

**“These were hard times for Skanderbeg,
but he had an ally,
the Hungarian Hunyadi”**

Episodes in Albanian–Hungarian Historical Contacts



Edited by
Krisztián Csaplár-Degovics



*“These were hard times for Skanderbeg,
but he had an ally, the Hungarian Hunyadi”*
Episodes in Albanian–Hungarian Historical Contacts

Acta Balcano-Hungarica 1.



Series managing editors:
Pál Fodor and Antal Molnár

Series editor:
Krisztián Csaplár-Degovics



Hungarian Academy of Sciences
Research Centre for the Humanities

***“These were hard times for Skanderbeg,
but he had an ally,
the Hungarian Hunyadi”***

Episodes in Albanian–Hungarian Historical Contacts



Edited by
Krisztián Csaplár-Degovics



Research Centre for the Humanities,
Hungarian Academy of Sciences

Budapest, 2019

This book has been published in collaboration with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade of Hungary during the Hungarian Cultural Weeks held in the Republic of Albania and in the Republic of Kosovo



Hard and Soft Cover:

Portraits of John Hunyadi and Skanderbeg in the Cathedral of Our Lady of Perpetual Succour, Prizren (© Photo made by Jeton Jagxhiu)

ISBN 978-963-416-184-4

ISSN 2676-914X

Research Centre for the Humanities of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences,
Budapest, Hungary

Prepress preparation: Institute of History, RCH HAS

Research Assistance Team: Imre Horváth, Gabriella Kocsis, Judit Lakatos

Leader: Éva Kovács

Cover Design: Imre Horváth

Page layout: Bence Marafkó, Imre Horváth

Maps: Béla Nagy and Kristóf Csákváry

Printed in Hungary by Krónikás Bt., Biatorbágy

Table of Contents

Introduction (Krisztián Csaplár-Degovics)	7
--------------------------------------------------------	---

Part I: Historical Contacts

Tamás Pálosfalvi Skanderbeg and the Hunyadis: Myth and Reality	15
Balázs Sudár An Aristocratic Albanian Family that Gained a Foothold and Emerged in the Hungarian Borderlands: the Aranids	23
Zoltán Péter Bagi Giorgio Basta: A Short Summary of a Career	35
Antal Molnár The Catholic Missions and the Origins of Albanian Nation-Building at the Beginning of the 17th Century	67
Eleonóra Géra The Secret Life of the Albanian Priest Toma Raspassani in Buda	93
Krisztián Csaplár-Degovics Lajos Thallóczy and Albanian Historiography	107
Tibor Balla The Activities of the International “Scutari Detachment” in 1913–1914	147
Ferenc Pollmann Baron Ferenc Nopcsa’s Participation in the Albanian Military Campaign of the Austro–Hungarian Monarchy in 1916	167
Krisztián Csaplár-Degovics The 25th Anniversary of Albanian Independence and the Hungarians (1937)	187

Csaba Katona Geraldine Apponyi, the Sold Bride	203
Péter Kacziba Albanian–Hungarian Relations During the Greek Civil War (1946–1949)	219
László Márkus Hungarian View on the Independence of Kosovo	231
Part II: Academic links	
Krisztián Csaplár-Degovics and Lumnije Jusufi The Birth of the First Hungarian–Albanian Dictionary (1913)	257
Zoltán Barina and Dániel Pifkó Hungarian Botanists in Albania	275
Miklós Takács and Péter Langó Archaeologia Hungaroalbanica. Connections between Hungarian and Albanian Medieval Archaeology	305
Index	325

The Birth of the First Hungarian–Albanian Dictionary (1913)¹



Krisztián Csaplár-Degovics and Lumnije Jusufi

Albanology as a science was born in Austria–Hungary. The history of its origins and emergence and the history of the first generations dealing with this discipline have been discussed in a small number of studies and monographies. Generally speaking, “Austro–Hungarian Albanology” is regarded as a science of German-speaking scholars who carried out their research in the Austrian part of the empire. Both Austria–Hungary and Austro–Hungarian Albanology had, however, a *Hungarian* part. This study aims to highlight the significance of the Hungarian-speaking scholars and the role they played in the history of Albanology.

It is not an easy task to position the beginning of the history of Hungarian Albanology. In order to understand this claim, it is worth quoting a passage from the well-known book by Robert Musil (*The Man Without Qualities*):

“This sense of Austro–Hungarian nationhood was an entity so strangely formed that it seems almost futile to try to explain it to anyone who has not experienced it himself. It did not consist of an Austrian and a Hungarian part that, as one might imagine, combined to form a unity, but of a whole and a part, namely of

1 This paper was first published as Csaplár-Degovics, Krisztián and Jusufi, Lumnije. ‘The birth of the first Albanian–Hungarian dictionary (1913).’ In *Marrëdhëniet e popullit shqiptar me Austro–Hungarinë (Austriinë), nga mesi I shek. XIX deri në ditët tona / Relations between Albanians and Austria–Hungary (Austria) from the mid-19th century to the present day*, edited by Fehari Ramadani et al. 87–102. Shkup–Prishtinë: Logos-A, 2017. The present study is published with a few changes.

a Hungarian and an Austro–Hungarian sense of nationhood; and the latter was at home in Austria, ...”²

This quotation serves well as a point of departure for this paper because it sheds light on the relations between Hungarian Albanology and its Austro–Hungarian counterpart. Incredible as it may sound, two different schools of Albanology emerged in Austria–Hungary. One of these is referred to as the Austro–Hungarian school, the other as the Hungarian. In general terms, the Austro–Hungarian school shared some properties with the Hungarian: both were parts of an imperial foreign policy (that of Austria–Hungary and Hungary), and both had an economic and a scientific side. The difference lies in the fact that the High Command of the joint Austro–Hungarian army supported the Austro–Hungarian discipline, while Hungarian Albanology had no associations with the military. The former also had the support of the Ballhausplatz from 1896 on, while the latter won the support of the Hungarian government only in 1913 as a consequence of the First Balkan War. Finally, Austro–Hungarian Albanology carried a far greater significance than the Hungarian variant for both the Monarchy and the Albanians.

