effect, in as much as it is known that states are powerful factors for ethnic-cultural integration and consolidation. In this direction, the Albanian nationality is one of the infrequent examples of how, even in these conditions, it was able to preserve and develop the stage of unification achieved, although from ancient times it had to live under the conditions of the political and cultural interference of great empires and the universal cultures which they presented. Moreover, for centuries on end, this nationality was included in the territories of several states and under the influence of several cultures at the same time. During this period of domination by various foreign powers there were a number of instances of more or less mass movements of ethnically foreign elements to the territories of the autochthonous population, as was the case in the southeast under the domination of the great Bulgarian state, in the north and northeast in the conditions of the expansion

of the Serbian state into Kosova. In general, the long period of foreign domination of the Albanian territories by ethnically foreign ruling classes, such as the Byzantines, in the first place, who had a powerful centralized political, military and church apparatus in their hands, constituted a factor which inhibited and slowed the formation of a native ruling class and its political activity. The reasons why the Albanian feudal class still remained weak in the 11th and 12th centuries until it managed to break away and emancipate itself from the Byzantine imperial feudal class must be sought in these conditions. This holds good also for the situation that existed in the territory of Kosova where, in the conditions of the Serbian domination until the 14th century, the class differentiation in the ranks of the Albanian population proceeded slowly and steadily.

Another inhibiting circumstance was the fact that the foreign ruling class had control of the church and its apparatus, including the church language, not only as the liturgical language, but also as the language of culture. If we bear in mind the important ideological role of religion and the church in the Middle Ages, we have to say that the fact that no church which served the local ruling class, and even less with the national language, has ever operated in the Albanian territories, constituted a factor with negative effects. It is known that in the Middle Ages three religions hostile to one another and the bearers of opposing political and ideological tendencies clashed in the Albanian territories. In these

conditions, membership of a particular religion or church could not become a more or less specific ethnic-cultural characteristic as it did in many other instances. The cultural community, however superficial, of the same religion, created in the zones of Serbian, Bulgarian and other occupation, where the church also had control of the political power, led in a number of cases, as is known, to phenomena of ethnic-cultural assimilation, as in the case of the Slavization of the autochthonous Albanian population in some territories of Dioclea-Zeta, Kosova, Macedonia, etc. If in these processes the old local population managed to withstand the threat of this assimilation, the explanation for this must be sought in the concord of the social and ethnic factors among the autochthonous population opposed to the foreign rulers, but also in the reliance of the autochthonous population on an ancient ethnic-cultural basis. In such situations, it was "the conquered" "that assimilated the conquerors; the ancient peasant and citizen assimilated his overlord," says Engels, and he continues, "the modern nationalities, likewise, are the result of oppressed classes."

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The history of the Albanian people in the Middle Ages is pervaded by a series of constant factors which characterize and determine its legitimate course. The result of these deep-going processes found its expression in the awareness of foreigners of the unity of the medieval Albanians as an entity distinct from

the other neighbouring nationalities, and as a nationality derived from "the same stock," having the same history, the same customs, living on the same territory and having the same interests, as the local people saw themselves. The subjective reflection of the objective process of formation of the Albanian nationality was formulated by the Albanian humanist Marin Barleti, in the 15th century, in precisely these terms.

There is no doubt that, embodied in this expression, there was the experience of the great struggle waged for almost a century by the Albanian population in all its territories and regions against the invasion of the Ottoman Turks from the end of the 14th century. The irreconcilable class contradiction between the popular masses and the invaders, which operated in this case, too, helped to strengthen the political and military cohesion of this nationality; this consciousness became an effective weapon which served the popular war which the native ruling class, with Skanderbeg at the head, led.

This great protracted conflict of the popular masses with the "foreigners" also explains a seemingly strange ethnogenetic phenomenon: it is precisely after this period of war that we see the ancient ethnic name Arbër gradually replaced by another name with ancient roots, "*Shqiptar*," by which this nationality distinguishes itself from the foreign occupiers, as a separate national entity, which is different, in the first place, in its distinct, common and understandable language, *shqipe* (Albanian).

The new situations which were created in the Albanian territories under many centuries of Ottoman rule could not essentially alter the fundamental ethnic-cultural structure of the already crystallized Albanian nationality, nor could they interrupt the course of the unified political and cultural development, the bearers of which were the popular masses in their general opposition to the Ottoman ruling and exploiting class. In these new circumstances, the Albanians were obliged to travel again over a course they had traversed in the Early Middle Ages, but now in new conditions, at a higher level, in order to gain their political and cultural emancipation, to consolidate themselves as an ethnic community against the assimilating tendencies of the universal Ottoman monarchy and its theocratic ideology which did not recognize nationality.

The example of the development of the Albanian nationality is additional proof that no outside force is able to undo what has been constructed and consolidated over the centuries, to reverse or stop the ever increasing development of the socio-economic and cultural forces of the popular masses.

This long historical road was not only one of conservation, but also one of all-round development and rejuvenation. It is the best testimony to the never-ending creative capacity and potential of this people, who, even in the most difficult conditions of history, succeeded in developing and strengthening their internal cohesion, formed on the basis of ob-



jective laws.

The economic and social, political and cultural content of successive periods mounts in an undeviating line of ascent, bringing the Albanian ethnos, the Albanian nationality, to a formation of the highest historical-social level — the level of the nation of today, the Albanian socialist nation, united in its language, culture and territory and all the best things it has inherited from history. Resisting the storms of many centuries, this mighty oak, which has its roots deeply implanted in its own historic soil, is experiencing a new renaissance in everything today. Under the leadership of the working class, and the Party born from its ranks, which are flesh of the flesh and blood of the blood of this nation, those great processes of unification, development and progress, which constitute our history over thousands of years, have found their realization with a new, higher content. The strength of this cohesion defied the centuries and grew stronger. Ancient, but perpetually young, this nation will always be able to withstand the storms and tests of the coming centuries.

## **PROBLEMS OF THE HISTORY OF THE FORMATION OF THE ALBANIAN LANGUAGE, ACHIEVEMENTS AND TASKS**

1. The formation of the Albanian language, like the formation of the Albanian people and nationality, is a big, difficult, complex problem; we have to do with an ancient people, indeed one of the most ancient peoples of the Balkans, and an ancient language, one which although documented in writing relatively late, has preserved its originality and individuality as a separate language, the only representative of a group of ancient languages, although as a result of geographical-historical factors, it has been obliged during the centuries to have many contacts, sometimes very intensive contacts, with other languages, and consequently to borrow words from them or give them words. In the history of the Albanian language there are broken threads that must be tied together and certain processes and phases of its development during the centuries to be reconstructed and portrayed completely.

The formation of a language and the formation of the people who speak it are processes very closely linked together. History and philology complement and help explain each other. Language, as a social phenomenon, is an historical category, one of the fundamental

characteristics of an ethnic entity, of a people. In the course of time it changes according to its own laws, in conformity with the social and political development of the people who speak it.

As a reflection of the history of the people who speak it, language provides interesting information about their past, frequently completing and correcting the information from other sources, especially historical sources. Linguistic information is particularly important regarding undocumented periods and aspects of the past historical development.

The outstanding Danish linguist of the 19th century, R. Rasch, says: "In order to know the origin of peoples and their links in Early Antiquity, when history leaves us no other means, nothing is as important as their language." The living language spoken amongst people has been described as a great achievement of the past, a deposit of priceless documentary material and the most ancient and faithful historical reflection of the life of a community through the centuries.

The importance of linguistic information and evidence, on clarifying problems from the history of the language, is especially great for the history of our people, when we have no adequate written sources about whole centuries (4th-10th centuries), when we have to reconstruct processes and phases of this history on the basis of various other indirect facts and evidence. The history of the Albanian language, the elucidation of the problems of its formation, enable us to throw light on many

aspects of these processes and phases, help to solve important problems of the genesis of the Albanian people, of the basis and the place from which this people emerged, and of the factors and the historical conditions which determined this emergence.

In clarifying the fundamental problems of the genesis of the Albanian language we encounter difficulties and obstacles, but they are not insuperable. Albanian is a separate Indo-European language which has direct or tangential links with the most ancient languages of the Balkans, but at the same time, is a language for which the written evidence is from a relatively late period and, for the most part, in a very evolved form. As is known, although there is evidence of writing in Albanian from the 13th century, the earliest documents available go back only to the second half of the 15th century. The materials available from the non-Greek ancient languages of the Balkans are scanty and one-sided, mainly of an onomastic character. However, what our language lost in the course of time, the gaps created on this account in its history can be complemented in a relatively satisfactory way by proceeding from the material of the current language which constitutes a valuable historical document, and by reconstructing the undocumented bygone phases on the basis of this and the information from the first centuries of written Albanian, through internal and external comparison and examination of history.

The history of the formation, crystalliza-

tion and consolidation of Albanian as the language of a people presupposes a very lengthy process. It is a complex problem with many aspects involving a number of questions. It is necessary to determine its origin, its components and the role and weight of the other elements which have been integrated into it, the time and place of its formation, the examination of its main contacts with other languages and the consequences of these contacts for the Albanian language, the different stages of its development, etc. We shall examine the most fundamental questions of this complex.

2. *Illyrian origin of the Albanian language.* When we speak of the original source of the Albanian language, we have in mind its direct genealogical relationship with some other ancient Balkan language, the identification of the predecessor of the Albanian language, that language of which the modern Albanian is the continuation, and not its earliest beginnings which are linked with the character of the Albanian language as an Indo-European language. This problem has attracted the attention of all who have studied the origin of the Albanian people — because the two problems are closely linked — or the history of the Albanian language, as well as many Balkanologists. There is a great wealth of literature on this, but it is very heterogeneous. A very detailed, indeed exhaustive examination of all this literature is necessary in order to present the history and the present state of the treatment of this problem, with all the aspects it involves, with a critical analysis of the meth-

odology used, the facts and arguments raised, and the opinions expressed. Among other things, this would help to outline of the tasks of future research more clearly.

In ancient times, the main languages spoken in the Balkan Peninsula were Greek in the south, Illyrian in the west and Thracian in the east. A few decades ago Bulgarian linguists divided Thracian into two separate languages, Thracian and Daco-Mysian.

The problem of the origin of the Albanian people was first raised and treated on a scientific basis by the German historian, Johan Thunmann, 200 years ago (1774).<sup>\*</sup> Basing himself on facts from history and geography, but also utilizing the conclusions drawn from the linguistic materials, he rejected the unfounded hypothesis of some of his contemporaries, demonstrated the autochthony of the Albanians and defended the thesis of their origin from the Illyrians, whom he regarded as closely related to the Thracians. From analysis of the Albanian language, he observes, it is impossible not to see that the people who speak it have been neighbours of the Greeks for centuries and subjects of ancient Rome; both these facts lead one back to the ancient Illyrians. He points out that the Albanian people have retained the ancient Illyrian basis of their language, while the penetration into it of a large number of borrowings from other languages reflects the impact of different

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<sup>\*</sup> Johannes Thunmann, *Untersuchungen über die Geschichte des östlichen europäischen Völker*, vol. 3, Leipzig 1774.

events and periods of their history.

More than a century and a half later, the Austrian scholar J. Hahn, whose work "Albanian Studies,"\* marked the beginning of a new epoch in several fields of Albanology, raised the question of whether or not the Albanians are autochthonous on their present territories, and answered this question in the affirmative. He regarded the Albanians as the direct descendants of the Illyrians, whom he considered to be closely connected to the Epirots and the Macedonians, whom he linked with the pre-historic Pelasgians. To support his thesis of the Illyrian origin of the Albanians and their language, Hahn used the linguistic materials. The theory of the origin of Albanian from Pelasgian, through Illyrian, was expounded, both before and after Hahn, in the studies of a number of Arbëreshi authors of the 18th century and later. This became the thesis universally supported by the men of the Albanian National Renaissance, who wanted to emphasize the antiquity of the Albanian people in this way.

At the end of the last century the famous Albanologist, Gustav Meyer, took a clear, unequivocal stand on the issue of the origin of the Albanians and the Albanian language, establishing it on a more realistic historical basis. He epitomized his thesis in the following words: "To call the Albanians the new Illyrians is just as correct as to call present-day

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\* J.G. von Hahn, *Albanesische Studien*, Jena 1851.

Greeks modern Greeks.”\* In his opinion, the Albanian language represents the most recent phase of one of the Illyrian dialects.\*\*

The thesis of the Illyrian origin of the Albanians and the Albanian language found wide acceptance in scientific circles and was supported by a number of outstanding scientists and scholars of the end of the last century and the beginning of this century, such as Paul Kretschmer, Albert Thumb, V. Meyer-Lübke, Holger Pedersen, Fr. Ribezzo, and many others.

At the end of the last century, the idea was launched of the relationship of Albanian to Thracian, a thesis subsequently adopted by a number of linguists, amongst when the Balkanologist G. Weigand\*\*\* put it in its most complete form. This theory was based solely on linguistic arguments, on a number of names of people and places of Thrace and Dacia and on some Thracian glosses which were explained through Albanian words, on a number of pre-Latin elements common to the Albanian and Romanian language and some other similarities or parallelisms of these two languages which were brought up as evidence of their common source, as well as on some

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\* G. Meyer, *Della lingua e della letteratura albanese*, “Nuova Antologia,” series 2, vol. 50, 1885, p. 588.

\*\* Gröbers *Drundriss der romanischen Philologie* I.

\*\*\* G. Weigand, *Sind die Albaner die Nachkommen der Illyrier oder der Thraken?*, “Balkan Archiv” 1927, III, pp. 227-251. Translated into Albanian by A. Xhuvani and published in the magazine “Dituria” (Knowledge) 1928, No. 8, p. 291; Nos. 9-11, pp. 333-334.



criticism of the Illyrian theory. The thesis of the Thracian (and later that of the Daco-My-sian) origin of the Albanians, without any historical basis, places the cradle of the Albanian people and the Albanian language further east in the Balkan hinterland, far from the Adriatic coast, thus opposing the autochthony of the Albanians in ancient times on their present territories.

