

FOREIGN ALBANOLOGISTS FOR THE ARBANASI LANGUAGE OF ZADAR



Linguistics

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Abstract

In this scientific work will be followed and evaluated the contribution of albanologists and foreign Balkanology scholars who study the dialect of the Arbanasi of Zadar - this small portion of dialect, necessarily separated from the trunk of the Albanian language in the first half of the XVIII century, but partially preserved to this day. In the light of learning and studying this linguistic matter, closely related to sociolinguistic, educational, historical, political factors, etc., it is important to see the first attempts and achievements of these linguistic traces, which belong to three foreign linguists: Slovenian professor Franz Miklosich, German professor Gustav Weigand and Italian professor Carlo Tagliavini. In this study, however, will be treated some modest but precious efforts of these three scholars who contributed for the isoglosses of the dialectal area of the Arbanasi of Zadar, which this means they contributed for the Albanian language at a time when the first chapters of the Albanian language studies and its importance within the Balkan and comparative linguistics had just been drawn up and aligned. The works of the aforementioned linguists, published in foreign languages, such as German and Italian, besides their considerable scientific weight, they also had historical echoes since the marked an affirmation for the Albanian language and Albanians even in international relations.

Introduction

Interlinguistic knowledge has long aroused the interest of various scholars, especially linguists. In the migration and study of linguistic interconnections, several research criteria were followed, such as: phonetic, morphological, lexical, phraseological criteria, etc.

In this light the extralinguistic criteria were also followed, such as: the geographical extent of peoples and languages, the methodology of research, the important language schools of the time and precisely for this, new linguistic disciplines were born and grew, such as comparative linguistics, the Balkan linguistics of which the fundamental impetus was given by Christian Sandfield with the work: “Balkan Linguistics - Problems and Results 1930”, then the linguistic connection that belonged to the school of Prague, etc.

From this point of view, dialectal studies should always be accompanied by the rich matter of popular creativity in which are preserved the various linguistic and onomastic features of an ethnicity and province. Therefore, the dialectal and socio-economic features of the Arbanasi of Zadar will be viewed from these angles.

Foreign Scholars on the Language and Literature of the Arbanasi of Zadar

Within the years of 1874-1750, from the villages of *Brisk* and *Shestan* in the district of *Kraja* and beyond, there was a forced displacement of Albanians, who settled in Zadar, Dalmatia. The Venetian government placed them in a village at the entrance of the city, and they called themselves as Arbanasi (Arbnesh), out of curiosity to preserve their identity, which place will also be known from the Italian government as Borgo Erizzo.

The Venetian rulers of the time created favorable conditions for the Arbanasi of Zadar by providing them working land, and so on. They proved to be very distinguishable workers, especially of agricultural products, that they were able to supply the city as well, and thus made a name for themselves as a respected ethnicity; later on began their gradual integration into the new circumstances of life.

Arbanasi aroused the interest of scholars in several areas of identity, such as: language, folklore, ethnography, beliefs, etc. In the course of this integration, a significant number of Arbanasi of Zadar followed current studies and developments in various fields, such as: education, culture, history, politics, etc. Not only in Croatia, but also in the region with a particular focus on new integration achievements.

This arduous activity of the Arbanasi in order to preserve and support the place of origin was also seen by the congratulatory telegram that the “National Committee of Albanians from Arbanasi” sent to the head of the provisional government of Albania (Ismail Qemali) on the occasion of the Declaration of Independence of Albania., on November 28, 1912.

Thus, afterwards, the Arbanasi ties with the Albanian state became more and more extensive, but they were interrupted by the First World War and new difficulties emerged from 1920 when Zadar was annexed by the Italian kingdom.

After the Italian capitulation, many Arbanasi, under pressure from the partisans, fled Zadar. The pursuit of the Arbanasi by the communists continued and from the historical data it is proved that only for 2-3 days after the intervention of the communists about 60 Arbanasi were allegedly killed disobedient to the communist system.

The Dialect of the Arbanasi

The first to follow with great interest the dialect of the Arbanasi of Zadar was the poet and translator Stjepan Buzoliq, who in 1868 published an article on the Arbanasi of Zadar in which he also spoke about their dialect, although he was not a scholar of the language.

The first scientist to deal with the dialect of the Arbnes of Zadar was the Slovenian scholar Franz Miklosich (1813-1891), professor of Slovenian languages at the University of Vienna. Despite the interest he showed, he had difficulties researching the linguistic material of the Arbanasi of Zadar, as he never stayed in Zadar and lacked the source material for research.

Miklosich learned about this speech from the correspondence he had with Zadar's cleric Ivan Brčić, who did not know either the dialect of the Arbanasi of Zadar, but took some lexical notes and Arbanasi's folk songs, which he secured from the Arbanasi at his request and sent them to the Slovenian linguist in Vienna.