It is important to note, however, that the efforts of the two schools were in synch, that is, the two different kinds of Albanology were not rival disciplines. The sole purpose of Hungarian Albanology was to support Hungarian imperial aspirations in a way that would not compromise the foreign political and foreign economic interests of Austria–Hungary. The representatives of Hungarian Albanology conducted their research within the political framework of the dualist state. Another reason why the relations of the two k.u.k. Albanology schools were so peaceful was that Lajos Thallóczy played a key role in both.

Lajos Thallóczy and Ferenc Nopcsa were undoubtedly prominent figures not only of Austro–Hungarian Albanology but also of the Albanian lobby operating alongside the Ballhausplatz.³ Thallóczy’s role in the Albanian state- and nation-building process is currently being researched in both Albania and Hungary.⁴ Research on Ferenc Nopcsa’s political and scientific activity has already yielded major results, so it is to be assumed that Albanology will not pose significant questions about him in the future.

2 Musil, Robert. *The Man Without Qualities*, 42. Source: <http://uberty.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/12/musil-1.pdf>, The Great Conference. (downloaded: March 12, 2018).

3 Gostentschnigg, Kurt. *Wissenschaft im Spannungsfeld von Politik und Militär. Die österreichisch-ungarische Albanologie 1867–1918*. Wiesbaden: Springer, 2018; Gostentschnigg, Kurt. ‘Die albanischen Parteigänger Österreich–Ungarns. Ein Versuch der Rekonstruktion des Brückenkopf-Feldes an der Peripherie des habsburgischen Zentrums.’ *Shëjzat* 1, no. 1–2 (2016): 123–163.

4 Thallóczy, Lajos. *Të ndodhurat e Shqypnis*. Transkriptoi, dokumentoi e komentoit Raim Beluli. Shkodër: Botime Françeskane, 2008; Csaplár-Degovics, Krisztián. ‘Lajos Thallóczy und die Historiographie Albanien.’ *Südost-Forschungen* 68 (2010): 205–246.

Who else belonged to the first great generation of Hungarian Albanologists besides these two scholars? And what necessitated the development of an independent Hungarian discipline alongside the joint Austro–Hungarian Albanology?

At the turn of the century the imperialistic aspirations of Hungary grew out of Hungarian Oriental studies, the quality of which significantly improved following the Austro–Hungarian Compromise of 1867. Upon the formation of the dualist state, the preconditions of building a modern, burgeoning Hungary were also created. By the turn of the century the system of Hungarian scientific institutions had been consolidated, and the reigning governments donated generous sums to advance the sciences. Basically, by funding Oriental studies, the Budapest government aimed to create “positions in the world economy” for Hungary in the Eastern countries.⁵ By the Orient, Budapest meant the Balkan Peninsula, Anatolia, today’s Middle East and the Asian continent.

The Hungarian governments had several designs on how to attain these Eastern positions. Firstly, they set out to establish operations for an independent and secret diplomatic corps in the 1870s. This network of “commercial correspondents” came under the supervision of the Hungarian Ministry of Commerce, and its well-trained members dealt not only with economic matters but were also tasked with gathering intelligence and establishing international networks. The most talented correspondent of this secret body was none other than Lajos Thallóczy.

The young man’s first covert spy mission took place in Russia.⁶ After that, in the spring of 1882, he set out on a round trip in the Levant: he visited Serbia, Bulgaria, Constantinople, Greece and finally coastal Albania. Formally he wrote a travel diary as the travelling correspondent of the daily *Pesti Napló*, but in reality, under the pseudonym “Lemaics”, he made secret political and economic reports primarily to Baron Gábor Kemény, Minister of Trade in Budapest. (His dispatches for the *Pesti Napló* from the Levant were published in an independent volume.⁷)

According to Engelbert Deusch, Hungarian political circles were greatly distressed by the foreign agitators that appeared between 1878 and 1882 in Bosnia-Herzegovina and in Northern Albania, and that was why they sent Thallóczy there (he could never gain the trust of Lippich, the Austro–Hungarian consul-general in Shkodra). Although his primary mission was to collect intelligence, according to Deusch, the young spy successfully incited several Albanian tribes to revolt, which

5 Hajdú, Zoltán. ‘Az intézményes Balkán-kutatás kialakulásának és fejlődésének problémái Magyarországon 1948-ig, különös tekintettel a földrajzi kutatásokra.’ *Balkán-füzetek* 1, no. 1 (2003): 9.

6 Thallóczy, Lajos. *Oroszország és hazánk*. Budapest: Athaeneum, 1884.

7 Thallóczy, Lajos. *Utazás a Levantéban. A keleti kereskedelem története Magyarországon*. Budapest: Pfeifer N, 1882.

further complicated matters in connection with the fall of the League of Prizren.⁸ The mission, however, brought about two major consequences. On the one hand, Benjámín Kállay, joint minister of finance, took the troublemaker to Vienna in 1885 and appointed him a joint official. On the other hand, it was during his 1882 trip to Albania that Thallóczy took a liking to the Albanians and started to collect scientific data about this people.

Many of these commercial correspondents became well-trained scholars over time and engaged in scientific activity either as private researchers or as teachers of the Budapest Oriental Academy, an institute founded by the Hungarian government. The Hungarian Royal Oriental Commercial Academy was founded in 1899. The idea of an elite educational institute had been put forward by Thallóczy with the primary objective of nurturing relations between Hungary and the Orient.⁹ While the Academy obviously focused on teaching practical skills, the education was also characterised by scientific diversity. Also, the very best language teachers of Hungary held classes at the Academy. Albanian, for instance, was taught by the internationally renowned linguist József Schmidt (1863–1933), head of the Indo-European Languages Department at Pázmány Péter Royal University.¹⁰

Secondly, the great Hungarian geographical expeditions of the time also served the purpose of securing positions for Hungary in the East. Several Hungarian geographers rose to international fame as a result of the geological and geographical expeditions organized by the Hungarian Geographical Society, the Hungarian Academy of Sciences and the Hungarian Geographical Institute. Count Béla Széchenyi (1837–1918) led an expedition to Inner Asia and Western China in the 1880s. Before the turn of the century, Hungarian research expeditions appeared in Finland, Bulgaria, the Ottoman Empire and the Russian Caucasus. (The young Ferenc Nopcsa also participated in some of these expeditions.) The expeditionists collected not only geographical data but also local folklore. Today this collection is housed in the Hungarian Folklore Museum. Count Ágost Zichy (1852–1925) led an expedition to Mongolia in 1875–1876; Károly Újfalvy (1842–1904), teacher of the Paris *Écoles des langues vivantes* visited Inner Asia, the Pamirs and Northern India (1876–1881); and György Almásy (1867–1933), Juris Doctor and zoologist, father of the famous Africa explorer László Almásy a.k.a. “the English patient”

8 Deusch, Engelbert. ‘Der Aufstand der Malësia e Mbishkodrës von 1883 und das Verhältnis der albanischen Katholiken zu Österreich–Ungarn.’ *Südost-Forschungen* 63/64 (2004/2005): 267–274.