Some other scholars have pointed out the double relationship of Albanian with both Illyrian and Thracian, considering these two ancient languages of the Balkans as very closely related. By and large, this was the stand, expressed by Thunmann in the 18th century. This theory was expressed in its most complete and crystallized form in the works of the outstanding Austrian Albanologist, Norbert Jokl. He pointed out a number of similarities and analogies between Albanian, on the one hand, and Illyrian and Thracian, on the other, in their vocabularies and also in their phonetic and word-building systems, concluding that the Albanian language was very closely akin to both Illyrian and Thracian. N. Jokl says: "However it comes about, we see that the linguistic heritage left from the ancient Balkan languages, both of the Illyrians and of the Thracians, is very closely connected with the language of the Albanians. This double connection can be explained only by postulating relations between the Illyrians and the Thracians."\*

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\* N. Jokl, *Albaner*, "Reallezicon der Vorgeschichte" I, 1924, pp. 184-194.

The study of the Illyrian and Thracian languages has been pursued with greater vigour in the recent decades, examining them from a new critical standpoint and making new efforts to describe their phonetic systems and to throw new light on their grammatical systems, mainly in word-building and the means used for this.

Progress has been made, too, in the study of the problem of the origin of the Albanian language and the Albanian people, while opinions remained divided between those who supported the thesis of the Illyrian origin and those who were for the Thracian origin (or Daco-Mysian, according to others) of the Albanians.

Thanks especially to the fruitful work of Albanian science in archaeology, linguistics, history and ethnography, the thesis of the Illyrian origin of the Albanian language and the Albanian people was developed further, was reinforced with new facts, evidence and arguments and imposed itself as the more correct and acceptable theory. Valuable contributions in this field were made by the scientific session "The Illyrians and the Genesis of the Albanians" (March 1969), and by the 1st Convention of Illyrian Studies (November 1972).\*

Albanian linguistics made great advances on these problems in the first place, through

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\* See "The Illyrians and the Genesis of the Albanians," the State University of Tirana, the Faculty of History and Linguistics, 1969; "The Assembly of Illyrian Studies," I, II, the Academy of Sciences of the PSRA, Tirana 1974.

the very fruitful studies of Prof. Eqrem Çabej who frequently returned to various problems of the origin of the Albanian language,\* closely linked with the origin of the Albanian people. He brought out numerous facts and data which throw light on these complex problems, powerful arguments which invalidate the criticisms and points on which the supporters of the Thracian thesis base themselves, and further strengthen the theory of Illyrian origin. The thesis of Illyrian origin has been and is held by a number of foreign linguists\*\* and is well entrenched in world scientific opinion.

The material available directly from the Illyrian language is scanty and comprises mainly personal names and place names, names of deities, tribes and inhabitants (about

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\* See amongst others E. Çabej, *The Problem of the Autochthony of the Albanians in the Light of Place Names*, Bulletin of the State University of Tirana "The Series of Social Sciences," 1965, No. 2, pp. 54-62; *The Early Territory of the Albanians in the Balkan Peninsula in the Light of Language and Place Names*, Ibidem, 1962, No. 1, pp. 219-226; *Some Fundamental Problems of the Ancient History of the Albanian Language*, "The 1st Conference of Albanological Studies" (November 13-21, 1962), Tirana 1965, pp. 89-105; *Illyrian and Albanian*, Tirana 1969, pp. 41-52; *The Problem of the Place of the Formation of the Albanian Language*, "The Assembly of Illyrian Studies," II, pp. 7-26.

\*\* See W. Chimočovski, *The Origin of the Albanian Language*, Bulletin of the State University of Tirana, Series of Social Sciences, 1968, 1, pp. 32-45; V. Pisani, *L'albanais et les autres langues indo-européennes*, "Saggi di linguistica storica — Scritti...", Torino 1959, pp. 94-114; *The Illyrians in Italy*, "Philological Studies," 1972, 4, pp. 65-74; *Gli Illirii in Italia*, "Studia albanica," 1972, 2, pp. 259-268.

1,000 altogether) and three or four glosses. In addition to these there are the materials from Messapian which, despite the reservations of some students today, is generally considered to be Illyrian. From this we have about 450 names of people and places and a number of short texts. Attempts have been made to enrich this fund by identifying Illyrian words in the body of Greek and Latin, southern and northern Italian and the dialects of the zone of the Alps. In this way material has been collected from which it is possible to form an idea of the vocabulary of Illyrian, its phonetic system and, to some extent, its word-formation and to make some comparisons with other languages.

Hence, we have some materials on which we can base ourselves to make comparisons and examine the nature of Illyrian-Albanian relationships. There are also other linguistic arguments which permit us to draw valuable conclusions on this problem, not to mention the historical geographical factor, that the present-day Albanians inhabit a territory which in ancient times was inhabited by the Illyrians, about whom history does not mention any important movement of population which could be linked with the immigration of Albanians, any influx of them in Late Antiquity or the Middle Ages, as some claim without any basis.

There are many different facts and arguments which support and reinforce the thesis of the Illyrian origin of the Albanians. They have been mentioned and elaborated upon

more than once in the works of Prof. E. Çabej. We shall try to present them in a summarized form.

Among the facts that indicate the origin of the Albanian language from Illyrian the following can be mentioned:

a — the Illyrian-Albanian continuity established on the basis of the connection of the national name of the Albanians in the Middle Ages (in Byzantine sources “Arbanoi,” “Arbanitai,” the country “Arbanon”; in Latin sources “Albanenses, Arbanenses”; in Albanian “arbër, arbëresh, arbënor, arbëror”) with the name “Albanoi” (an Illyrian tribe in the vicinity of Durrës);

b — the many coincidences and similarities between Illyrian words, or Illyrian relics in other languages, and Albanian words, which have been pointed out by a great number of scholars;

c — the parallels and similarities between the phonetic systems of Illyrian and Albanian;

d — the close similarity of their word-forming systems and a group of word-forming means, mainly suffixes, common to both languages.

e — the presence in the Albanian language of a number of borrowings from ancient Greek, mainly from the northern dialect Doric, and, at the same time, the important place which elements borrowed from Latin have in the Albanian language, which shows that the forefathers of the Albanians lived since ancient times on territories north of those inhabited by the Greeks, and that they experienced for

centuries the powerful political, cultural and linguistic pressure of Latin on those territories in which the Illyrians are known to have lived in Antiquity;

f — the preservation of a great number of toponyms, mainly Illyrian — names of cities, rivers and mountains — from ancient times to our days in the Albanian territories, and what is more important, generally in a form that corresponds to the phonetic development of the Albanian language, which indicates that at all times these names have been used by Albanians and not by another people;

g — the continued use among the present-day Albanians of some personal names from Illyrian anthroponymy, such as *Dassius*, *Dassus* — in Albanian *Dash*; *Bardus*, *Bardulis*, *Bardyllis* — in Albanian *Bardhi*.

h — the existence of a relatively rich Albanian maritime terminology connected both with the fauna and flora, and with navigation and fishing, which is evidence that Albanians inhabited the coast from the most ancient times.

In order to make the arguments in support of the origin of Albanian from Illyrian clearer, let us dwell a little on some of these facts.

Since the time of Hahn (1854), in some cases even before him, many scholars have tried to explain the meaning of many Illyrian proper names by means of the Albanian language, Albanian roots and words have been compared with Illyrian roots and words drawn from Illyrian toponyms, anthroponyms, ethnonyms, or words from ancient languages,

such as Greek and Latin, or the current dialects of Italy and the Alpine zone, which have been defined as or are supposed to have been Illyrian. In this work by many generations of scholars, there are weaknesses and shortcomings, and often a lack of strict scientific criteria. However, it is unreasonable to reject everything done in this field, without acknowledging that it has any value. The hypercritical stand of certain present-day linguists, some of whom go so far as to think that this work must begin again from scratch, without taking account of anything that has been said so far, is unacceptable. A critical examination of all this work is indispensable, subjecting it to stricter requirements, but without *a priori* scepticism, without necessarily putting everything in doubt, while establishing the study on more reliable scientific criteria. Both in this examination, and in the extension of information through more detailed research in the future, account must always be taken of the chronology of the linguistic development, without absolutely equating words of Illyrian with the new, evolved forms of Albanian, but making extensive use of the method of the reconstruction of the most ancient forms on the basis of comparisons within and outside the language.

Below we present some of the many comparisons that have been made hitherto between Illyrian names and their equivalent Albanian words.

Illyrian: *Bardus*, *Bardyllis*, *Skenobardus*, mesap. *Barzides*, *Barzidihi* Albanian *i bardhë*,

*Bardhi*; Illyrian *Bardibalus*, Albanian *balë*; Illyrian *Bistum*, Albanian *bisht*; Illyrian (mons.) *Borea*, *Boreas*, Albanian *borë*; Illyrian *Brindia*, *Brendesio*, mesap. *brenton* (= the head of a deer), Albanian *bri-ni*; Illyrian *Brigeste*, Albanian *bigë*; Illyrian *Dardania* (as a territory), its inhabitants — *Dardani*, names of persons *Dardanus*, *Dardana*, toponyms *Dardas*, *Derdas*, the town *Dardapara*, Albanian *dardhë* an appellative and the name for many villages; Illyrian *Dalmatia/Delmatia* (territory), its inhabitants — *Dalmatae/Delmatae*, *Delmion*, *Delminion*, Albanian *dele*, *delme*, *delmer*; Illyrian *Dassus*, *Dassius*, *Dazos*, *Dassaretae*, Albanian *dash*; Illyrian *Dimallum*, *Maluntum*, the town *Malvesa*, Albanian *mal* (this being a root which appears also in other linguistic territories); Illyrian *Pelagonia*, the inhabitants *Pelagones*, Albanian *pellgl*; Illyrian *Ulcinium*, *Ulcissia* (castra), *Ulcirus*, Albanian *ulk*; Illyrian *Vendes*, *Vendenis*, Albanian *vend*, etc.

Amongst the words from Latin and ancient Greek, which have been identified as Illyrian or which have been compared with Albanian words, we mention: Δίζα (=dhi) (goat), Albanian *dhizë* (=kec) (kid); λάρος (=pulëbardhë (seagull), Albanian *larë* (markings on animals or birds — piebald); Latin *mannuns* (=pony), Albanian *mâz/mëz*, *mëzat*; Latin *barobaronis* (— uncouth or stupid person), the ancient Albanian word *bëruo bruo* (=grass); etc. From Illyrian relics in the dialects of Italy and the Alpine zone: the Lombardian dialect *palta*, the Trieste dialect *paltan* (=mud), ancient Dalmatian *balta* (=wet), Albanian *baltë*; the Lombardian



dialect and Rome dialect *ber*, the Piemonte dialect *bero* (=ram), Albanian *berr*; the Alpine dialect *loba*, *lauba*, Albanian *lopë*; the Engadise dialect *manz* (=ox), Albanian *mâz*, *mëzat*; Italian of Puglia *karparo* (=hard stone which serves as building material), Albanian *karpë* (=crag, rock), etc.

A task which must be accomplished as quickly as possible is to gather up all these materials and observations, doing a detailed critical examination of the comparisons that have been made and the similarities found, and of the opinions that have been expressed about them, in order to determine what is well-based and what must be done in the future to provide the scholars with a body of material as complete and reliable as possible. Through a more careful examination of the Illyrian material, after preliminary philological work which will permit its original form to emerge from its Latin or Greek overlay, further comparison may be added to those made hitherto. Let us give some examples which should be examined. Procopius Caesarensis mentions the castles *Gurasson* and *Gurbikon* in Dardania and the station *Gurbita* in Tabula Peutingeriana. As can be seen, their common root is *gur* which leads to the Albanian inherited word *gur* which several experts have described as very ancient, indeed pre-Indo-European. The name of the Illyrian town Bunnus (of Stefan Bizantini) can be compared with the Albanian word with an Indo-European root, *bun-i* (=huts of herdsmen; small cottages of unhewn stones), etc.

A number of phonetic similarities and analogies of a specific of a more general character between Illyrian and Albanian have been discovered in the fundamental characteristics of the sounds system or in the development of special sounds.

The most recent studies have shown that in the division of the Indo-European languages into *kentum* and *satem* as to the reflection of the palatal glottal consonants, Albanian and the Illyrian do not belong to two different groups, as some scholars thought in the past, because the Illyrian, too, is a satem language or because together with Albanian it should be excluded from the above traditional grouping.

Similarities between Albanian and Illyrian are observed in their reflection of a series of sounds, vowels and consonants, of the common Indo-European languages, as for example, the short Indo-European *o* with the *a*; the Indo-European aspirated sonorous occlusive consonants with non aspirated consonants (of the *bh* with *b*, of the *dh* with *d*, of the *gh* with *g*), these being coincidences which are observed in other languages; the Indo-European labiovelars before the open vowels (*i*, *e*) and the closed vowels (*a*, *o*, *u*) the syllabic *l*, of developments of *ti* into *s*, of *di* into *z*, in the place of the accent, etc.

With the exception of some very short fragments from the Illyrian of Italy, Messapian, we do not have any connected text from Illyrian. Therefore, we are unable to know its morphology. However, we have ample information on

its word-formation. Judging from the material available, in this language the formation with suffixes predominates. Compound words are not lacking but are used much less. In Albanian too, formation with prefixes and suffixes is used more than compounds.