On the basis of these dialectal data, Miklosich published the paper "Albanian research, 1870-1871 at the Academy of Vienna in which he brought interesting notes on the extent of the Arbanasi of Zadar, their number, for the use of the Arbanasi dialect in the family, in church sermons, etc., as well as about two hundred Arbanasi words sent to him by Brčić.

Although he didn't do a broader research on the subject and he was not an Albanologist, it is the merit of Miklosich who showed curiosity to deal with the scientific research of the Albanian language, as one of the oldest languages in the Balkans.

After the publication of Franz Miklosich's study of the dialect of the Arbanasi of Zadar, the interest of linguists in this subject for years was raised by both foreign Albanologists and Albanian scholars. The work of professor Tullio Erber, entitled: "Albanian Colony of Borgo Erizzo" in which the author gives a bright sociolinguistic picture from which can be understood important heterogeneous data of different circumstances of this area, such as: ethnographic, ethnological, educational, multidisciplinary, etc., in which the Albanian language continued to resist.

Furthermore, the author Erber noted that when considering the reality, such as: the education of children only in Croatian, religious services and sermons in the same language and partly in Latin, the lack of texts and media in the mother tongue, marriages of different nationalities became a phenomenon, and communication in the native language of the Arbanasi became difficult, not to mention interrupted, especially with the younger generation, and even in the family. The aforementioned sociolinguistic factors were decisive in the gradual disappearance of a language, in this case the dialect of the Arbanasi of Zadar.

From the meetings that Erber had with the Arbanasi, he had also collected some words of this dialect which he sent to the German albanologist Gustav Mayer to trace as matter of interest to the etymological dictionary of the Albanian language (Strasbourg, 1891) although Erber had written these words with a lot of inaccuracy.

The interest of Balkanologists and foreign Albanologists in this discourse was growing. Thus, in the summer of 1909, the professor of the University of Leipzig, the Albanologist Gustav Weigand, stayed in Arbanasi for eight days out of curiosity to gather dialectal data on this speech.

At that time, Weigand writes that the Arbanasi dialect was used in the family communication, despite the fact that Croatian and Italian were not absent, especially in ethnically mixed families, such as through marital and neighborly connections, etc.

Weigand's research on the dialect of the Arbanasi of Zadar and its results were highly praised by the Italian linguist Carlo Tagliavini, who, among other things, wrote: "His work is not only the first monographic overview for the Arbanasi dialect, but it is the first broad description of an Albanian dialect in general".¹

The Italian professor of the University of Padua called Tagliavini, from the study of Gustav Weigand, but also from other data on these dialects showed an interest to advance further the previous activity in this field, thus, he will carry out two research positions among of the Arbanasi of Zadar in 1933 and 1935 (a total of six weeks).

From these attitudes, the Italian philologist noticed that the researches up to that time for this dialect not only did not capture the linguistic system as a whole, but from place to place these tracks lacked stable scientific support. Professor Tagliavini, who at the beginning of his work: "Albanians of Dalmatia", wrote that: "all elderly people also speak Croatian, and 90% of them speak Italian; the new generation, in addition to Arbanasi, also speaks Italian, but very few of them speak Croatian. To find someone who speaks only Arbanasi, one should only search among children up to the age of 2."²

For about twenty-five years (1918-1943) Zadar was under Italian occupation, so the sociolinguistic circumstances, especially those of language policy, were very complicated and unfavorable for the free use of the Croatian by the Croats themselves after the occupier banned the use of this language by imposing Italian, even Italianizing anthroponyms, patronyms, Croatian toponyms, etc. In this situation, politically separated even for the natives, it was absurd to expect the Arbanasi of Zadar to cultivate linguistic, i.e., national identity. Thus, due to the fact that about 90% of Arbanasi spoke Italian, Tagliavini was content with this finding alone, but did not find it reasonable to say the cause for the reality of banning other languages.

The above-mentioned researchers also dealt with some distinctive features of the dialect of the Arbanasi of Zadar mainly from the field of phonetics, so for e.g. Franz Miklosich distinguished two types of sound *q* and *ç*; other scholars, such as: Weigand, Tagliavini, Ajeti, etc., did not find a difference in the connection between these sounds, i.e., found only their orthoepic identification.

Diphthong *uo* Miklosich found it predominant in the use of this dialect, while Tagliavini found this insignificant diphthong in the word *gruo*; Professor Ajeti, following this diphthong

¹ Aleksandar Stipceviq, *Kultura tradicionale e arbneshe të Zarës*, Prishtinë, 2012, faq. 237.

² *Ibid* p. 239.

from the trunk and not from the bud, rightly noticed that in this dialect the *uo* and *ua* diphthongs are preserved.

Tagliavini and several others have also noted the influence of Italian and Croatian on the dialect of the Arbanasi of Zadar, especially in the field of lexicon.