9 XII. Session (3. összes ülés), March 31, 1913, *Akadémiai Értesítő* (24) 1913, 4. füzet (April 15, 1913), 230; XXXI. Session (9. összes ülés), October 30, 1916, *Akadémiai Értesítő* (27) 1916, 11. füzet (November 15, 1916), 657.

10 Hajdú, ‘Az intézményes Balkán-kutatás’, 12–13.

(1895–1951), travelled in Russian Central Asia and Northern China between 1900 and 1906.¹¹

Today the grand Oriental designs of Hungary may appear far-fetched, but at the time these visions seemed not unfounded at all. The “imperial idea” was very much in synch with contemporary European trends, and the fast-paced economic modernization and intellectual progress in Hungary may also account for such plans of grandeur. Let us view the statistics that fuelled this self-confidence.

The population of Hungary at the beginning of the 20th century was around 20.5 million. At the same time the total population of Romania, Bulgaria, Serbia, Greece and Montenegro was around 16.45 million. This means that the Carpathian Basin had a population approximately 4 million more than all the independent Balkan states together. The area of Saint Stephen’s Hungary was 325,000 km², which exceeded the total area of Romania, Serbia, Bulgaria and Montenegro in 1905. According to a 1911 British statistical report, the revenue of the Hungarian state amounted to 64 million pounds, while Romania, Bulgaria, Greece and Serbia together had an income of 33.5 million pounds (the GDPs were similarly proportioned!). Thus, it is understandable why the Hungarian political elite envisioned a future Hungarian empire.¹²

It is important to emphasize once again that the most prominent Hungarian political and economic elite never lost sight of their primary goal: the economic interests and advantageous positions of Hungary were to be protected *within* the joint market of the Monarchy. Accordingly, Hungarian imperial aspirations never meant to challenge the Austro–Hungarian Compromise, as the agreement guaranteed utmost protection against Russia and the nationalities. Rather, these aspirations sought to promote a division of interests over and beyond the border of the Monarchy.¹³ Therefore the objective was to distinguish between areas serving Hungarian interests and other areas serving Austrian imperial aspirations. In spite of the positive economic indices, the Hungarian economy did not suffice to support the implementation of a grand-scale imperial policy and so the Hungarian political and intellectual elite shifted focus to “Europe’s East”, that is, the Balkan Peninsula.¹⁴

Major Hungarian corporations and banks (e.g. the Hungarian Commercial Bank of Pest) appeared on the peninsula as early as the turn of the century. What is more, at the request of the Ballhausplatz the banks provided government loans to

11 Róna-Tas, András. ‘Belső-Ázsia magyar felfedezői. A kezdetektől az első világháborúig.’ *Keletkutatás* I, ősz (1986): 40, 42.

12 ifj. Bertényi, Iván. ‘A “magyar birodalmi gondolatról” – az I. világháború előtt.’ *Kommentár* 2, no. 4 (2007): 47–48.

13 Romsics, Ignác. ‘A magyar birodalmi gondolat.’ In *Múltról a mának. Tanulmányok és esszék a magyar történelemről*, edited by Ignác Romsics, 122. Budapest: Osiris, 2004.

14 Bertényi, ‘A „magyar birodalmi gondolatról”, 41, 43, 52.

the lesser nation states of the Balkans. But these major Hungarian banks also actively shaped the economy of the peninsula as railway and industrial investors and as stock exchange and bank shareholders, even though they did not belong among the most important actors. Thus, the Balkans promised to be an increasingly important market for the realization of political and economic interests.¹⁵

Following this short review of Hungarian imperial aspirations, it is important to make two further distinctions between the Austro–Hungarian and Hungarian branches of Albanology. What we may call Austro–Hungarian Albanology is the discipline that was supported by the joint ministries as well as by Austria’s political and scientific institutional network – and from 1910 on – by the Turan Society in Hungary.¹⁶ Hungarian Albanology, on the other hand, was backed by the Hungarian ministries and scientific bodies only. The other major difference is that the Hungarian branch did not aim to support the Albanian nation- and state-building process, while this became one of the most significant ambitions of Austro–Hungarian Albanology. Kurt Gostentschnigg’s statement that it was imperialistic policy that played a key role in the creation of Albanology and in the first decade of its history, seems to be true for the Hungarian branch of the discipline rather than for the Austro–Hungarian one.¹⁷

At the time of the annexation of Bosnia, on October 1, 1908, Thallóczy submitted a proposal to the Hungarian government. In it, he made recommendations to Budapest as to the best possible reactions to the final annexation in order to profit from the new politico-economic environment. Thallóczy, who was a historian and an official, shared two main insights: that it was necessary to commence state-organized scientific research on the peninsula and that communications with the peoples of the Balkans had to be improved. He claimed that the primary prerequisite of successful communication was an excellent knowledge of local languages and he therefore urged for the compilation of modern, up-to-date dictionaries of the languages of the Balkans.¹⁸ During the First Balkan War, Thallóczy once again voiced his above recommendations when, in the late autumn of 1912, he addressed a memorandum to the Hungarian Government.¹⁹

15 Magyar Nemzeti Levéltár Országos Levéltára (MNL OL), Pesti Magyar Kereskedelmi Bank (PMKB), Z 33, 11. csomó: 1913–1915, 12. csomó: 1916–1919, and Z 34, 50. csomó.

16 *Illyrisch-Albanische Forschungen*. 2Bde, edited by Ludwig von Thallóczy. München–Leipzig: Duncker&Humblot, 1916.

17 Gostentschnigg, Kurt. *Zwischen Wissenschaft und Politik. Die österreichisch-ungarische Albanologie 1867–1918*. Diss. Graz 1996. 137–142.