Various scholars have drawn attention to the prefixes and suffixes of Illyrian, some of which have been related to prefixes and suffixes of Albanian. There is a series of similarities and analogies between these two languages in the formation of names, both in the ways they are formed and in their semantic values. About 15 such isoglosses have been defined. Some of them are more or less specific while others, of a more general character, appear in other languages, too, but examined alongside the former, these too, assume value and weight. Thus, in the Illyrian language the suffix *at* appears in the names of inhabitants: *Olciniatae*, *Olcinium*, *Docleatea* and *Docleates*, *Doclea*, *Labeates*, *Sardeates*, *Sarda*, etc.; in people's names: *Glevatus* and *Clevata*, *Pleuralus*; in toponymy: *Aemate*, *Gedate*. In Albanian the corresponding suffix *at* appears in brother's names (*Demat*, *Zekat*), in names of villages and other toponyms (*Luzat*, *Dukat*, *Bushat*). Other similarities and parallelisms: Illyrian (*e*) *ste*, which shows place in Albanian (*e*) *shtë*, in the same way; Illyrian *Palaeste*, *Ter-geste*, in Albanian *ullishtë*, *breshtë*, *v(ë) reshtë*, etc., Illyrian — *to* — /*ta* —: *Dasto*, (Messapian) *Daxta*, *Ditus*, *Dita* in Albanian *-të*; *i thatë*, *i gurtë*, *i ftohtë* *i dytë*; Illyrian *-ano* and *-ino* to show the tribe and the inhabitant: *Dardanus*,

*Dardana, Dardani, Albanoi, Scodrina*, in Albanian *-an, -in*, showing the inhabitants of a place: *shkodrani, kasharini* (=inhabitant of the Kashar village); Illyrian *-inium: Ulcinium*, in Albanian *-inj* to form the plural form or to give the collective meaning: *thelpinj*; Illyrian *-ak-* to indicate the inhabitant or pertaining to; *Paserentiaci*, Albanian *-ak* in the same meaning: *durrsak, ulqinak, Muzak, etc.*, etc.<sup>1</sup> Some coincidence of prefixes has been discovered too, such as *li* in Illyrian *Liburni* compare with *Burni*), Albanian *lë: lëfyt — fyt*.

The Illyrian names have been transmitted to us in Latinized or Greek forms having entered into the grammatical paradigms of these languages. It is possible that some form which avoids these paradigms might present the Illyrian form. This may be so of the form with *-i* in the nominative case of the word *Scupi* alongside *Scupis*. About such forms and for forms with *-a*, such as *Scodra, Eqrem Çabej* expressed the opinion that possibly the suffixed article has emerged in their terminal vowels. As is known, this article is ancient in Albanian, there is indirect evidence of it since the Roman times, and it may have existed in Illyrian, too.

The links of Albanian with Thracian (or with Daco-Mysian) are not so numerous and important as to indicate a parental relationship between them, as has been thought by some supporters of the Thracian thesis. From comparison of the Thracian linguistic material with Albanian it emerges that along with some similarities and common lexical

and phonetic features there are distinctions which are even more numerous and of greater importance. We have other evidence, though indirect, in the fact that there is no complete concordance between Albanian and the Gëto-Dacian substratum of Romanian.

These facts, arguments and evidence strongly support the thesis of the Illyrian origin of Albanian and the Albanians, and consequently, the thesis of their autochthony on the territories they inhabit today. Considered in their entirety and in their interconnections with one another, they assume great weight and power to convince.

Along with the distinctions which exist between Illyrian and Thracian, as two separate languages, phonetic and word-formation similarities and several lexical isoglosses have been observed, too, and this has made some scholars speak of them as related languages.

When we say that Albanian is derived from Illyrian and not from Thracian, this does not mean that the Albanian language has no relation whatsoever with Thraco-Dacian. A number of scholars while supporting the thesis of the Illyrian origin of Albanian, have accepted or have not failed to mention a number of similarities and analogies in various fields between the Albanian and Thraco-Dacian languages. N. Jokl\* pointed out various links of Albanian with both Illyrian and Thracian. These he explained with the great similarity of the Illyrian and Thracian languages, which

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\* N. Jokl, "Albaner," "Reallexicon der Vorgeschichte," I, 1924, p. 96; "Illyruer," Ibidem, 1926, pp. 37-48.

led him to consider these two languages as belonging to one larger linguistic unit.

Illyrian and Thracio-Dacian were neighbouring languages geographically, in continuous intense contacts over centuries, mutually influencing and interacting with each other, especially in the border territories.

Various scholars have pointed out a series of Thracio-Illyrian lexical isoglosses. Some Thracian words and names have been compared with Albanian words and attempts have been made to explain them by this means. Thus, the word *amalusta* (=daisy) with the word *ambël manteia mantia* (=bramble) with the word *man, skiare* (=thistle) with the word *shqerr, pino* with the word *pi*. The name of the Carpathian Mountains, *Karpates*, with its ethnonyms *Karpoi* and *Karpiloi*, have been related to the Albanian *karpë* (=crag, rock); the ethnonym *Buroi*, the anthroponym *Buris* and the first parts of the names *Buridava* and *Burebista* have been compared to the Albanian *burrë*; the second part of the anthroponym *Decabalus* with the Albanian *ballë*, the first part of *Drizupara* with the Albanian *drizë*, etc.

The tables compiled by the Balkanologist and expert of Indo-European languages, V. Georgiev, comparing various Indo-European sounds with their forms in Albanian and Daco-Mysian are not convincing overall, and even less convincing is the conclusion he draws that these tables clearly demonstrate that the Albanian represents a development of the Daco-Mysian phonematic system. However, phonetic isoglosses between Albanian

and Thracian (or Daco-Mysian) can be seen. In these, however, as well as in the lexical similarities, Illyrian too, frequently takes part.

We might say that there are elements of Thracian in Albanian, but further work is required in order to determine their weight and the linguistic and historical conditions of their integration with any degree of certainty. The relationship of Albanian to Thracian requires further elucidation, first, of the relations between Illyrian and Thracian (or Daco-Mysian), through a comparative study which brings out their similarities and differences, which should be well weighed up and their causes and sources discovered (whether they result from genealogical relationship or from geographical proximity and the historical circumstances).

Attention must also be paid to the pre-historic, pre-Illyrian, proto-Indo-European or non-Indo-European substrata, which might have influenced Illyrian, and through it, left their mark on the Albanian language, too. This is the complex of questions linked with the language that has been called "Pelasgian" and the so-called "Mediterranean" substratum, for which some have other names. These problems of linguistic palaeontology which present great difficulties, must be looked into carefully identifying the respective relics and defining the source and the circumstances under which they spread.

3. *The place of formation of the Albanian language.* Important problems for the history of the Albanian language and the Albani-

an people are the place of formation of this language and this people. These matters are closely linked with the problem of their source and origin and the time at which the process of formation of the Albanian language and its development to the stage of a national language took place.

Copious scientific literature exists on the problem of the place which was the cradle of the Albanian language and Albanian people. Various, sometimes contradictory, views have been expressed even disregarding the utterly amateurish and fanciful opinions which present the Albanians as coming to their present territories in the Middle Ages, from countries outside the Balkans, such as Scotland, the Caucasus, etc. Two different main theses have been expressed about the place of formation of the Albanian people and their language. The supporters of the first thesis place the cradle of the Albanians in the territories where they live today, either on the relatively narrow territories of Dardania and Mat, or on a more extensive territory, while the supporters of the second thesis, place it deeper within the Balkans, close to or directly bordering on the cradle of the Romanians. E. Çabej pointed out more than once that the territories of the Albanians have shrunk, not expanded, over the ages, that the cradle of the Albanian people and of the Albanian language could not have been a small, circumscribed, isolated territory. On the basis of linguistic information and arguments he has shown that the Albanians are autochthonous



on their present territories.

In order to find the correct answer, the process of the formation of the Albanian language must be examined from all sides and aspects, taking into consideration the linguistic, historical, archaeological and ethnographic evidence. The formation of the Albanian language is closely linked with the process of formation of the Albanian people and has continued for a long time. Linguistic and other evidence shows that it took place on an extensive territory, coinciding more or less with the present Albanian territories.

Such a protracted and complex process could not have taken place except in certain given social conditions. It should not be conceived in a simplified, static way, as merely the preservation of the language and the ethnic character of the local population of some small, isolated country which, because of geographical conditions, remained unaffected by the steamroller of Romanization and the migrations of various tribes and populations that poured into the Balkans at the end of the antiquity and the beginning of the Middle Ages. This process should be regarded as a further development, conditioned by the historical circumstances and transformations, as a transition from one situation to another situation. In these conditions the formation of the Albanian people and the Albanian language could not have taken place in a restricted remote mountainous zone like Mat, inhabited by culturally backward herdsmen unaffected by the Roman penetration due to

natural difficulties, as the German historian, G. Stadtmüller, claimed. Moreover the special features that, according to this author, made Mat the cradle of the Albanians, do not exist in this district. Mat is not so isolated that it remained as unaffected by Romanization as has been claimed. Valleys and passes link it with the neighbouring territories; even to this day it has a few Roman toponyms such as Vinjalle, Fulqet, etc. Because of its peripheral position in the Illyrian world, Dardania could not have served as the primary or only centre of the formation of the Albanian people and the Albanian language, as N. Jokl and other scholars have thought, either. A series of linguistic, historical, archaeological or other facts and arguments, prove that the Albanian language was formed on an extensive territory. The ancient local toponymy, preserved to this day, in all the territories inhabited by the Albanian population, comprising the names of cities, rivers, mountains, from the northernmost to the southernmost extremity of the country, proves this. An important achievement of the Albanian science of linguistics and the great merit of Prof. E. Çabej has been the refutation of the assertions of those who repeated the claim that the toponymy of the present territories inhabited by the Albanian people allegedly shows its Slav origin, which has led some of them to go so far as to say that the Albanians came to their present territories after the Slavs. On the contrary, through precise analyses it has been shown and proved that the phonetic development of these topo-

nyms from their ancient to their present forms has proceeded according to the phonetic laws of the Albanian language and not of another language. Moreover, it has been proved that a good part of the Slavonic forms of these toponyms originated from the respective Albanian forms because it is impossible to explain their phonetic mutations except through the Albanian language.

E. Çabej has analysed a series of toponyms developed according to the phonetic laws of Albanian, and these are to be found in all the Albanian territories: in Dardania — present-day Kosova, in part of Macedonia and some other border zone. For example *Scupi: Shkup, Naissus — Nish; Astibus — Shtip, Scardus (mons) — Sharr*; in Northwestern Albania: *Scodra — Shkodra; Drinus — Drimon — Drin; Barbanna — Buna; Lissus — Lesh; Mathis — Mat*; north of Shkodra: *Ulcinium — Ulqin*; in Central Albania: *Dyrrachium — Durrës, Isamnus — Ishëm; Skampis, Skampinus — Shkumbin; Albanoi — Arbëri*; in Southern Albania: *Aulon — Vlora; Thyamis — Çam, Çamëria*, etc. There are other names from Antiquity the evolution of which into their present forms can be explained by the rules of the Albanian language, such as: *Tomaros — Tomorr; Axoas — Vjosa; Pistum — Bisht*, etc.

G. Stadtmüller opposed the inclusion of Dardania in the territory of the formation of the Albanian language and the Albanian people, claiming that it was entirely Romanized in the Roman and Byzantine period. This assertion does not correspond to the truth.

The autochthonous population of Dardania still retained its individuality during the second half of the 3rd century of our era. If there was Romanization, it was not uniform everywhere and did not penetrate all strata to the same degree. Studies have shown that the Romanization was weak in Dardania. The above-mentioned toponyms of this territory and the neighbouring zones are evidence of this.

The frequency of the ancient toponyms developed according to the historical phonetics of the Albanian language, in the area around Shkodra, refutes the claims of Seliščev and I. Popović that the Slavs found not an Albanian, but a completely Romanized population there.

A noteworthy fact is the almost completely native toponymy of Central Albania, which has very few toponyms of foreign origin. Here there are many toponyms such as *Arbër*, *Arbëni*, *Arbanë*, *Prroi Arbanës*, etc. which are identical or similar to medieval names of the Albanian people and Albania (*Arbën*, *Arbëni*, *Arbani*, *arbënor*, *arbënes*, “Αλβανοί,” and “Αρβανῆται” mentioned by the Byzantine chroniclers of the 11th and 12th centuries; *Arbanenses*, *Albanenses* in the Latin sources, etc.) and the name “Αλβανοί,” of an Illyrian tribe of the 2nd century in the zone near Dürres.

4. *Time of the formation of the Albanian language.* In the long and complex process of the formation of the Albanian language, several stages which mark its different levels can be distinguished. The lack of direct evidence creates a number of difficulties. However,

through retrospective analysis of linguistic facts, examination of archaeological and historical information, a base can be established to determine the time of the formation of the Albanian language and its stages.

We can distinguish an initial phase, characterized by the encounter of Illyrian with Latin and its first contacts with Byzantine Greek and other languages in the conditions of Roman domination and the beginning of Byzantine rule, as well as the various influxes in the time of migrations of peoples. This is the phase of the transition from Illyrian to Albanian and the formation of early Albanian. Illyrian stood up well to the political and cultural Romanization of the state. It emerged triumphant. A large number of Latin words were integrated into it, though the result was not a Latin language, but an independent Indo-European language with its own grammatical structure developed from the structure of southern Illyrian. The starting point of this phase can be taken as about the beginning of the 2nd century of our era when, after crushing the great Illyrian uprisings of the first century, Rome completely consolidated its rule in Southern Illyria. This first phase may be extended up to the end of the 6th century or the beginning of the 7th century. From comparison of the Indo-European and Latin elements of Albanian, we see that along with the continuation of some former rules, new phonetic and morphological rules begin to operate. At the end of this phase, early Albanian, which resulted from the further development of Il-

lyrian, was completely formed with its own individuality and features. It reacted as a relatively united entity, defined and crystallized to a good level, against any influence exerted on it from outside.