Socio-onomastics of the Arbanasi of Zadar

Socio-onomastics as a scientific subdiscipline of onomastics has the task of tracing and tracking social, political, educational, historic, economic, circumstances, which are also reflected in the science of onomastics. As such it is integrated with other knowledge, sheds new light on the historical and source migration of different ethnicities by investigating the onomastic transformations and metaonomastic that took place and are imposed by the above circumstances.

Socio-onomastics of the Arbanasi of Zadar is an integral part of the reality of the life of this ethnicity since the first years of their settlement in this part of Dalmatia and continuously throughout history. It is evidence of the denationalizing and alienating policy that was applied to the Arbanasi through the change of anthroponyms and patronyms where sometimes were Croatianized and other times Italianized, thus gradually losing track of the origin of the Arbanasi of Zadar.

The change of onomastic (anthroponymic) designations firstly was made by the clergy who did not know the language of the Arbanasi, but also by the local state power. This progress was documented, even in the Italian administration, which was put in Zadar in 1928, it was formalized by law according to which (law) Croats and Arbanasi had to take Italian names and surnames, e.g. Giorgia (Italian), Jure (Gjuro) Croatian, those bearing the name John; Alessio (it.) Aleksa (kro) shqip Lekë.³ In some cases only the change of the name graph was imposed, e.g. Kalmeta was made in c - Calmeca. This change was especially obligatory for those working in the public services in the Italian state government.

In order to preserve the anthroponymy and source toponymy alongside the names imposed by the government, the Arbanasi, in the close communication of the neighborhoods, etc., also used the early names of the country of their origin, such as *The Mountaineer*, *Kalmets*, coined from the name of the village Kalmet that lies south of Shkodra where the Kalmets came from. In this way, many cases of double names were created.

Thus, the toponym *Kollovare*, a promenade near the sea, which they found, was named Karma, which in Albanian means rock near the sea or river. The same happened with some other microtoponyms that the Arbanasi named according to the place of their origin, e.g., *the crown*, *the rocks*, from the Albanian word, rock, ridge, karma road, road near the promenade.

³ Ibid, p. 245.

Something similar happened with toponymy. From the nostalgia for the homeland and the place names there, the Arbanasi also brought the names of the settlements from which they were forcibly displaced.

Folk Creativity

The oral literature of the Arbanasi of Zadar is also of interest for dialectal, ethnographic, ethnological, stylistic, figurative research, although for the most part it has disappeared into the stream of motives.

Clergyman Ivan Brčić collected some folk songs, which, together with lexical data, he sent these songs for linguistic research to Miklosich in Vienna. Weigand also used this rich matter (of popular literature) for dialectal-linguistic research. He had published the song “The bird sings, the myna bird”. This song was also written by Pashk Bardhi in Arbanasi, in 1905, a Franciscan and Albanian language teacher and published it in Faik Konica’s magazine “Albania”. The variant of this song collected by Weigand was published four years later in a much longer verses.

Tagliavini, in his work in 1937, entitled: “Albanians of Dalmatia”, published two popular songs by Arbanasi of Zadar: “The New Sunday” and “The Bird Sings”. The first is dedicated to the church ceremony held on Sundays in the church, and the second belongs to the wedding songs, with significant content that advises the boy not to look at and appreciate the bride from the embroideries, but from the beauty. This wedding song in the version collected and published by Pashk Bardhi had 18 verses and 30 years later, when it was marked by Tagliavini, it was reduced to 10 verses.

From this data it can be understood that this rich linguistic, cultural, sociological, historical matter of popular literature has always been reduced along with the past, but also along with the high value it has. The popular literature of the Arbanasi of Zadar is of different types of oral creativity, e.g. patriotic songs, weddings, love songs, humor, lullabies, etc.

For the creations of the popular literature of the Arbanasi of Zadar and for the importance of the messages of their content it has been written in Croatian magazines as well, e.g. in the magazine “Croatian Crown”, no. 22, (June 9, 1900).

The attention of foreign and Albanian scholars was also drawn to folk tales or stories, which, in their prose content, except that they contained valuable content and messages that summarized in themselves, were also very important for the research of various linguistic and non-linguistic sciences.

The German linguist Weigand deserves credit for publishing the two stories he heard from the elders of the Arbanasi of Zadar, which served as a source material for him to see the linguistic features of this dialect. Even professor Tagliavini, driven by an interest in providing the widest

possible subject for linguistic research, he collected from the conversations of the Arbanasi five popular reports that later he published them in his work: “Albanians of Dalmatia”.

In 1987 Krun Krstic, PhD and a prominent Croatian philologist and lexicographer of Arbanasi descent, published the work: “Dictionary of the dialect of the Arbnes of Zadar”, in which he summarized some wise words with important advisory content and various dialectal phenomena.

Even this creativity, as well as the linguistic one, represents a rich value for research of different knowledge of Albanian philology.

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