18 Tömöry, Márta. ‘Bosznia-Hercegovina anektálásának történetéből (Részletek Thallóczy Lajos naplóiból)’. *Századok* 100, no. 4–5 (1966): 895–896; Országos Széchényi Könyvtár (OSZK), Kézirat-tár, Quart. Hung. 2459, 11. kötet, f. 79–80.

19 Református Zsinati Levéltár Budapest (RZSL), 45. fond, 10.43. Thallóczy, Lajos. *A Balkán-félszigeten beálló változásokról*. Memoir, pp. 12.

Similarities and Differences between Austro–Hungarian and Hungarian Albanology

	<i>Austro–Hungarian Albanology</i>	<i>Hungarian Albanology</i>
<i>Similarities</i>	1. political, economic and scientific aspects 2. Albanology is part of an imperial foreign policy	
<i>Differences</i>	1. imperial policy at imperial level of Austria–Hungary	1. imperial policy at national level of Hungary
	2. the joint Austro–Hungarian army supported Austro–Hungarian Albanology	2. no associations with the military
	3. supported by the Ballhausplatz from 1896 on	3. supported by the Hungarian government from 1913 on
	4. Austro–Hungarian Albanology was supported by – the joint ministries – Austria’s political and scientific institutional network – the Turan Society in Hungary (from 1910 on)	4. Hungarian Albanology was backed by the Hungarian ministries and scientific bodies only.
	5. One of the most significant ambitions of Austro–Hungarian Albanology was to support the Albanian nation- and state-building process.	5. Hungarian Albanology did not aim to support the Albanian nation- and state-building process.

The Hungarian Academy of Sciences accepted Thallóczy’s scientific and cultural proposals and began to implement them. Firstly, in the winter of 1912–1913, a Body of Experts was convened under the leadership of the famous geographer and would-be Prime Minister, Count Pál Teleki (1879–1941). On March 31, 1913, the Body proposed to form an Oriental Committee responsible for initiating scientific research and publishing new dictionaries.²⁰ The Committee was finally set up in early

20 XII. Session (3. összes ülés), March 31, 1913, *Akadémiai Értesítő* (24) 1913, 4. füzet (April 15, 1913), 230.

1914 under the name “Balkanian Committee” rather than the previously proposed Oriental Committee. At the grand assembly of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences on May 6, 1914, the Committee formally announced its formation and the first open scholarships: those attending the assembly called for studies to be published in an encyclopaedia on the Balkan Peninsula and for the compilation of Albanian–Hungarian, Bulgarian–Hungarian and Turkish–Hungarian dictionaries.²¹

Árpád Degen (1866–1934), a botanist of European fame, was the first famous scientist of Hungarian Albanology. Although he personally never visited the Albanian territories, between 1895 and 1928 he took on the enormous task of recording and organizing the remarkable botanical collections of the Albania-explorers (Antonio Baldacci,²² Ferenc Nopcsa and Ignaz Dörfler²³).

Although the first state-funded economic research papers on Albania were published in 1914,²⁴ organized research in the field of Hungarian Albanology began only in 1916, with the support of the Balkan Committee and the Austro–Hungarian High Command (AOK). Árpád Buday conducted archaeological research mainly in what is today Albania.²⁵ The economist Adolf Strausz analysed the possible future of the Albanian economy as part of the transforming Balkan Peninsula.²⁶

Although the above research was important, the greatest achievements and findings belonged to the botanical and zoological expeditions. The first botanist to collect plants in Albania was József Andrasovszky (1889–1943). He made an expedition in 1916–1917 along what is today the triple border of Montenegro, Albania and Kosovo. His collection was organized in Budapest by Sándor Jávorka (1883–1961), who also explored parts of Albania in the summer of 1918 in the company of Jenő Béla Kümmerle (1876–1931).²⁷ Jávorka collected specimens in

21 *Akadémiai Értesítő* (25) 1914, 2. füzet (February 15, 1914), Kisebb Közlemények; Keleti Bizottság, előzetes jelentés, 127; LXXIV. Great Session, May 6, 1914, First Day, *Akadémiai Értesítő* (25) 1914, 6–7. füzet (June 15, 1914); Hajdú, ‘Az intézményes Balkán-kutatás’, 14–16.

22 Antonio Baldacci (1867–1950): Italian geographer and botanist; one of the first modern researchers of Albania.

23 Ignaz Dörfler (1866–1950): Austrian botanist.

24 *Balkáni piacok a háború után. Gazdasági ismertető*. Vol. 1–15., 17–20. Budapest: Magyar Királyi Kereskedelmi Múzeum, 1914. (Vol. 1: Albánia; Vol. 2: Skutari; Vol. 3: Durazzo; Vol. 4: Valona; Vol. 5: Új-Szerbia [present-day Kosova and Macedonia]; Vol. 9: Prizren).

25 Árpád Buday (1879–1937): archaeologist, university professor. Buday, Árpád. *Régészeti kutatás Albániában*. Kolozsvár: Stief, 1918.

26 Adolf Strausz (1853–1944): officer, historian, ethnologist, politician, expert of the Balkans. Strausz, Adolf. *Das Osmanische Reich: wirtschaftspolitische Ausblicke*. Posen: Mitteleuropäischer Buch- und Lehrmittelverlag, 1917; Strausz, Adolf. *Az új Balkán félsziget és a török birodalom: politikai, gazdasági tanulmány*. Budapest: Kilián, 1913.

27 Among others, Jávorka, Sándor. ‘Új adatok Albánia flórájához. Neuigkeiten aus der Flora Albaniens.’ *Botanikai közlemények* 19 (1921): 1–6, 17–29; Jávorka, Sándor. ‘Plantae novae albanicae I.’ *Magyar Botanikai Lapok* 20 (1921): 1–12, 60–61; Jávorka, Sándor. ‘Plantae novae albanicae II.’ *Magyar Botanikai Lapok* 21 (1922): 1–12, 1722; Jávorka, Sándor. ‘Utivázlat.’ In *A Magyar Tudományos*

central and Northern Albania, while his companion worked along the Prizren–Šar Planina line. The entomologist Ernő Csiki (1875–1954, born Ernst Diel) researched the local insects of Albania and today's Kosovo in 1917, mainly in the Peja and Gjakova area.