The period from the 7th century up to the middle of the 11th century is the second phase of the formation of the Albanian language and the Albanian people, the phase of the consolidation and crystallization of this language to a higher level in new political and social conditions. Our historians have pointed out that the period from the 7th to the 12th centuries constitutes a key link in the history of the economic, social and ethnic-cultural development of the Albanian people.\*

In the 6th century the Slavs poured into the Balkans. Beginning from the 7th century, some of them established themselves in Albania. Later, from the middle of the 9th century, the Bulgarian Kingdom occupied most of Southern and Central Albania, which, with some interruptions and changes in its extension, it kept under its domination for about two centuries. More or less at the same period Northern Albania fell under the domination of the Serbian state of Raša. The reinforcement of the Slav element in the Albanian territories through these occupations, the Slav political and military domination for long periods, the pressure exerted by Slavonic languages as official languages, brought about the cre-

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\* A. Buda, *On Some Questions of the History of the Formation of the Albanian People, of their Language and Culture*, "Historical Studies," 1980, 1, p. 172.

ation of an extensive Slav toponymy and the penetration of a stratum of Slav words and a small number of Slav suffixes into the Albanian language. Since Albanian was a completely crystallized language by this time they did not bring about changes in it and did not occupy a fundamental place in it. Although not few in numbers, the borrowings from Slavonic in the Albanian language are not of a general use, except for a relatively small part of them. The majority have a dialectical character and are used in some mainly peripheral dialects, which have been in continuous contact with the Slav-speaking territories. A good part of them are synonyms, emerge along with words from other sources or have assumed nuances of value for effect or style.

Several, mainly Slav, scholars have tried to attribute to this element a greater weight than it has in reality in the Albanian language, in order to present the factors and the circumstances of its penetration into our language in a non-objective and, at times, distorted light. The number of borrowings and toponyms from Slavonic is exaggerated, efforts are made to present all of them as having entered Albanian early, linking them with the first centuries of the Slav-Albanian contacts and the first Slav settlements in Albania, without taking into account the consequences of the long political domination of the Southern Slav states in the Albanian territories. True there are early Slavisms and toponyms which have their origin in the first Slav settlements in Albania, but the overwhelming bulk of them

belong to later periods, to the periods of Bulgarian-Macedonian and Serb dominations, and the many-sided influences exerted by their state apparatus or continuous contacts as neighbours.

In this field Albanian science is faced with the task of carrying out extensive studies in order to give the complex of problems about the Slavo-Albanian linguistic relationship in the Middle Ages, the necessary comprehensive treatment to clarify them objectively on scientific criteria and to combat the distortions that have been accumulated and still circulate in some scientific circles.

In the second phase of the development of the process of formation of the Albanian language, some of its phonetic rules are replaced with new rules, which operate in the integration of Slavonic, Greek-Byzantine and, later, Romanian elements into the Albanian language. These internal changes must be traced and defined accurately as regards their chronological order, the circumstances in which they were adopted, and the consequences they had for the language.

In this second phase, not only are there changes in the internal development, and the external contacts with other languages, but there is also a development of the Albanian language, which gains a higher functional role, becoming a means of communication of ever larger geographical, regional and inter-regional communities, parallel with the process of the further development of the Albanian ethnos. By the end of this phase, the Albanian



language is the distinguishing feature of a not small ethnic entity and now serves as a means of communication for a nation — the Albanian nation, which is crystallized and consolidated more and more in its general outlines and which, in the 12th century, even has its own state, the state of the Arbën.

5. *Latin elements in the Albanian language.*

For more than eight centuries on end Illyrian was subjected to the direct and powerful pressure of the Latin language. From the occupation of Southern Illyria, in the second half of the 2nd century before our era until the end of the 4th century when the Roman Empire was divided into the Western Empire and the Eastern Empire, Roman domination prevailed uninterruptedly over the Illyrian tribes with all the consequences that its economic, cultural and political activity brought. The Latin language continued as the official language of the Eastern Empire, too, in which Southern Illyria was included, for two centuries after the division. Frederick Engels (in his work "The Origin of the Family, Private Property and the State," Tirana 1970, p. 223) says: "The levelling place of the Roman world power had been passing for centuries over all the Mediterranean countries. Where the Greek language offered no resistance, all national languages gave way to corrupt Latin; ...there were no more Gauls, Iberians, Ligurians, Noricans, all had become Romans." Greek managed to escape the Romanization in Europe, as a consequence of the superiority of Greek culture and the prestige this

language enjoyed through this fact. Illyrian, which continued to exist and developed further into Albanian as a separate language, was not Latinized, either. The opinion that, as a result of the powerful pressure of Latin, Albanian was formed as a semi-Romanized language, was refuted at the end of the 19th century by the Danish expert on Indo-European languages, Holger Pedersen, supported later by N. Jokl and others, including E. Çabej. Today this opinion could be expressed partly or indirectly only by some uninformed linguist. This “miracle” of the non-Romanization of Illyrian was no accident. This was not a case of some very small tribe or ethnic group, hidden in some remote, enclosed zone inaccessible to foreign military, political, economic, cultural and linguistic influences. We are referring to a population, established on an extensive territory in a key part of the Balkans on the eastern shores of the Adriatic, and which attracted the attention of Rome very early and became an objective of its expansionist ambitions. In order to understand this historical phenomenon, which at first sight might seem inexplicable, we must bear in mind, first of all, that Southern Illyria, which occupied more or less the present-day Albanian territories, had achieved a high level of socio-economic development and that the Illyrian tribes offered a staunch resistance to the Roman conquest and the subsequent process of Romanization. The geographical configuration played a supplementary and partial role.

The widespread opinion that after the 3rd

century, there were no longer Illyrians, but a completely Romanized population does not correspond to the truth. Various evidence and facts contradict this idea. Illyrian names continue to appear in inscriptions in the 4th century. The Latin writer of Dalmato-Illyrian origin, Hieronymus (4th-5th century), affirms that in his time in Dalmatia and neighbouring Pannonia a barbarian language not Latin, that is, the native language was spoken.\* Despite the geographical proximity of Rome and the long duration of the Roman occupation, Romanization did not operate with the same intensity everywhere and all the time in Illyria and did not have the same results everywhere. The historian of ancient Rome, T. Mommsen, points out the intensity of the Romanization of Dalmatia as against the limited scale of its development in the neighbouring senatorial province of Macedonia, which included a good part of the present-day Albanian territories. Prof. A. Buda quite correctly points out: "The cultural assimilation in Southern Illyria was a restricted phenomenon at different levels depending on the social situation and the geographical position of the subject population. In the conditions of the resistance of the exploited masses, Romanization could not lead to the assimilation of the Illyrian language and culture of the southern territories on a mass scale, even though, in intensive contacts with the culture of the Empire, they acquired new elements which, while enrich-

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\* C. Patsch, *The Illyrians*, 1923, p. 69.

ing them, did not alter them fundamentally or disrupt the unified appearance of the material and spiritual culture.”\* The language of the people remained Illyrian. For the above reasons and others that must be investigated and defined, it emerged triumphant from its long and hard battle with Latin. It retained its own individual features, except that many Latin lexical elements as well as a number of word-forming elements, mainly suffixes, were introduced into it.

When it commenced the process of its development as the Albanian language, the Southern Illyrian language had attained a degree of crystallization sufficient to permit it to react more or less uniformly to the pressure of Latin and contacts with other languages subsequently.

Since the pressure of Latin on Albanian continued for a period of several centuries, it is understandable that the Latinisms in the Albanian language appear in forms which belong to different time stratifications. Many of them represent an earlier stage than that of the Latin elements in Romanian and, at times, even earlier than that of those elements in Romance languages. This shows that they entered the Southern Illyrian language early, some of them in the time of the Republic, therefore, they have retained in Albanian their earliest Latin form, unaffected by later innovations. Thus, the glottal consonant *c* (*k*) has remained glottal even preceding *e*, *i*, pathatalized in Al-

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\* A. Buda, op. cit., p. 171.

banian (*cicer qiqër, cepa: qepa*); unlike what has occurred in Romanian and Italian which reflect its later transition into affricative Latin (*cepa: Romanian ceapa, Italian cipella from + cepulla*). From this it emerges that the ancestors of the Albanians came into contact with the Latins very early, being in close relations with them for centuries on end. This must have been because they occupied more or less their present habitat since ancient times. The differences observed between the Latin elements of Romanian and of Albanian rule out or make unlikely the possibility that the Albanian language was formed in the internal part of the Balkans, near the cradle of the ancestors of the Romanians or that its origin was from Daco-Mysian. Apart from the earlier forms preserved in it, it has been observed that the Latin borrowings in Albanian are most frequently primary words, whereas the Latin words in Romanian are derivatives of them. The latter may have their source in a later stratum, in a more evolved and popular stage of the language, whereas the former may have a more literary character. It has been pointed out that Albanian has more literary Latin forms than the Romanian language, or even the Romance languages; for example the Albanian words *qere, faqe* for the Latin ones *caries, facies*, whereas the respective Romanian words *carie, fata* lead to the Latin forms with *-a* ending, which are not always reflected in the literary language (*caria, facia*).\* If the general-

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\* H. Mihaescu, *Les éléments de la langue albanaise*, "Revue des Etudes Sud-Esteuropéennes," Bucharest

ly more literary character of the Latin borrowings in Albanian is confirmed, this may throw some light on the circumstances and manner of their penetration into the Illyrian language. Does this fact indicate the weak Romanization of the Illyrians, with knowledge of Latin by only limited strata of learned people, and that the Latinisms in Albanian do not result from the all-sided intensive relations of the broad masses of Latins and Illyrians?

From their number, the extent of their usage, and their radiation, Latin words occupy first place among the borrowings in Albanian. The overwhelming majority of them belong to the general language, some of them to the main fund of words. The place they occupy is explained with the strong pressure exerted for a long period by Latin as the state language, as the language of economic and trade relations, as the language of culture and in the final phase as the language of the Catholic Church.

From the great changes which the Latinisms have undergone according to the phonetic and grammatical laws of the Albanian language, it is often difficult to distinguish a Latinism in the Albanian language from a native Indo-European word or from some specific or more general Latin-Albanian iso-

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1966. 1-2, pp. 5-33. See also E. Çabei, *Zur Charakteristik der lateinischen Lehnwörter im Albanischen*, "Revue de linguistique," Bucharest 1962, pp. 161-199, *The Characteristics of the Latin Loan-Words in the Albanian Language*, "Philological Studies," 1974, 2, pp. 13-51; S. Anamali, *Archaeology and Agriculture*, Tirana 1980, pp. 55-63.

gloss. The failure of Latin to penetrate the grammatical structure of Albanian, the latter's ability to preserve its originality and individuality as a separate Indo-European language refute the unfounded opinion that the Illyrians were completely Romanized, apart from some tribes living in remote places in the mountains and that later, from early medieval times, this large Romanized population was Albanized by a minority of Albanians who came down from the mountains. Everything, including the language, indicates that Latin was always used along with the native language and that in the course of this simultaneous use they acted on each other, which brought about the penetration of words borrowed from Latin that the Albanian language has today. This is not a case of one language disappearing and its remnants surviving in the triumphant language, but of the operation of *ad stratum* and *superstratum*.

Despite the many important results that have been achieved in the study of Latinisms, there are still questions to be clarified and many facts to be gathered together. More light must be thrown on the process that occurred in the course of the joint use of the native language and Latin for centuries on end and the consequences of this must be defined; the distinguishing of Latinisms from the autochthonous Indo-European words on the one hand, and Italianisms, on the other hand, must be continued further, and this can be done more successfully now that our knowledge of the lexicon of Albanian is being continually en-

riched.

6. The ethnogenesis of the Albanians constitutes a major complex problem of our Albanological sciences, which calls for an extensive coordinated study in many disciplines. We must do our best to put into practice the instruction of the Party and Comrade Enver Hoxha that "the ethnogenesis of the Albanian people is a problem as important as it is complex, for the study of which the activation and collaboration of many scientific workers will be required." (Enver Hoxha, Works, vol. 23, p. 547, Alb. ed.).

It is up to our workers in historical, linguistic, archaeological and ethnographic studies to carry out even greater research activity of a higher level in order to respond properly to these tasks which the Party and Comrade Enver Hoxha set before us, so that the results achieved are carried further ahead.



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## **THE PROBLEM OF THE FORMATION OF THE ALBANIAN PEOPLE IN THE LIGHT OF ARCHAEOLOGICAL DATA**

The newest and no doubt most important aspect in the present stage of development of our medieval archaeology is that of research undertaken in recent years almost all over our country with the aim of unravelling the process of the formation of the Albanian people. This is a period about which there are few written documents (historical sources) and in which archaeological data assume particular value. The accumulation of a wealth of varied archaeological material together with new facts have made it possible to achieve a series of outstanding results in regard to this problem.

On the basis of these data this report will deal with the following problems: the culture of Late Antiquity and its unity (including early Roman provincial Byzantine influences), the early medieval Arbër culture, its distinctive features and component elements and their origin, the place and the time of the formation of this culture and the continuity of urban life from Antiquity to the Middle Ages. They constitute a great difficult, problem and the archaeological research is daily providing

clear evidence that the process of the formation of the Albanian people took place in the conditions of a development which was slow at first, but which assumed considerable proportions after the 8th century. The period of Late Antiquity was decisive in the history of the Southern Illyrians, a period when the process of the preservation of the material and spiritual culture occurred, while another process, that of the formation of the Albanian people, received its first impulses. This process took place in the framework of the late Roman Empire and, subsequently, the Byzantine Empire, and bears the seal of the time both from the historical and cultural aspects.

1. The increase in archaeological discoveries has brought about a change in the previous opinions concerning the period of late Antiquity in the Southern Illyrian territory and has imposed a new view of history. These discoveries have provided incontestable proofs of the Illyrian ethnic-cultural continuity in the provinces of Prevalitania, Dardania, New Epirus and Old Epirus, and of the presence of *a unitary culture* there at that time.

It is known that one of the most important consequences of the decay of the slave-owning system was the decline of cities and the ruralization of life, especially in the West. This phenomenon was felt in the eastern provinces of the Roman Empire, too. In the extensive Illyrian territories an appreciable increase of rural settlements can be seen from the evidence of the archaeological artefacts that appear in greater numbers in the period of Late

Antiquity than in the previous centuries. Of interest from this standpoint are the frequent discoveries of agricultural implements in the necropolises of these rural settlements. In our country this phenomenon is seen in the Coastal Lowlands, known earlier as a region of intensive urban development.\* The peasant population of these settlements now appears as a very active free peasantry. The crisis of the slave-owning system also exerted an influence on the interprovincial trade relations. They are now interrupted, and the Illyrian territory appears as an area independent of imports. Local handicraft production meets the demands of consumers, though, unlike that of the past, it is now small-scale artisan production.

In the long resistance to the Roman occupiers, the Illyrian peasant population displayed a stability in various fields of life. The end of the long domination of the Roman traditions in art, freed the local creative forces in the Southern Illyrian provinces from the fetters of this art. In connection with this revival of the local art in which ancient influences are apparent, some reliefs found in recent years are of great interest. They show working men, farmers and artisans, and are the work of folk craftsmen. These reliefs, discovered mainly in peasant settlements, are distinguished from their earlier counterparts by their composition, the shallow engraving of the stone, and, especially, the typically Illyrian dress of

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\* S. Anamali, *Archaeology and Agriculture*, Tirana 1980, pp. 55-63.

the human figures.\* This folk art proves that the Illyrian ethnic community never ceased to exist. The process of evolution of the Illyrian culture during the period of Late Antiquity followed a normal course.

Another fact must be added here: despite the all-round resistance to Romanization which was unable to lead to the assimilation of the Illyrian culture, as a result of continuous contacts with the culture of the Roman Empire, new elements entered the Illyrian culture, but the Illyrians remained a stable ethnic element.\*\*

A characteristic feature of the period of Late Antiquity was the fortification of some cities, but especially the reconstruction of castles on the coastal plains for military purposes. Examples are the fortresses of Skampini (Elbasan), Vigu (Shkodra), Paleokastra (Gjirokastra), etc. It has been claimed that their construction was dictated mostly by the need for defence against invasions by the Goths and other barbarians.\*\*\* While accepting this as correct, it must be added that these castles were built for another, no less important reason: to control the movements and uprisings of the local population, which, as frequent sources indicate, was opposed to the Roman occupation. Let us recall the up-

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\* S. Anamali, (*Archaeology and Agriculture*), Tirana 1980, pp. 64-67.

\*\* S. Anamali, *From the Illyrians to the Arbër*, "Studime Historike" No. 3, 1972, pp. 122-126.

\*\*\* A. Baçe, *Paleokastra Castle*, "Illyria," No. 2, p. 36.

rising of the Illyrian Taulanti in the year 395, which the Emperor Honorius put down sending against them the Visigoths led by Alaric.\*

The cities, in which the crisis of the slave-owning system made itself felt more severely and was accompanied with grave consequences, especially in the 4th century of our era, provide quite another picture. Nevertheless, it must be said that not all the cities of the Southern Illyrian provinces were ruined and abandoned by their inhabitants. The "elimination" of ancient cities was more intensive on the Adriatic coast, where the density of cities was relatively great. This is what happened to the big and famous city of Apollonia. After a thousand years' existence Apollonia became an episcopal centre, but having no economic role (the river Aoos had changed its course and flowed further to the south while the surrounding agricultural area had become a swamp), it turned into a "parasite" settlement which was gradually abandoned by its inhabitants. Other cities, such as Antigonea (today's Jerma in the vicinity of Gjirokastra), the city of Zgërdhesh (in Kruja district) and others were abandoned in this period.

In the 5th and 6th centuries the general situation of the Southern Illyrian provinces included in the Eastern Empire changed to some extent. There were still some cities which, favoured by their advantageous geographical positions, survived the crisis of the slave-own-

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\* Procopci Cesarensis, *De bello vandalico* III, 10-12 in the volume "The Illyrians and Illyria in the Ancient Authors," Tirana 1965, p. 431.

ing system in the 4th century and remained important fortified centres with reconstructed walls. These cities survived as a result of the growth of productive elements and the extension of their suburbs. Some of these cities like Shkodra, Lissus (Lezha), Antipatrea — Pulcheriopolis (Berat), Aulona — Hadrianopolis (Melan in Gjirokastra region), Onchesimoi (Saranda) and some others, situated on important land and sea routes, remained commercial and handicraft centres. Archaeological investigations have shown that below the city of Lissus at that time there was a suburb which, favoured by the presence of a main road which linked Dyrrachium with the cities of Dardania and by the navigation on the Drin River, became the biggest quarter of the city. Numerous archaeological discoveries in the castle of Berat show that Antipatrea-Pulcheriopolis was still a big centre in the 5th-6th centuries. Fragments of walls built in the period of Late Antiquity have been found under the medieval castle walls, while at several places inside the castle where excavations have been made, the ruins of buildings of that period have been found. Many fragments of pottery ware for daily use, table ware, cooking utensils and cellar pots have been found. Together with them work tools, household utensils and coins have been found in that cultural stratum.\*

Dyrrachium (Durrës), the capital of the

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\* H. Spahiv, *The Illyrian-Albanian City of Berat* (results of archaeological excavations), paper read at the scientific session of 1978.

province of New Epirus, was a big city in the period of Late Antiquity, too. The concentration of the provincial and military administration and religious institutions stimulated the development of various branches of the production of the city and its trade with the Illyrian hinterland. In Dyrrachium there were big imperial workshops producing bricks and tiles and decorative architectural sculptures, which supplied not only the city, but also an extensive region.\* This was the region called Dyrrachia which, according to Vebius Sequestris, a geographer of the 5th century, extended from the Mat River in the north to the Shkumbin in the south.\*\* This was a region inhabited by a compact Illyrian population that always defended the city and played an important role in the events of the 6th century and the beginning of the 7th century and which retained its links with Dyrrachium even in the Middle Ages. (Historical sources mention 30 castles protecting this city which extended to the north up to Ulqin). In the period of Late Antiquity Dyrrachium had a powerful system of defensive walls built by the emperor Anastas I, who originated from this city.\*\*\*

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\* K. Zheku, *Epigraphic Discoveries in the Encircling Walls of the Durrës Citadel*, "Monuments" No. 3, 1972, p. 35-46; Gj. Karaiskaj, *New Data on the Dating of Elbasan Castle*, "Monuments," No. 3, 1972, pp. 147-158.

\*\* Vebii Sequestris, *De fluminibus, fontibus, lacubus, nemoribus, paludibus, montibus, gentibus per litteras Tibullus*, Lipsiae, 1967, p. 6.

\*\*\* Gj. Karaiskaj — A. Baçe, *Durrës Castle and the Encircling System of Fortifications in Late Antiquity*, "Monuments," No. 9, 1975, pp. 5-23.

These walls and those built during the reign of the emperors Justin and Justinian were to remain the main basis of the city's defences all through the Middle Ages up till the Turkish invasion. Today the Durrës museum has the richest collection of paleo-Christian decorative architectural sculptures in our country: they are granite and marble columns and capitals, sometimes of very large dimensions, samples from Preconeses near Constantinople, as well as slabs and architraves carved with great skill, which formerly ornamented a series of monumental basilicas in the city and the surrounding district.\*

In the Southern Illyrian provinces there were cities which, although they continued to exist in Late Antiquity, underwent changes. There were cities which had shrunk to mere castles for strictly military-strategic purposes, and others which no longer had the former magnificent walls, or the ancient social buildings — with the exception of some church, and, more important, which had neither the power nor the economic means of the past and even their inhabited area was reduced, occupying only a small part of the territory of the ancient settlement. Such a scene has emerged from the ruins of the Illyrian city of Bylis, discovered on the hill above the village of Hekal in Mallakastra, in Fier district.

According to the guidebook of the 6th century, Syneodemus of Hierocles, there

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\* S. Anamali, *Dyrrachium in the 5th and 6th Century of Our Era*, paper read at the scientific session of 1979 in Durrës (manuscript).



were 20 settlements regarded as cities at that time in the Illyrian provinces.\* This number coincides with the data given by the contemporary religious councils, since almost all the big cities were at the same time episcopal centres. Among them were Scadra, Lissus, Dyrachium, Scampini, Scupi (Shkup), Ulpiana (in the vicinity of Prishtina), Lyhni (Ohri), Apollonia, Bylis, Amantina (Ploça of Vlora), Aulona, Buthrot (Butrint), Onhezmi, Foinike (Finiq of Saranda), and Hadrianopolis-Justinopolis.

Archaeological excavations have revealed an aspect, unknown until recently, about this territory where, apart from military-civil constructions, there was extensive creative activity in the field of building monumental churches, which can be seen in their architecture, mosaics and decorative structural forms. Amongst the new discoveries belonging to the 5th and 6th century let us mention the basilica of Saranda, built inside the city walls, with 150 sq. metres of multi-coloured mosaic covering the floors, the basilica of Ballsh (in the Fier district) with a wealth of architectonic-decorative sculptures, and the basilica of Arapaj (in the Dürres region), which appears to be one of the largest buildings of the Christian cult ever discovered in our country.\*\*

The number of ruined paleo-Christian

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\* Hierocles, *Synecdemus*, pp. 651-656, "The Illyrians and Illyria in the Ancient Authors," pp. 455, 456.

\*\* S. Hidri, *A Basilica of the 6th-12th Century of Arapaj Village* (Durrës), paper read at the scientific session of Saranda (June 14, 1982).

basilicas discovered in recent years in our country has greatly increased. On the coast at lowlands and in the hinterland, in cities and their surrounding districts, there are ruins of more than 30 paleo-Christian basilicas. These buildings were linked with the ruling circles.

Besides the towns that were episcopal seats, there were many fortified towns and castles, some of them connected with the military interests of the Byzantine Empire, but most of them were peasant settlements, engaged mainly in agricultural pursuits. These were built by the local population, which explains their great number. Of great interest from the period of Late Antiquity are the fortified towns of Kosova — centres of the Dardan peasants and miners, of which we are best acquainted with those of Drenice,\* but which as yet are unexcavated and insufficiently studied.

All the facts available to date indicate a *unity of material culture* in the territories inhabited by the Albanians in the 5th and 6th centuries. The unity of this culture is evident in the products of various handicrafts, in ceramics (including building ceramics), in the art of building, in the architectural forms and the mosaics, and even in the circulation of money.\*\* The unity of material culture in

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\* During the archaeological expedition of 1980, in Kosova, we explored the castles of Verbovc and Kosmac. See also Muharrem Pirraku, *Aid to the Archaeological Map of the Central Part of Kosova, Onomastics of Kosova*, Prishtina 1979, pp. 479-539.

\*\* S. Anamali, *Late Antiquity and the Early Middle Ages (Achievements and Problems)*, "Illyria" 9-10, 1979-

the Southern Illyrian provinces, Praevalis, Dardania, Old Epirus and New Epirus shows that their populations are one people ethnically, and reacted in the same manner to the influences of, first, the Roman and, later, the Byzantine culture.\*

2. The Illyrians entered the Middle Ages with an advanced economic and social development and with a common material and spiritual culture. However there is no mention of them in the Byzantine sources after the 6th century. *Materials about the early Middle Ages are mainly archaeological.* These are increasing from year to year and their documentary value is enhanced because they are almost completely of local origin.

One such culture is the "Koman culture." The earliest discoveries regarding this culture were made at the end of the last century in the graveyard of Dalmaca castle near Koman village in the Puka region, from which this culture has taken its name. From the time the first graves were discovered, the archaeological material in them attracted the attention of scholars and aroused great discussion. Finding themselves confronted with an unknown culture of major scientific interest, the scholars tried to unravel the "mystery." Not knowing the history of the people and the country in which the graves were found, and even less the geography of the region of Puka, they pos-

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\* A. Buda, *On Some Problems of the History of the Formation of the Albanian People, Their Language and Culture*, "Historical Studies," 1, 1980, p. 170.

tulated the presence at Koman of peoples that had nothing to do with the local population, such as the German Sueves, the Avars and the Slavs. The more acceptable and reasonable hypothesis for that time was that the graves of the Dalmaca Castle belonged to a Romanized Illyrian population. It was dated back to the period of “the migration of peoples” or the 4th-7th centuries.\*

Albanian archaeology has paid special attention to tracing and studying the Koman culture. A result of systematic investigations in the recent years has been the discovery of a number of graves similar to those of the Dalmaca Castle mainly in Northern and Central Albania, in the regions of Tirana, Durrës, Kruja, Lezha, Mirdita, Shkodra and Kukës. Traces of the Koman culture have been discovered also beyond the state borders of the PSR of Albania, in a small burial place in Aphion of Corfu (Greece), in the burial place of Miljele in the vicinity of Vir Pazar on the shores of the Shkodra Lake (Montenegro), and in those of Grobink, Radolisht and St. Erasmus near Ohër (Macedonia). The relatively large number of burial places discovered — they are about 30 today, the systematic excavations conducted in some of them and the wealth of archaeological material found have created conditions for the study of the Koman culture against a geographical background different from that of previous schol-

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\* S. Anamali, *The Problem of the Albanian Early Medieval Culture in the Light of New Discoveries*, “Historical Studies” No. 2, 1967, pp. 29-40.

ars and on an ample material base. All this has enabled the solution of the fundamental problems connected with this culture.\*

In all the burial places excavated, including even the smallest ones, *a single material culture* has been found. This is evident, in the first place, from the *inventory of the graves*, in which spring-formed fibulae are the finest specimens. This is also borne out by certain common elements, such as the wire coiled spirals or pyramidal heads observed in many ornaments such as the fibulae, necklaces, bracelets and head bands as well as the large belt hangings. The decoration of metallic ornaments, in which many elements of Illyrian symbolism recur with amazing frequency, is identical in all of them.