The aforementioned scholars laid the foundation of an independent Hungarian school in the field of zoology and botany with their research in areas inhabited by Albanians. Researchers in these scientific fields have been studying the flora and fauna of Albania and Kosovo ever since. The continuity of that research is unique among the various sub-disciplines of both Austro–Hungarian and Hungarian Albanology.²⁸

Zoltán László (1881–1961), author of the first Hungarian–Albanian dictionary, was born to a noble family, and his noble lineage allowed him to receive an education in the very best schools of the Monarchy. After finishing his university studies, he became a financial expert, journalist, author and self-appointed scholar. He was an ardent fan of the Orient and a language genius. Besides his mother tongue he spoke excellent German, English, French, Russian and Serbo-Croatian, and he could read Turkish and a bit of Arabic. After 1908 he became closely linked with Hungarian political, economic and scientific pressure groups whose members were staunch believers in Hungarian imperialistic aspirations. Between 1908 and 1911, Zoltán László served as an official in Bosnia-Herzegovina, furthering the Hungarian imperial cause in Travnik and Sarajevo. Later he worked as a correspondent for the major Budapest daily papers, and as a journalist he propagated Hungarian interests in the Balkans.

His most memorable achievement was a dictionary in which he collected the Turkisms and Arabisms of the local South Slavic dialect spoken in the annexed provinces.²⁹ Despite the fact that the author was merely a self-educated scholar, the dictionary is an important compilation on the Muslim use of language in Bosnia at the turn of the century. The special feature of the volume is that it contains words that were not included in the contemporary Croatian and Serbian dictionaries but were widely used in everyday Bosnian speech. László listed not only the Hungarian but also the South Slavic meanings of the Turkisms and Arabisms. For tourists, merchants and officials alike, the dictionary greatly facilitated communication

Akadémia Balkán-kutatásainak tudományos eredményei III, edited by Pál Teleki and Ernő Csiki, 74–89. Budapest: Magyar Tudományos Akadémia, 1926; Jávorka, Sándor. 'Zwei Albanienreisen.' *Ungarische Rundschau* 11 (1955): 9–10.

28 The botanists of present-day Hungary in Albanian territories are: Dr. Zoltán Barina and dr. Dániel Pifko (Hungarian Natural History Museum): http://www.nhmus.hu/hu/munkatars/barina_zoltan; http://www.nhmus.hu/hu/munkatars/pifko_daniel (downloaded: March 10, 2018).

29 László, Zoltán. *Turcizmusok és arabizmusok. A balkáni szerb-horvát nyelvben előforduló idegen, de szlavizált szavak gyűjteménye*. Budapest: Franklin, 1912.



Zoltán László and his family in 1912

with the Slavic-speaking people of Muslim background in the Balkans. Since the dictionary contained the idiosyncratic legal terminology that the Bosnian Muslims used in their official pleadings, petitions and complaints, it could also be used as a textbook for officials.

Zoltán László's Hungarian–Albanian dictionary, which was actually a Malësor–Hungarian dictionary (malësor – “highlander”), was published in 1913. What prompted the publication of the dictionary was the new situation in the aftermath of the First Balkan War and the partial success of the Monarchy's ambitious Albanian policy. It is highly possible that the work had been inspired by Karl Steinmetz's (Northern) Albanian–German dictionary, published in Sarajevo in 1912.³⁰

30 Steinmetz, Karl. *Albanische Grammatik. Nordalbanische Mundart*. Sarajevo: J. Studnička, 1912; Steinmetz, Karl. *Albanisches Not-Wörterbuch (Nordalbanischer Dialekt)*. Sarajevo: J. Studnička, 1912.

The concept and publication of the dictionary accorded with contemporary Hungarian imperialistic aspirations. Based on the author's foreword, it may be assumed that he was aware of Thallóczy's relevant plans and clearly understood the role played by the Monarchy in the Albanian nation- and state-building process. László regarded Austria–Hungary as the Protector of all Albanians. He published his dictionary with the intention of allowing citizens of Hungarian nationality to directly contact and communicate with the Albanians.³¹ In the light of the above facts, it has remained a mystery why the author never nominated his work for the 1914 scholarship of the Academy of Sciences.

When, where and how could László collect the words and expressions published in his dictionary? All we know is that his data collection took place in the period between 1908 and 1912. László's publications as a journalist, a classical writer and as the author of the first Hungarian–Albanian dictionary suggest that he did not speak Albanian, but that he had picked up a lot by listening to speakers of the language. With his Albanian acquaintances he communicated in one of the Southern Slavic languages. It may also be assumed that in the regions he frequented, the Albanian and the Southern Slavic languages existed side by side and were in direct contact. Therefore, László was active most probably along the Peja–Gjakova–Prizren axis, in the Sanjak, in the Šar–Planina region (today's triple border of Albania, Kosovo and Macedonia) and in the town of Tetovo (Kalkandelen). He had never visited what is today Albania before 1914.³²

Who were László's closest Albanian acquaintances? Did he need the help of interpreters? He certainly did. One of the Albanians László had a close relationship with was “Mustafa Batanovich”, who appeared in several of his literary works and publications. Mustafa most probably was a member of the Rugova tribe and was László's housekeeper in Travnik and Sarajevo (we do not know the Albanian version of the name of Mustafa).³³ Mustafa had good connections not only in Rugova but also in the Sanjak and in what is today the northwestern part of Kosovo. In all probability, László's first acquaintances here were members of Mustafa's personal network, and it was Mustafa who introduced László to them. Ibrahim Avdar may have been one of these acquaintances.³⁴

Two other Albanian friends of László lived in Bosnia. Bey Mehmed Dubrich was László's fellow student at the university of Vienna, and it was with him that

31 László, Zoltán. *Az albán nyelv szótára (észak-albán, maljiszór tájszólás)*. Budapest: Lampel, 1913. 3–4.

32 László, Zoltán. ‘Érdekeltségünk Albániában.’ *Pesti Hírlap*, February 2, 1913. 34–35.

33 László, Zoltán. ‘Emlékek – utirajz.’ *Veszprémi Hírlap*, October 24, 1909. 3.

34 László, Zoltán. ‘Emlékek – utirajz.’ *Veszprémi Hírlap*, October 24, 1909. 2–3; Ed d'em, bed d'em. In *A vérvád átka alatt*, edited by Zoltán László, 124–126. Budapest: Lengyel, 1914.

László explored the Tetovo region and travelled along the Vardar.³⁵ He made Kustura Mehmed's acquaintance in Mostar and their connection lasted for years. He remembered Kustura as follows:

*"During my roamings in the Balkans, he proved to be a good guide. He spoke Turkish, Albanian and Serbian, and my knowledge of the languages that I picked up down there was partially thanks to his efforts."*³⁶

Besides this handful of Malësors, it seems impossible to identify any other Albanian interpreters or guides. But it may not even be necessary. By that time, the Monarchy's Albanian policy had borne fruit among ordinary Albanians, too.³⁷ Wherever László roamed, the Albanians were pleased to have a word with him. This way he was able to collect words from the dialects of such regions as he personally never visited.

The investigation of the dictionary provides further details about the locations and circumstances of László's work. The compilation contains a high proportion of words related to mountainous regions, which suggests that László collected words in the mountains, far from the more densely populated regions. He collected the vocabulary of geological objects (*mal-i*, *maje-maja*, *perpijete-ras*, *bjeskva*, *gryk-a*), words describing the dynamics of motion and differences in altitude or elevation (*me pri*; *hajd!*; *ec!*; *nelt*; *perpjét*; *n'*; *m'*; *mi*; *tepóst*; *post*; *n'fún*; *ti post!*), or means of transportation (*strem-i*, *kerr-i*; *ká-u*, *kal-i*).

The words collected in the Malësor mountain settlements formed another group. These expressions described the village (*katun*) and village life, the Malësor kinship and social strata (*fis-i*, *mefstar-i*), and customary law (*Kanuni Skanderbeut*, *plak*).

The dictionary features a surprisingly rich urban vocabulary from such towns as Prizren, Gjakova and Peja, which were visited personally by the author. Interestingly enough, it is possible that László was able to collect some urban words from Albanians dwelling in Shkodra. However, the author never went to that town before 1914. As László roamed the Albanian countryside between 1908 and 1912, he was very likely to have met people from Shkodra fleeing into the mountains or the territories of the Monarchy (Kotor or Bosnia) from the retributory actions of the Ottoman military. László collected the following words from the towns mentioned above: clock-maker (*sábhátçii-ja*), doctor (*heçim-i*), lady (*vajse*) / Miss (*zonja*) / "virgin" (*zonka*); pub or

35 László, Zoltán. 'Iza Boljetinac I. Útirajz.' *Pesti Hírlap*, July 28, 1912. 69; László, Zoltán. 'Iza Boljetinac II.' *Pesti Hírlap*, August 4, 1912. 70.

36 Kiszlár-Hirsizsz. In *A vérvád átka alatt*, edited by Zoltán László, 196. Budapest: Lengyel, 1914.

37 Scheer, Tamara. 'Minimale Kosten, absolut kein Blut!' Österreich-Ungarns Präsenz im Sandžak von Novipazar (1879–1908). Frankfurt et al.: Lang, 2013. 55–66; The Bab Krali-story, Vlora, Ekrem Bey. *Lebenserinnerungen 2*. München: Oldenbourg, 1973. 9–10.

inn (*mejháne-mejhánja*), banker (*sharafa*), shopkeeper (*tydzsár*), barber (*berber-i*), ferry (*trap-i*), ferry driver (*stremxhi-ja*), stamp (*pula*), Adria (*Buna*), potato (*kartoll*) and words of the coffee culture (*kafé-kafja*, *filxhán-i*, *kafé han-a*).

In order that the Hungarian economy could gain ground in the region, it was necessary to collect words of commerce and economy: commerce (*tyxharluk-melun*), trade (*dugáj-a*), merchandise (*me blee*, *me bualish-verish*), merchant (*tyxhár-i*, *mesbit-i*), how much? (*me kushtue?*), craftsman (*zanatlii-ja*), free (*bedihava*), encash (*mim-zer-bogjin*), money (*pare*). But investors needed to be familiar with the terminology of taxation and state administration and had to know the words for the local ranks (*vergien-a*, *menzer-borgjin*, *vergien me-la*; *meftar-i*, *zabit-i*; *kralj-i*, *mali katunit*). The dictionary also contains the Albanian names of some countries: Arabia (*Arapistán*), England (*Hinglis*), Austria (*Nemcia*), Bulgaria (*Bugaresh*), Egypt (*Katumet*), France (*Francus*), Greece (*Jonan*), Hungary (*Madjaristán*), Montenegro (*Karadak-u*, *Málizii*), Germany (*veni nemçesh*), Russia (*Miskovi*), Spain (*Kudus*) and Turkey (*Turkiija*).

The choice of lemmas in the dictionary by László is interesting also from a linguistic point of view. From a sociolinguistic one, it is interesting because of the lexical fields which are highly differentiated between urban and rural areas, between

14		15
elkészült, elkészülve	házer	erős
ellen	kah, kúnra	erőd
ellenség	annik-u	erős
eloltani	me fik	erősített ház
előadás	potoli masza mesi	esik (az eső)
előbb	perpára	esni (el-)
elől (előre) menni	me pri	eső
elől, előtti	perpára, pára	est
előljáró	meftar-i (községi); zabit-i (kerületi)	este
	hajd! ee!	esztendő (év)
előre! hajrá!	ma pára	etetni
előszőr	me osart	ozelött
elrontani	perpára	erüst
első sorban	me sküe	
elszakítani	me u lágue	É
eltávozni	me bujt	édes
eltölteni (az éjjelt)	me ù nisz	ég (az)
elutazni	me marr	égni
elvenni	me hup, me bjer	éj
elveszíteni	njir-i	éjjel
ember	dzsin-ja	éjjel
emberek	csó-o	éhes vagyok
emelni	izn-i	éhség
engedély	müe	éles,
engem (accus)	m'	élet
engem (igék előtt)	me hanger	élni
enni	ana me buk; ana buk	élni
adj enni!	jem, jeme	én
enyém	csékács	énekelni
ennyi		
		püll-a
		kalá-ja
		fort
		kula-ja
		me ras sii
		me rá, me u rdzue
		sii-u
		mráme-ja; aksám
		n' mrame
		vjet-a
		me dhan me hanger
		perpára
		szerm-i

The first Hungarian–Albanian Dictionary 1913, page 8

plain and mountain, between private and professional sphere and so forth, as it is described above. Sociolinguistically speaking, some explanations that give cultural information about the background of the informants, could be highlighted like *vajz-a* ‘girl, lady and whore (!)’, then everything within the meaning of ‘single’, or like *me prish* ‘hurt, abuse’, which refers to a state of being emotionally and socially destroyed.