In all the burial places *the graves have been built in the same way*: in the form of a box slightly expanded in the middle. As a rule, the graves are lined with slabs of slate or limestone placed vertically, or surrounded. They are roofed with stone slabs, in some cases (more frequently in Kruja) in the form of a hipped roof. In all the graves the body is laid on its back, directly in the earth. There is unity in the orientation of the graves, which is predominantly east-west. There are also graves lying northeast-southwest or northwest-southeast (perhaps dictated by the seasons of the year) and more rarely (mainly in Kruja) in a north-south direction. Both the construction and orientation of the graves and the burial

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\* S. Anamali, *From the Illyrians to the Arbëri*, pp. 130-132.

rites are ancient in our country and have been found in virtually all the tumula burial places from the Late Bronze Age and the Iron Age.

The archaeologists who have studied the Koman culture have determined its *components*. Moreover by means of these components they have been able to follow the process of the autochthonous formation of this culture. Thus it is now quite clear that the Koman culture is the direct continuation of the local culture of the period of Late Antiquity, but at a higher stage. This can be seen very well in a number of objects found in the graves, in the work implements and the weapons (the axes, knives and arrow heads,) in ornaments (fibulae, broaches and buckles) and in pottery. All these objects reproduce familiar forms, which we have been found in the graves and habitats of the 4th-6th centuries, and are of great interest because they testify to their production locally, that is, they are evidence of the *continuity* of certain crafts such as silver and iron working and pottery — which is quite a natural phenomenon in the process of the autochthonous formation of the Koman culture.

Among the archaeological artefacts some necklets which are related to the manner of dressing and which come from the fund of the Illyrian culture of the Iron Age strike the eye. These necklets always of bronze which are in the form of single, double or triple rows, with or without interconnecting links between the rows, are frequently decorated, on two or four sides, with bird symbols. These circular necklets were used as amulets amongst the

Illyrians. Their circular shape represents the sun. The bird symbols linked them also with the sun-bird cult.

A considerable number of such necklets have been found in all the big burial places which means that they retained their old symbolic meaning and were worn even in the Early Middle Ages. This conclusion is of major importance, *first*, because it shows that among the population that used these burial places strong influences from pagan cults were still retained and together with them, vestiges of the ancient spiritual culture.

Another phenomenon observed in these burial places which reinforces our opinion about the continuity of the Illyrian culture is the presence in the graves of some characteristic Illyrian objects, such as hemispherical buttons the upper parts of which are decorated with transverse cuts, and pierced biconical beads, bracelets with lateral protrusions, and dangling fringes all made of bronze. All these objects are common in the Illyrian tumulus burial place of the region of Mat. In our burial places however, they are isolated artefacts, which no longer have their old function — a hemispherical button was found in a grave hung on a necklace of glass beads — and have remained relics, objects of a symbolic character inherited from the ancient inhabitants of the places where the graves are located.

All this leads to a logical conclusion that *the deep roots of the Koman culture go back to the*

*Illyrians, the ancient inhabitants of our country.\**

In the Koman culture there are objects which show the direct influence of the early Byzantine culture but which, at the same time, are important constituent parts of the Koman culture. Some of these objects, especially the earrings, are not simply "*imitations of Byzantine*" art, but have undergone a creative elaboration and have assumed a different form, gaining a local artistic appearance which is linked with the skills of the craftsmen who worked them, while showing that the new forms have been assimilated by these craftsmen. In general, the ornaments of the Koman culture are indications of clear ethnic peculiarities. This is very obvious when we compare them with similar objects from the other neighbouring peoples. The difference is striking; they are not found outside the territory inhabited by an autochthonous population.

Among the ornaments, some kinds of belt buckles, the gilded broaches and an occasional gold ring, brought in by the local gentry, are directly *Byzantine imports*. Most of them have been found in the Kruja cemetery, but they are not entirely absent in the inventories from the graves at Lezha, Mikele and even Dalmaca Castle. The city of Dyrrah was the centre from which these objects and the "Byzantine influences" in general came. This can be explained, first of all, from its geographical position and the fact that the roads of that period passed close to the burial places mentioned. The new

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\* Ibidem.



discoveries in some 7th century graves found within the city of Durrës have provided further proof in regard to the buckles which are numerous there, and some in forms we have not seen before.\*

The finding of Byzantine objects in our burial places indicates that the Koman culture also had *elements of the early Balkan-Byzantine culture*.

The Koman culture has no elements of the Slav and Avar cultures. The isolated discoveries of three-arched fibulae with "fingers" in the cemeteries of Kruja and Lezha, are, of course insufficient to prove the presence of a Slav culture brought with the Slav invasions of the 6th-7th centuries. In regard to these fibulae belonging to the 6th and 7th centuries, archaeologists hold various opinions. Some Romanian scholars, proceeding from the fact that such objects are found in different regions of the Byzantine Empire (down to Asia Minor), hold the opinion that these objects must be connected with the autochthonous population of the regions where they have been found.\*\* Others describe them as ornaments used by Slav women, although, they add, from an examination of the places in which these fibulae have been found, they "seem to be characteristic not of all Slavs, but of only the

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\* F. Tartari, *Durrës Tumuli of the 6th-8th Centuries*, paper read at the scientific session of Saranda (June 14, 1982).

\*\* Petre Aurelian, *Les fibules "digitées d'Historia" in Studi siceretari de Istorie Veche*," 1, Tomul 16, 1965, pp. 67, 68, V. Çiuça, *Fibula digitata*, in "Revista Muzeelor si Monumentelo," 6, 1978, p. 47.

Antes.”\* This shows clearly that our three fibulae cannot be taken as remnants left behind by the spread of the Slavs, but probably reached these parts through trade. The same holds good for the occasional three finned arrowheads used by the Avars, and found in three graves (at Lezha and Shurdhah) and in the town of Pogradec (two specimens).

As to the “theory” of some Yugoslav archaeologists who regarded some artefacts from the burial place of Dalmaca castle as “Slav remnants,” basing ourselves on the testimony of a wealth of archaeological material and with numerous arguments, we proved many years ago that this theory is unfounded.\*\* For the sake of the truth it must be said that in the Yugoslav literature today there is no longer a single opinion about the “Slav” elements in the Koman culture, especially since the increase in archaeological discoveries and the finding of graves with objects of this culture on the shores of Lakes Shkodra and Ohër. A good number of the Yugoslav archaeologists admit that “*a material and spiritual tradition of the local population is seen*” in the Koman culture, that “*it is formed as an independent culture in the tradition of Late Antiquity*”; however there are others who think that “*an archaeological group with special characteristics and with many Byzantine imports which belongs to an ethnos, was formed within a given area.*” Sometimes, how-

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\* See “Raports du III Congrès International d’Archeologie Slave” Tome 1, Bratislava 1979, p. 31.

\*\* S. Anamali, *On the Early Albanian Culture*, in “Historical Studies,” 2, 1969, p. 155-169.

ever — for instance about the inventory of the necropolis of Miješe in Montenegro, it is put like this: “*The nearest analogy is provided from the graves at Dalmaca Castle and Kruja.*” There are then authors who seek a compromise course, as is the case again with the burial place of Miješe, when they admit that “*For the time being we may speak of a heritage which covers the period in which the Illyrians, with their material and spiritual creativeness were present in this place (Miješe, Dalmaca Castle, Kruja and Lezha) and the period of the barbarian invasions when the syncretization of the cultures of the two ethnoses — the Illyrian Albanian and the Slav, possibly came about.*” An unfounded opinion is given about the bearers of the culture of the three burial places on the periphery of Ohër. Totally disregarding the Koman culture and its distribution, these objects are attributed to a Slav tribe, the Brsjacov.\*

As can be seen there are contradictory opinions in the Yugoslav literature regarding the Koman culture. However one thing is

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\* See for this: Irena Rajterić-Sive, *Stand der Mittelalterlichen archeologischen Forschung in Albanien*, nach dem II, Weltkrieg, in “Arheoloski Vostnik,” XXV, 1974, Ljubljana 1976.

J. Kovačević, *Sloveni i starobalkansko stanovstvo*, in “Materiali” IX 1972, p. 171.

O. Velimirović-Žižić, *Mitješe, Vir Pazar-ranosrednjovekovna nekropola*, in “Arheoloski Pregled,” 8, 1966, p. 155.

P. Mijović, *Miljelskinakit i kultura verovanja*, in “Starina” XX, 1, 1970 (Beograd 1972), pp. 68-69.

B. Babić, *Od arheoloskoto bogarsva na SR Makedonia (Srednovjekoven period co SR Makedonija)*, Skopje 1980, p. 103.

true. In most instances it is admitted that the "Koman culture" is a native culture (it is not called Albanian), but with the addition that apart from Byzantine influences, there are also Slav influences (which reached the Slavs from Byzantium).

Elements of provincial Roman culture which were retained through the period of Late Antiquity and continued into the Early Middle Ages, and elements of the early Byzantine culture, do not weaken the autochthonous character of the Koman culture. On the contrary, as we have pointed out previously, they show that this culture developed in close contact with the other two and that *its bearers are the medieval Arbëri, the direct descendants of the ancient Illyrian population*, that had first-hand knowledge of the Roman provincial and the early Byzantine cultures.

Basing itself on these data, Albanian archaeology reached the conclusion that the Koman culture is a native culture which developed on the basis of a more ancient, also native culture. As such, it is obvious that its bearers could be none other than the descendants of the ancient Illyrian population, who emerged in the Middle Ages under the name of Arbër, the successors to the Albans mentioned by Ptolemy. The Koman culture flourished between the 6th and the 8th centuries, at a time when the process of the formation of the Albanian people had begun. Therefore, it is connected with the Arbëri, the early Albanians.

The Arbër population in the 7th and 8th

centuries was organized in peasant and urban communities. However in the burial grounds used by this population graves have been found with inventories rich, poor or totally absent, which indicates an economic differentiation and the existence of different social strata within the community. The Koman culture was the culture of the Arbër peasant and urban communities, the disintegration of which belongs to the initial period of the establishment of feudal relations.

What were the limits of extension or the territory over which the Koman culture spread? The discovery of objects of this culture in the region of Kukës is clear proof that in the Early Middle Ages the territory of Dardania, which included this region had the same cultural development as the other regions of the country. The same holds true for the regions around Lake Ohër which, like the Dardanian territory were populated by the descendants of the great Illyrian community. I think that the opinions expressed 15 years ago that, "the cause of lack of finds (of the Koman culture — S.A.) in the provinces of Macedonia and Dardania seems to lie in the relatively insufficient activity to discover it, since in the neighbouring regions of Prevalitania and New Epirus we have a local autochthonous population and a great quantity of relevant discoveries from important burial places," must not be disregarded. "Examples to prove this are the necropolis of Koman, formerly the castle of Dalmaca in Northern Albania, then the

necropolis of Kruja in central Albania, etc.”\* The discovery of the burial place of Aphion in Corfu makes us think of a similar phenomenon in the southern regions, too.

In any case it can be stated with full conviction that the Koman culture extended over a wide region which was included in the Illyrian cultural group of Mat. On this basis, in the early Middle Ages the territory of Arbanon extended and a big ethnographic region began to be formed.

3. The archaeological excavations made in recent years in several tumuli in Southern Albania have revealed the presence in these regions, too, of an early medieval Arbër culture. It has emerged from a tumulus at Dukat (Vlora region), those at Pirskova, Rapcka and Grabova (Përmet region), the tumulus of Rehova (Kolonja region) and in some burial grounds of peasant settlements in Skrapar.\*\* The materials found in these graves are as yet unstudied and unpublished, hence any attempt at a synthesis is difficult and premature. Nevertheless, from the information given by our archaeologists a preliminary concept can

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\* Zd. Vinski, “Preslavenski Etnički Elementi na Balakanu etnogenezi južnih Slavena,” in “Symposium,” Mostar, October 24-26, 1968, Sarajevo 1969.

\*\* N. Bodinaku, *Discoveries of the Early Medieval Culture in the Upper Vjosa Valley*, Paper read at the National Conference on the Formation of the Albanian people, their Language and Culture, Tirana (July 2-5, 1982).

S. Alia, *Early Medieval Discoveries at Rehova (Kolonja)*, paper read at the scientific session of Saranda (June 14, 1982).

S. Anamali, *Medieval Discoveries in the Region of Skrapar* (manuscript).

be formed about the culture of these graves. What should be pointed out immediately is the use of tumular burial grounds again in the Middle Ages, the burial rite with the placing of the body and the box shape graves, which indicate the preservation of the ancient culture and the presence of an autochthonous population, which, here, too, is Arbër.

In the above-mentioned burial ground up till now no objects from Antiquity have been found while the objects from Early Medieval times, though few in number and limited to kinds of ornaments mainly earrings, bead necklaces and an occasional bracelet have their origin in the corresponding Byzantine forms of the 9th century. Perhaps this peculiarity of the Arbër culture was conditioned by the geographical and political situation of the country, in which the contacts with Byzantium which were most frequent and easiest through the valley of the Vjosa river, should be noted.

Although the discoveries are limited, we can speak of the presence in Southern Albania of Early Medieval material culture which is connected with the newly-formed Arbër population. I think that the formation of another large ethnographic region is another preliminary conclusion imposed upon us, though, it requires more archaeological evidence. It is characterized by another group of ornaments, especially several types of silver earrings. It is very probable that this ethnographic region corresponds to the territory south of the Shkumbin River where Illyrian cultural groups extended. However, in order

to give this thesis a more solid basis, new research must be done and more abundant and diversified archaeological material must be discovered.

Interesting archaeological material which belongs to the 10th-12th centuries has been found in some burial places in Southeastern Albania. It is somewhat different from the earlier materials of the same category, both in its inventory and partly, its geographical extension.