What else is hidden in László’s Hungarian–Albanian dictionary? The work is a bilingual – Hungarian–Albanian – concise dictionary. As for the Hungarian part, it is a simple concise dictionary. On the other hand, the Albanian part also includes features of a phrase book with Hungarian lexemes that have been described or rewritten, or even sometimes with a whole sentence used in everyday communication. The Albanian expressions in the dictionary were taken from the spoken language. It is a small dictionary, with 51 pages altogether, six of which are introductory texts (i.e. preface and manual), 43 pages corpora and approximately two pages an appendix (lexical sets of a phrase book – numerals, weeks, holidays, seasons and months).

The structure and inner logic of the dictionary reveals why the dictionary was created in that era, what competences the author had and how the working process evolved until the completion of the dictionary. In that vein, we learn first that the author had not mastered Albanian and had not examined contemporary scholarly literature. He worked in a purely empirical manner.

Numerous examples testify to these facts: for example, where he marked the word boundaries (even more words for one as *me nji heer* < *menjiheer*, or even one word for more like *poshitet* < *po shitet*), phrase definition (*nishanxhi* ‘(a) guard’ for ‘guard/protect’, one-word-phrase *Ruju!*, ‘take care of yourself’ for the infinitive, ‘to take care’), typical mishearings of an untrained researcher (*kakrull* for *kaprull* ‘deer’), confusion about unstressed vowels (*sokush* instead of *sekush* ‘each’) or hardening in the final position, that the author often, but not always, indicates. The author reveals his knowledge of South Slavic through his way of writing the Albanian lexemes. Although he states in the preface that he relies on Hungarian when writing Albanian words, he mostly does not reproduce orthographically the schwa near the resonant frequencies, so that *ër* (*r*), *ël* (*l*), *ëm*, *ën* are reproduced in accordance with the Slavic rule of syllabic *r* only through the resonants *r*(*r*), *l*(*l*), *m*, *n*.

With the intention of collecting the language material for the dictionary during his research trip to the Albanian areas, the author had certainly decided to undertake some preparations. This, however, implied the selection of the Hungarian lexemes, probably due to his lack of knowledge of Albanian. His corpus shows that the author was not aware of already existing Albanian dictionaries. Therein, he could have had access both linguistically and geographically to the dictionary by Gustav Meyer.

Other contemporary dictionaries, like the one by Bashkimi (1908),³⁸ were even less known and accessible for the author. Otherwise, contradictory or slightly different translations or spelling errors would not have occurred.

The Albanian expressions in the dictionary were taken from the spoken language. Many features of these language idioms can be found in the appendix of the dictionary or, for example, in such prepositions as *n'* (< *në*) or *s'* (< *më*). The author is not familiar with the genitive and adjective article as such because he empirically never encountered those. These are not applied in the spoken language because they appear only as part of the preceding noun. The names of the countries represent the best example of the empirically provided language material without any knowledge of the Albanian, as these often require a reconstructed context in order not to be seen as mistakes, apart from the fact that these are orientalisms: for example, England ~ *Hinglis*, Arabia ~ *Arapistan*, Austria ~ *Nemcia* (slav. for Germany), Bulgaria ~ *Bugares* (ablative with *ven* land of Bulgarians), Egypt ~ *Katumet*, Greece ~ *Jonan*, Macedonia ~ *Shipnija* (certainly determined by the northern part of Kosovo with respect to the neighbouring regions Tetovo and Skopje, shaped by Albanian culture), Hungary ~ *Madjaristan*, Russia ~ *Miskovi*, Spain ~ *Kudus* (Turkish for Jerusalem).

This means that the language material was empirically collected. Thereupon, he must have proceeded with the help of informants and participant observation. This method helps us as linguists to embed the differing translations into the reconstructed context, like in the case of country names, in order to avoid errors in labelling. The word *k(ë)rnj,-i* 'beech' would therefore be misleading on the basis of pure philological analysis. However, if we apply empirical methods in the gathering of data, we could imagine the following situation: the author is placed somewhere at a central location (a village or the city of Prizren) and points to the places and objects in front of him and his informant. This helps us with the following analysis of the aforementioned word *k(ë)rnj,-i*: From the Serb. *krnj*, 'broken', 'damaged', in the context of 'folded beech tree'. With his "synonyms" *ah-i* 'beech' (with *-i* in Kosovo) and *çeshmo* 'water fountain', László describes to us the place of the collection like a movie director: A water fountain, with the surrounding public squares and a beech tree, in terms of 'at village square (with beech and watering place)', as it is the common case in the Balkans. In this manner, one could reconstruct even whole situations.

For example, with the word *eshótsia (vllamt)* < *e shó(ç)ia e vlla(a)mt* 'bride'. Here, the informant is the brother-in-law of the person shown, most likely at a wedding, whereupon the author points to the bride and asks about the word. The brother-in-law responds by saying 'the wife of my brother'. It also indicates that the author must have come into contact with families in order to be able to approach the lexical field of "Family".

38 Bashkimi, Shoqnia. *Fjaluer i Rii i Shcypes*. Shkodër: Preie Shocniéet t' Bashkimit, 1908.

Allegedly, other mistakes could be the result of errors in the recording methods used by the author, or they could result from misunderstandings during the printing process. The author must have transposed the oral interviews into writing on the spot. Allegedly, no other recording technique was used. Letter ornaments, that the author causes via handwritten notes, such as *aer-a* < (*d*)*er*,-*a* ‘door’, *borbér-i* < *berbér*,-*i* ‘hairdresser’ and *me bo rapf* < *me bo(o) r(r)afsh* ‘compensate’.

Finally, the printing house also had its impact on the book. Obvious mistakes, which most probably would not have been made by the author, are, for example, the repetition of the nasality (*une kam u* < *une kam (û)* ‘I am hungry’ > one line down: *û-ja* < *û(û)*,-*ja* ‘hungry’), the non-active infinitive (almost always *me + u +* participle, but not here: *me lã* < *me (u) laa* ‘to wash oneself’) and the vowel length (always double *i* for the long *i*, but here within the long *ü*: *baktü* for *baktii* ‘beef’).

A consideration of the empirical methodologies of the language data collection and printing enables us to reconstruct the contexts surrounding the words and therefore to exclude the mistakes of translation and meaning, which would have been certainly considered as such in case of a purely philological work.

László’s dictionary reflects the Albanian of the period, given the use of loanwords of Turkic and Slavic origin. It requires no special research to determine that the number of orientalisms in the form of Turkic, Arabic and Persian words that entered Albanian via Turkish, is very large in this dictionary. Of the 1261 entries, 71 are orientalisms, some of which are repeated in further entries. Approximately one quarter of these orientalisms are still being widely used today, including *penxhere* ‘window’, despite the colloquial form.³⁹ Almost the same quantity of orientalisms appears outside Albania or only in certain regions due to the settled language purism after the Second World War that suppressed these words from everyday vocabulary.⁴⁰ Nearly half of these are not even used today, probably as a result of the Albanian national movement. It is remarkable, though, that most of the orientalisms are nouns and adverbs. Among the nouns we find many items (*zabit*), professions (*sahatxhi*), country names (*Hingliz*), or population names (*orum* ‘Romans’, *at* ‘Greek’).

Slavic words, which today are common in the Albanian dialects of the former Yugoslav territories, are surprisingly rare in the dictionary. For example, today Slavic words like *çeetk*, *-a* ‘brush’ or *viluushk*, *-a* ‘fork’ can be heard almost everywhere outside Albania. On the contrary, there are words in the dictionary that are labelled as regional variants used in Albania, such as *bruush*,-*a* and *pirun*, *-i*. Nevertheless we can trace the influence of the newly appeared national movement, namely in the

39 See: Jusufi, Lumnije and Pani, Pandeli. *Dem Purismus zum Trotz: Das Überleben der Turzismen im Albanischen*. It is published shortly in *Mediterranean Language Review*, edited by Matthias Kappler, Werner Arnold and Till Stellino. Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2016.

40 Ibid.

Slavic word *orl,-i* for eagle, the Albanian national symbol. In this way, the dictionary captures the spirit of the period.

The dialect material of the dictionary represents another asset to Albanology. The author states in the preface that areas marked by the Gheg dialect served as a source for his language material. However, the language material provides numerous features of the Gheg dialect like the Gheg verb infinitive forms or vowel groups *ue* and *ye*, nasals instead of consonant clusters (*n < nd*, *m < mb*), or *n* instead of rhotacism, as well as a very strong vowel nasalization.

But which isoglosses of the Gheg area did the author consider? As already noted, he only gave partial information. The above historiographical assessments are based on the instructions and features taken from the corpus. Regarding the doublets, the author refers to Gjakova and Prizren, which are for him comparable starting points, as implied within the other language features, such as the language spoken in Shkodra and the surrounding area. (This is reflected in the translation of the River Buna with the Adriatic surrounding. Only in Shkodra does the Buna flow into the Adriatic.) It is likely that during the interview the author or his informant confused the two bodies of water. Further, many dialect features are contained within the language corpus, such as:

- Lexis: *kinxb,-i* ‘lamb’, *nadje* ‘in the morning’
- Phonetics: the palatalized plosive *gʲ*⁴¹, in 15 lexemes that the author gives as the grapheme *gj*, which is not to be mistaken with the present-day standard Albanian palatal plosive *j*, due to the fact that it first appears in the fricative consonant *dʒ* and secondly that we find a counterpart *kj* (*me kjaa* ‘weep’)
- Grammar: Assertive masculine form at *-k*, *-g*, *-b* with *-u*.

But we can also trace many examples from the northeastern Gheg dialect, found today in Kosovo, such as:

- Lexis: *kallamoç,-i* ‘corn’, *me muujt* ‘can’
- Phonetics: the open *a*, given as *e* by the author, which is typical for the western part of Kosovo (*lerg* ‘faraway’), *g* instead of *gj* (*për t’gaat* ‘long ago’)
- Grammar: Assertive masculine form at *-k*, *-g*, *-b* mit *-i*.

The following doublets display this most clearly:

- Lexis: *nalt* vs. *nelt* ‘above/up’, *pasul,-i* vs. *fasule,-ja* ‘bean’, etc.
- Phonetics: *kj* vs. *k*: *shk(j)aa,-u* ‘Slav’
- Translation: *shk(j)aa,-u* for the Slavic (orthodox) neighbours (Montenegrians around Shkodra, Kosovo Serbs, the Orthodox everywhere).

Six lexemes enable us to follow the author even beyond the central Gheg area of Luma and Tetovo. This refers to a set of traditional laws, such as Kanuni i

41 The highly positioned *j* should avoid the graphic confusion with the sound *j* (*gj*) in standard Albanian.

Skanderbegut, that bear this name only in the specific region, with the following four words: *sounte* ‘today evening’, *përsëypri* ‘over/above’, *kruic,-i* ‘cross’, *zenjin,-i* ‘rich’ and *secajli/secajla* ‘each’.

The dictionary covers the entire northern area of the Gheg dialect with some examples from the southern central Gheg isoglosses.

Conclusion

László’s dictionary is a perfect illustration of the treasures that can be unearthed by researching the history of Hungarian Albanology. The reconstruction of the historical background of the first modern Hungarian–Albanian dictionary draws attention to many facts that are almost unknown in international historiography. Firstly, it is revealed that besides the Ballhausplatz the Hungarian government also had imperialist aspirations towards the Orient, which were to be realised and legitimized partly by means of scientific studies and fieldwork. Secondly, it gives a general overview of the longstanding traditions of Hungarian Oriental Studies. Thirdly, it sheds light on the fact that Hungary’s “Oriental policy” primarily targeted the Albanian, Bosnian and Turkish peoples.

From the linguistic point of view, László’s dictionary represents in many ways a valuable source for the spoken Albanian language (language elements, varieties, borrowings). From a sociolinguistic perspective, the dictionary appears just as interesting in relation to the highly differentiated word-fields and to the culturally determined content surrounding lemmas, and thus it brings us closer to the people of those times. A good publication is perceived to have literary worth when it is timeless. But in scientific terms, its value lies in being a witness to the past in the manner of Zoltán László’s Hungarian–Albanian dictionary from the year 1913. László greatly enriched the heritage of the Albanian language.