These graves and cemeteries have been found mainly in the southeastern part of the country, in the regions of Pogradec, Korça, Kolonja, Skrapar and less so in Përmet. The inventory of the graves that have been opened is *very uniform* and consists mainly of open bracelets, rings and earrings, generally of bronze.\*

These ornaments were widely extended in other regions of the Balkans, too, in Greece, Macedonia, Bulgaria and Serbia. Various opinions have been expressed in archaeological literature about these ornaments which were widespread in the 9-11 centuries. According to some scholars they should be considered "as developed from the Byzantine models," while other authorities have linked them with the Slavs.\*\* From the fact that the above-mentioned regions belong to a region

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\* The scientific findings about most of the graves of this time are unpublished. See D. Komata, *Excavations in the Medieval Burial Place of Shtika* (Kolonja), Archaeological bulletin, Tirana 1969.

\*\* S. Anamali, *Late Antiquity...* p. 11.



of a particular and continuous contact with the Bulgarian state, and not overlooking the Byzantine influence, their presence in our country may be linked also with the Bulgarian occupations.

The spread of these objects in the Southern Arbër territory has nothing to do with the formation of our people, because this process had already been completed and another process, that of the consolidation of the Albanian nationality, had begun. Apart from this, these objects were spread, as we said, in a zone of contact, but geographically and chronologically limited.

There is another, equally important fact to be pointed out in regard to this ethnographic region, formed in the 6th century: the exceptionally great activity of a number of settlements and towns inhabited by the native population, such as Ballsh, Gllavenica, Joriko, Buthroton, Hadiranopolis, Kolones and Deabolis, in the events of the 10th-11th centuries. These were new Arbër towns, and wars and foreign invasions may have had grave economic consequences for the local population but did not change the appearance of these southern regions, which did not differ from those of the north. There is no archaeological evidence of new dwelling centres which could be linked with the foreign invasions of the 10-11th centuries, but there is abundant evidence of cities which existed in Antiquity or of towns which were built by the Arbër as fortresses and were later transformed into towns by the Arbër themselves.

4. The study of urban life in the Early Middle Ages is of great interest for the problem we are dealing with because the cities were intermediaries in the transmission of ancient ethnic-cultural traditions and played a first-rate role in the formation of the Albanian people. In this, two important factors must be borne in mind: first, that the Arbër city developed on the basis of ancient urban traditions, about which archaeological research into Antiquity provides many convincing proofs, and second, that this territory, especially the coastal zone, was very little affected by the barbarian migrations and invasions which took place in the Balkans on the eve of the Middle Ages.\*

What must be stated from the outset is that the physiognomy of the Arbër cities and settlements at the beginning of the Middle Ages, especially during the first two centuries of the Middle Ages, was very similar to that in the period of Late Antiquity. They continued their normal existence, while passing from Late Antiquity to the Middle Ages, as a result of an uninterrupted internal development, but experiencing the grave crisis of the slave-owning order and its consequences. I shall mention the best known examples which have emerged from the excavations of the last 10 years.

The Pogradec Castle is one of the small fortified towns built in the period of Late Antiquity, which continued to exist in the Early Middle Ages when agriculture takes pride

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\* S. Anamali, *The Character of the Barbarian Migrations into the Balkans, The Southern Slavs*, (manuscript).

of place.\* The four years of excavations have brought to light proofs of a revival of the population of this city and a revival of some cultural traditions. It was observed that elements of the autochthonous material culture of Late Antiquity continued into the Early Middle Ages. The iron arrowheads and knives found in the town have their most perfect analogies in the material from the graves of the 6th-8th centuries of Northern and Central Albania. The pottery has forms and decorative motifs which continue in the Middle Ages. A number of ceramic fragments of a special type, big vessels made of a yellow clay ornamented in brown and red with dots and lines in which the motive of the cross is not lacking, date back to the 6th-8th centuries. Found along with them were a gold earring in the form of a bunch of grapes and bronze encolpion of Byzantine production.

Excavations made in the ruins of the fortified town of Symiza (in the Korça district) a town of Dasarete origin, and also the centre of an agricultural zone have provided us with this view. At the beginning of the Middle Ages a temporary decline in the intensity of life in the town was observed, caused, according to expert opinion, by the disturbed situation created in the neighbouring Eastern regions. From the 8th century and the more so in the 9th-11th centuries, according to archaeological discoveries, life in the town regained its vigour. Characteristic of this period

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\* S. Anamali, *The Castle of Pogradec*, in "Illyria," IX-X, 1979-1980.

is the ceramic ware which "continues the traditions of Late Antiquity which are reflected in the forms and decorations of the vessels."\*

The archaeologists have noticed the continuation of the traditions of the folk pottery of Late Antiquity in the Early Middle Ages, as well as the existence of native pottery workshops also in the excavations in the ruins of the famous city of Butrint. In the Early Middle Ages too, Buthrot was an important city of the Empire, which never broke off its links with the imperial state, as is indicated by the archaeological discoveries from the Byzantine source, such as glazed ceramics, several kinds of ornament (earrings, buckles, etc.) and coins.\*\* The walls of this city built in the 9th century encircled a territory bigger than that of earlier historical periods and in them the ancient blocks of stones were used again. Often these reconstructions of the Early Middle Ages were done over the ancient walls, as can be seen clearly on the Northern side of the fortifications of the city.

The cities of Antipatrea-Pulcheriopolis-Beligrad and later also Kanina were contemporaneous with Buthrot and had the same economic and cultural development in Late Antiquity and the Early Middle Ages. The archaeological data from excavations in the castle of Berat show that it was a true city in

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\* Gj. Karaiskaj, *The Fortified Town of Symiza in Late Antiquity and in the Middle Ages*, in "Illyria," IX-X, 1979-1980.

\*\* K. Lako, *Results of Archaeological Excavations in Butrint in 1975-1976*, in "Illyria," 1981, 1.

the Early Middle Ages. The medieval walls of this castle have been built over the Illyrian walls and follow their line. Likewise the medieval walls of the Kanina castle are built over the ancient walls. The medieval walls of the city of Hadrianopolis, with minor differences, adhere to the line of the ancient walls. *In the early medieval period the Arbër castles assumed the appearance they had all through the Middle Ages and which they partially retain to this day.* I think the examples presented here prove one truth: in Late Antiquity and in the early medieval period the population is the same, since it retained the same material and the spiritual culture and lifestyle in the identical urban context.

A more or less similar situation has emerged in Dyrrah, too. In the Early Middle Ages this city was still encircled with the same walls it had in Late Antiquity. In the 7th and 8th centuries it had neither the need, nor apparently the economic means, to carry out new construction work, since the big civil and religious buildings were still in good conditions and the system of underground channels of the period of Late Antiquity was functioning perfectly. In general the city had adopted itself to the situation created in the Byzantine Empire and remained within its old limits without shrinking or expanding in size, and what seems more important, retaining the useful relations it had had with the Arbër population of the hinterland. In the Early Middle Ages, Dyrrah remained a trade and handicrafts centre, a fact which is demonstrated clearly by a

group of metallic ornaments of the Byzantine type of the 7th and 8th centuries imported by this city and found in a number of Arbër graves.

A characteristic of this first phase of the early medieval periods which is directly linked with the Arbër population is the retention of the old religious organization. In regard to the church buildings, too, both inside and outside city walls, we see the same phenomenon. For more than two centuries no new buildings are observed, but the monumental "paleo-Christian" buildings are preserved by carrying out partial repairs. This has struck the eye of those who have studied the monumental basilicas of Butrint, Arapaj, Saranda, Ballsh, etc.

The basilica of Ballsh is a monument worthy of special attention. It was an episcopal basilica built during the reign of the Emperor Justinian and occupies an important place in the historical events that occurred later in the southern regions of the Arbër territory. It is one of the group of basilicas connected with the fortified monasteries and which owned large areas of land. The small settlement of Ballsh with its monastery at the centre, with better economic resources took the place of the Illyrian Bylys on the eve of the Middle Ages. With the shifting of the city and with the passage of time, the old Illyrian name was transformed. In the church sources we read: Bylis, Belis, Ballis, Vallis, which lead us to the present-day name, Ballsh. Byzantine sources of the 9th-11th centuries mention another city in this southern part of the Arbëreshi region,

likewise an episcopal centre, Gllavenica — Kefalenina, which in our opinion, is Ballsh (compare Ballsh-Kokë-Gllava-Kefalis). Since for a time, according to Byzantine narrative sources, Ballsh-Gllavenica was occupied by the Bulgarians and was linked with Bulgarian historical figures, the opinion has been expressed that the basilica of Ballsh-Gllavenica was a Bulgarian construction. However, the excavations carried out to the ruins of the basilica of Ballsh have proved that it is a building of the time of Justinian, as we have stated, and moreover that it is a building of great architectural and artistic values which had a functional existence of more than 1,000 years. Hitherto nothing has been discovered to prove on the basis of archaeological discoveries that the constructions made during the Bulgarian phase which ends in 1018, indeed even the first major reconstruction which involved both the architecture and the internal decoration, belongs to the 11th-12th centuries and the period of the revival of the Byzantine art of architecture.\*

A number of castles which, for the time being we have investigated in Northern Albania, testify of the building activity of the Arbër population.

As a well-known example in which systematic excavations have been carried out and very good results achieved, we mention the castle of Shurdhah (medieval Sarda).

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\* S. Anamali, *The Illyrian-Albanian Monument of Ballsh*, in "Fieri" almanac, 1976; *On the Decorative Architectural Sculpture of Ballsh*, in "Illyria" 2, 1981.

Sarda (Shurdhah) began its existence as a castle in the 6th-7th centuries, not far from an important road which linked the Adriatic coast with the Dardan hinterland (Kosova). In the first period it had a wall encircling the entire hill (encircled on three sides by the Drin River) and 12 towers of various forms. Among the materials which help to define the 6th-7th centuries as the beginning of the life of the settlement and the building of the castle are, first, the earthenware vessels discovered in the course of excavations, then the finds in the burial place, which belong to the Koman culture. Indeed in Shurdhah we found something of great interest which was found again later in Kruja: inside the castle, among the earliest ruins of houses were ornaments and tools of the Koman culture.<sup>1</sup> The elements of the architecture are in conformity with the data from the archaeological findings. All those who have studied this castle have come to the conclusion that in the early medieval castle of Shurdhah the elements inherited from Late Antiquity, from the Roman provincial castra, are present everywhere in the forms of the towers in the protection of the entrance to the castle by two towers, in the single axis of the city which runs from the middle of the gate up the hill, etc. Overall, one gets a clear impression of a desire to meet the requirements of a well-known earlier system of fortification and, at the same time, of an attempt to respect the compositional concepts of the previous architecture.

All these peculiarities which can be ob-



served in the castle of Shurdhah are not accidental; they have to do with a native population, heirs to the civilization of Late Antiquity, which was acquainted with urban life. The castle of Shurdhah (Sarda) was built to serve the local population, the Arbër population which was forming on the Illyrian territory, at a given stage of its development. Later this new population, formed as a separate nation, was to transform Shurdhah from a castle into a city.

Shurdhah was not the only castle which retained a certain originality. It had relations with Byzantium, but at the same time it retained its autonomy. The picture of the birth and development of the Shurdhah castle is very similar to those of Drivast — Drisht and Kruja. They too were built as castles, being modified to suit the terrain but also partly protected by the natural lay of the land. Its proximity to Dyrrah had only a side influence on Kruja: as in the case of Shurdhah the archaeological material found is related to the presence of an Arbër population to which may be attributed the rich tumulus of the 6th-8th centuries on the mountain slope facing the castle.

The building of castles by the native population took place in the conditions of the temporary weakening of the Byzantine Empire, but also of the weakening of the links of many Arbër regions with the central government. In this changed political situation the Arbër population was relieved of the direct pressure of the imperial authorities and developed

more freely. This led to the economic development of the country and of production. This flowering of the local handicrafts (recall the rich archaeological material from Arbëresh graves) makes us think that for more than two centuries the exploitation of mines, metallurgy, the various handicrafts and trade, including interregional trade, had passed into the hands of the native population which had become a vigorous force at that time.

According to archaeological data beginning from the end of the 8th century, but especially during the 9th century, the Arbër cities flourished even more vigorously. There were various reasons for this. Without doubt the administrative reorganization of the Byzantine Empire, with the creation of the *theme of Durrës* and later, that of Nicopolis — which included all the Arbër territory, gave an impulse to the internal development of the local productive forces in the first place. But this was not the only cause. I think that other, no less important facts, such as the gradual strengthening of feudal relations and the creation of a local feudal class, the formation, by this time, of the Albanian people and the transition towards the formation of the Albanian nationality, should also be borne in mind.

Earlier we mentioned the reconstruction of the defensive walls of a number of cities and castles, construction of a military character stimulated mostly by the state and linked with the now increased military and administrative importance of these centres. These belong to the first phase. Later there is an increase in

the construction of church and civil buildings, which can be interpreted as indications of economic development. For this period, too, the city of Durrës again provides a classical example. Although the establishment of the new city on top of the medieval city *frequently prevents extensive excavations* a wide range of chance discoveries,\* among which architectural decorative patterns of a new type and great artistic value predominate, indicate the building of new monumental religious buildings in the city. In this same period, which is also the period of the revival of old bishoprics and the creation of new ones in the hinterland, churches etc. were built outside the cities, too. What attracts the attention of those studying these monuments is the continuation of churches of the basilica type, which does not occur in Constantinople at that time, the wealth of ornamental architectural elements found (in the regions of Fier, Berat, Gjirokastra, Saranda, etc.), and the construction technique, which does not differ from that of contemporary fortifications. For the Arbër population the period from the 9th to 11th centuries was one of many wars with the destructive consequences. In their descriptions of those wars the Byzantine chroniclers mention a number of cities. Arbanon, like the erstwhile Illyria, had many fortified cities and

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\* Usually these are fragments of cornices with inscriptions and accompanied by the motive of "successive waves" and architectural components ornamented with intertwined triple plaits. They are preserved in the archaeological museum of Durrës and Tirana.

castles not only in the coastal regions, but also in the interior of the country. But something else must be added: in the Arbër territories there is an uninterrupted historical continuity between the Illyrian and the Albanian city, associated with all the consequences of the transition from the slave-owning order to the feudal order. It was up to archaeology to prove this, and it has done so. However the Arbër character of our medieval cities, and indeed their continuity, is also shown by the names they bear today, and the linguists\* have provided and enriched the proofs of this phenomenon and others linked with toponomastics.

The birth and development of cities was linked with the autochthonous population. Living in these cities there has always been a *powerful Arbër ethnic stratum*, which, even when it has not had political power in its hands, has exercised a strong influence on the direction which the economic and political life of the country had to take. This is why unlike the central Balkans, in the territory of Southern Illyria there was almost no complete disintegration of urban life, either at the time of the migrations of the Slavs to the Balkans or later. The Illyrian-Albanian cities continued to exist, of course with the zig-zags imposed by the times, but without interruption.

Through the results of archaeological ex-

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\* E. Çabej, *The Problem of the Autochtony of the Albanians in the Light of Place Names*, in "Bulletin of the State University of Tirana," the series of Social Sciences, 2, 1958, pp. 54-62; *The Early Habitat of Albanians in the Balkan Peninsula in the Light of the Language and Place Names*, *Ibidem*, 1; 1962, pp. 219-236.

cavations, in the treatise presented we have followed the process of the autochthonous formation of our people and their culture. However it must be admitted that these results are not exhaustive. For the archaeologist the continual discovery of new facts through archaeological research and excavations is an essential task, but not an aim in itself. In order to discover the truth, the archaeological facts must be compared, linked together and explained. This is the course that Albanian archaeology has followed, and this has led it to important discoveries. Comrade Enver Hoxha says: "The Albanians stem from the Illyrian trunk and our archaeological studies are confirming and recording our history of hundreds of centuries, the rich and ancient culture of a valiant industrious and indomitable people."\*

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\* Enver Hoxha, *The Khrushchevites*, Tirana 1980, p. 376, Eng. ed.

## SUMMARY OF THE PAPERS BY ALBANIAN STUDENTS

In his paper *The Autochthony of the Albanians in the Light of Data from Ancient Toponymy*, the candidate of sciences **Seit Mançaku** capitalizes on the question that the historical-linguistic study of ancient toponymy of the Albanian territories, from Antiquity and the Early Middle Ages, proves the autochthony of the Albanians on their present territories. The fact that quite a few old names, which have been preserved until today, have developed according to the rules of the historical phonetics of Albanian, a thing which shows that these names have been uninterruptedly used by the Albanians, is important in defining the ancient habitat of the Albanians and the Illyrian origin of the Albanian language.

The candidate of sciences **Ethem Likaj** read the paper *Early Morphological Manifestations in the Albanian Language — Proofs of its Ancient Character*. In a comparative analysis of internal and external elements, the author places some morphological manifestations of the Albanian language in the pre-Latin period. In the external plane he compares them with old languages, like Latin, Greek, Hindu, etc., which have early recorded documents. Albanian developed its morphological elements parallel with them. On the internal plane the author proposes a relative chronology of the morphological manifestations of Albanian, concluding that these manifestations prove that, judging from its fundamental features,

Albanian is very ancient.

In the paper *Medieval Buildings of the Cult and their Origin in Late Antiquity*, the candidate of sciences **Aleksandër Meksi** points out that the study of the buildings of the cult throws light on many problems of the history of the Middle Ages and the Illyrian-Albanian continuity. The particular features of them are regarded as the result of ancient traditions, of the general socio-economic and cultural level of the country, as phenomena accompanying the historical processes. The findings of new cult buildings, and the problems of the architectural features of them are also treated in this paper.

In *Findings of Early Medieval Culture in the Valley of the Upper Vjosa River*, **Namik Bodinaku** points out that the material culture of the 7th-8th centuries, mainly ceramics and ornaments and objects of everyday use, is an expression of the close connection with and continuity from the material culture of Late Antiquity in the territory of Illyria. The culture of the period of the 9th-11th centuries, completely formed by that time, preserves its ethnic-cultural individuality expressed in many and various elements. This culture has the one general aspect everywhere in Southern Albania.

Senior scientific worker **Qemal Haxhihasani** in his paper *The Popular Epic as an Expression of the Individual Feature of the Albanian Ethnos in the Middle Ages*, makes a study of the ethnic-cultural features of the legendary ballads and songs of the heroic epic. Operating with the retrospective method, the author

tries to pick up the interconnections in the ancient Illyrian culture and its development in the territory bordering on the Greek-Roman territories from the period of Antiquity. The author analyses these songs in detail, in connection with the socio-economic organization during the Middle Ages.

In his paper *Anthropological Observations and the Formation of the Albanian People*, **Aleksandër Dhima** dwells on data from anthropology in connection with the origin, continuity and development of the physical types on the Albanian territories. The author links the development of the Adriatic type, until it became predominant, with the generic anthropological proximity of the medieval Arbërs and to the present-day Albanians. The presence of Adriatic type variants in the tumular remains of the Middle Ages speaks of the direct continuity of types, i.e., of a common ethnic base.

Senior scientific worker, **Dhorka Dhamo**, in her paper *Common Features in the Albanian Medieval Painting of the 12th-14th Centuries* points out that the common features of painting of this period reflect common and original ethnographic elements and details from life. The Albanian painting achieved an artistic independence and developed apart from all influences of the extremist trends of philosophical and aesthetic conservatism. In its development, it was enriched with local elements and new features, reaching its highest stage in the 16th-18th centuries.

The candidate of sciences **Emil Lafe** in his paper *Unity and Continuity in the Formation of*



*the Albanian Ethnonyms* pointed out that the study of ethnonyms presents interest not only for the word-building in Albanian, but also for elucidating some questions of the history of language and historical toponymy, because ethnonyms are sometimes older than toponyms. The author reaches the conclusion that Albanian inherited a number of means of the formation of ethnonyms from antiquity, which is evidence of the deep and ancient roots of the Albanian people in their native lands.

**Prof. Dhimitër S. Shuteriqi**, in his paper *National Awareness Among the Albanians in the First Centuries of Ottoman Occupation*, pointed out, among other things, that the national awareness of the Albanians is manifested in the clear definition of their ethnic borders. Their language, the native land, history, their ancient origin, constitute some of the elements of their national awareness.

In the paper *The Spread of Vine-Growing in the Middle Ages (13th-17th centuries) and its Economic Role*, **Spiro Shkurti** dwells on vine-growing as one of the specialized branches of agriculture, which speaks of the development of agriculture and of the all-round development of the Albanian society of that time. The spread of vineyards, the processing and usage of their products and by-products, is, in its way, an expression of the way of life.

The candidate of sciences, **Mark Tirtja**, in his paper *About the Development of Regional Ethnographic Units in the Framework of the Albanian Nationality (14th-16th Centuries)* points out that, on the basis of historical data, it is

possible to trace the features of ethnographic regions and districts of the Albanian territories, which, in the framework of the continuous development of their physiognomy, in the process of shrinking, expansion and merger, the preservation or alteration of the name during the centuries, have their roots in the Middle Ages or further back.

In her paper *The Epoch of Skanderbeg and its Role in the Consolidation of the Albanian Nationality*, **Drita Mehmeti** lays the stress on the fact that the importance of this epoch lies not only in the long heroic wars of the Albanian people against the Ottoman invaders, for the defence of freedom and independence, but also in it that during this period the Albanian nationality was consolidated, many of its fundamental features, which were to become the basis of the Albanian nation, were formed.

## SUMMARY OF PAPERS BY FOREIGN STUDENTS

Prof. **Herman Olberg** (Insbruck) in his paper *The Contribution of Linguistics to the Question of the Balkan Habitat of the Albanians*, deals with the relationship between old Albanian and Latin and the other Balkan languages, with the question of the habitat of the Albanians in pre-Roman times as well as with the evolution of the phonetic system of the Albanian, and presents concrete examples to prove his thesis. He stresses that the achievements and successes of the Albanian science exercise a direct influence on the work of foreign scientists.

Prof. **Emil Condurachi** (Bucharest) in his paper *The Daco-Romanian Continuity in Relation to the Continuity of the Albanians in the End of the Antiquity and in the Early Middle Ages*, provides some fundamental data about the history of the Romanians and succinctly compares them with data from Albanian archaeology. From this comparison one sees that the evolution of the Romanian people distinguishes itself from the evolution of the Albanian people, who trace their origin back to the Illyrians, "Illyri proprie dicti," mentioned by Old Pliny who considers them an autochthonous population living for hundreds and thousands of years on the territory of present-day Albania.

Prof. **Hélène Ahrweiler** (Paris) in her paper *Byzantium and the Illyrian Coast* deals with the Albanians as a clearly individual-

ized people in the framework of the Byzantine Empire, a people having their own cities and leaders of Albanian ethnic origin as far back in time as the 13th century. She dwells on the genesis of the Albanians which goes through some stages, marking the independence of the Illyrian-Albanian population.

Prof. **Haralambie Mihaescu** (Bucharest) read the paper *Linguistics and the Ethnogenesis of the Albanians*. He says that each historical epoch must be judged according to the specific conditions of each nation. The ethnogenesis of the Albanians should be seen and studied from this angle, too. Then he speaks of the ancient character of the Albanian language, as well as of some historical and geographical evidence about the former habitat of the Albanians.

Prof. **J. Hubschmied** (Bern) in his paper *The Historical Interpretation of Albanian-Romanian Word Equations and the Daco-Mysian Substratum*, deals with problems of methodology in linguistic comparisons and reconstructions. He also dwells on the historical connections between the words compared, the mutual borrowings of words and points out that Albanian, Illyrian, Daco-Mysian, etc. are ancient languages with lexical affinities between each other.

Prof. **G.B. Pellegrini** (Padova) read the paper *A View on the Latin Elements of Albanian*, in which he deals with the anthroponymy and Venetian inscriptions and its connections with the anthroponymy of ancient Balkan languages. He proves with scientific argument the ancient

character of the Albanian language which at that time had incorporated a number of Latin elements. Albanian is not only of fundamental importance for Indo-European studies, but it can also provide useful elements for the philologist and especially the students of neo-Latin languages.

Prof. **Aris N. Poulianos** (Athens) in his paper *Anthropological Data on the Formation of the Albanian People* considers the origin of the Albanians and the other Balkan peoples. He indicates that Albanian anthropological science has enriched itself with new data which prove the autochthony of the Albanians. The question is not, says he, about the autochthony of the Albanians, but about how far back in the history of mankind we must look for this autochthony. Physical anthropology also plays a first-rate role in the study of the ethnogenesis of the Albanians and the other Balkan peoples.

Prof. **Dimitri Obolensky** (Oxford) in his paper *Clementius of Ochrid and His Activity in Albania* indicates that Clementius of Ochrid has played a major role in the medieval history of the Albanian people. Thanks to him the newly Christianized communities between the Shkumbin, Diabolis and Gllavenica, whose main axis goes through the Devoll region, must have taken part in one of the more important medieval civilizing activities.

Prof. **Evangelos Hrysos** (Ioannina) in his paper *Sidimund and Gento from Dyrrachium: Reflections on Early Medieval Feudalism* considers some forms of early medieval feudalism

proceeding from historical documents on the political and social condition of Dyrrachium in the years 479-482. Their emergence in the area between the Vjosa and Mat rivers is sought in the infrastructure of the society of the Late Antiquity, and especially in the land granting acts of the Byzantine estate which created the first fiefs.

Prof. **Joachim Werner** (Muenchen) in the paper *New Data on the Medieval Treasure Found at Vrap of Elbasan*, proceeding from the study of the objects contained in a treasure-trove in Central Europe, which were very similar to those found in a treasure unearthed at Vrap of Albania in 1902 (now are in the New York Metropolitan Museum), provides information about this treasure which comprises gold and silver objects of Byzantine and Avar origin. They help elucidate the political situation of Albania at a time in which there are few historical documents.

The Arbëreshi profesor **Giuseppe Schiro** (Rome), read the paper *Medieval Arbër of Epirus in Byzantine Sources*. Treating this problem in the light of the historical documents of the 14th-15th centuries, he stresses that the *bessa*, with which the Albanian people have made themselves famous, has contributed to the enhancement of the honour of each individual. Against this background stands out the giant figure of Skanderbeg not only as a military leader, but also as a man who formed and educated the national consciousness of the Albanians.

Prof. **Gunnar Olaf Svane** (Arhus-Den-

mark) in his paper *The Formation of the Albanian Language as Reflected in "Speculum Confessionis" of Budi (1621)*, pays particular attention to Budi's style, his use of words and his contribution to the enrichment of the Albanian lexic. The author says that in the arrangement of the material and style Budi owes nothing to *de Bonis*, whose book he translated, and creates a national prose which in some directions is not inferior to the European level of that time. This fact speaks in favour of the possible existence of an Albanian literary tradition prior to Budi and Buzuku, which may go as far back as the Middle Ages.

Prof. **Paul H. Stahl** (Paris) in his paper *The Place of Old Albanian, its Social Structure in the Context of Balkan and European Societies*, after affirming that the formation of a people and their place among neighbouring peoples can be recognized not only through their language and their history, but also through the study of their social structures, provides a classification of the main forms of these structures in the Europe of the 18th century. Then he defines the place the Albanian family or family group occupies in this European context and stresses the importance of a better acquaintance with the interesting data collected in this field.

Prof. **Helmut Schaller** (Muenchen) in his paper *On the Question of the Development of the Lexic of Contemporary Albanian* deals with the lexical composition of Albanian. Along with Indo-European elements, Albanian also has borrowings from other languages, which, how-

ever, have adapted themselves to the phonetic and morphological system of Albanian. What was said in the past century about the Albanian being a half-Romanized language does not stand any longer.







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