

CULTURAL RELATIONS BETWEEN ALBANIA AND HUNGARY DURING AND AFTER THE COMMUNIST DICTATORSHIP

A BRIEF INTRODUCTION

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Abstract: This paper presents various important aspects in the cultural relations between Albania and Hungary, both during the communist regime that lasted almost 50 years in Albania (1944-1992), and in the last thirty years (1993-2022), which are considered “the democracy years” in Albania, although they have rather been years of protracted transition. The paper presents important information about: a) Albanian students who were educated in Hungary; b) linguistic and literary publications created in the two countries, both in Albanian and Hungarian, and c) relations between the two countries, especially in education over the last 30 years.

Keywords: Albanian students in Hungary, University of Budapest, Hungarian revolution, communist dictatorship, Albanian language and literature, Hungarian language and literature, Hungarian writers, Albanian writers, publications, Albanian and Hungarian universities

Introduction

Relations between Albania and Hungary began in the year 1922, when Albania was already an independent country. This was followed by a break in inter-state relations due to fascist occupation (1939-1942) first by Italy, then by Nazi Germany (1943-1944). The relations between the two states were restored with the liberation of the country in October 1944.

However, the relations between the two peoples (Csaplár-Degovics, 2019, 340) go back to the time of the Árpáds (Sufflay, 1916, 294-298), and the spread of Benedictine monasteries in the Albanian territories during the early Middle Ages. According to the great Croatian medievalist Milan Šufflay, “the monasteries of medieval Albania belonged to the type of high assemblies with extensive properties, similar to the great abbeys of Hungary and Italy” (Sufflay, 1916, 267). This paper focuses on cultural relations during the period of communist dictatorship (Malaj, 2016, 269-282; Malaj, 2021, 7-32), concentrating on exchanges in education and culture. The article is divided into four sections, which explore the education of Albanian students in Hungary; publications on Hungarian language and literature in Albania; publications about the Albanian language, literature, and culture in Hungary; and today's relations in education.

The Education of Albanian Students in Hungary

From 1948 until the Hungarian revolution

Albanian-Hungarian relations in education began in 1948, after the reestablishment of diplomatic relations in 1947 (Kacziba, 2017, 99; Central Intelligence Agency [CIA], 1988, 43). Albania and Hungary reached an agreement for higher education cooperation, and 70 students of the Higher Institute of Sciences of Tirana travelled to Hungary in 1948 (Kaloçi, 2016). The students had to learn the Hungarian language before beginning their studies in the fields of journalism, pharmacy, medicine, and archaeology (Kopliku & Dibra, 2017, 136). The Albanian students mostly studied at various faculties of Eötvös Loránd University and the Budapest University of Medicine [which was known as the “The Medical Faculty” until 1951 and was later renamed Semmelweis University (Eötvös Loránd University, n.d.)]. Semmelweis University emphasizes the participation of its students in the 1956 Hungarian revolution to this day (Semmelweis University, n.d.).

From the beginning of the program, Hungarian was taught by professor István Schütz, a young linguist who had just finished his studies in Hungarian and Latin literature. The literature does not provide more information about how many

classes were taught and how many participants participated in the courses. Schütz communicated with students in English and Italian. The contact with the Albanians was also the beginning of Albanological studies for Schütz, who later wrote a grammar book of the Albanian language for Hungarians (Schütz, 2002).

Thoma Dardeli, one of the Albanian students at the Faculty of Medicine in the 1950s, mentions 70–75 Albanian students, and people who had come for different specializations (Dardeli, 2015, 66). Other sources give a number of 40 students and 30 specialists. The scholarship for these students was paid for by the Hungarian government, which initially amounted to 650 forints. By May 1952, the scholarship increased to 900 forints because prices had doubled during that period (Dardeli, 2015, 66). The Albanian students in Budapest later had a club at November 7 square (*Oktogon* today), where they held their celebrations and cultural activities (Dardeli, 2015, 11).

During and After the Hungarian Revolution

The Albanian students continued their studies until the outbreak of the Hungarian revolution in 1956 (Kaloçi, 2016), when some of them, including Dardeli, got involved in the revolution. Dardeli was active in the anti-communist movement in Hungary and took part in the Petőfi Club revolt, which was mostly attended by students. The Albanian ambassador to Hungary, Bato Karafili advised the Albanian students not to take part in these developments (Kaloçi, 2016). This was more than understandable, as the Albanian communist state could not allow its students to be involved in an anti-communist movement like the Hungarian revolution. The Soviet tanks mercilessly suppressed this movement for freedom and democracy, as Khrushchev did not allow Hungary to leave the Communist Bloc. Enver Hoxha, Albania's communist leader¹ fully approved the intervention of Soviet tanks in Budapest (Boriçi, 2022, 28–29).

1 “Hoxha, Enver (1908–85) was an Albanian statesman, founder of the Albanian Communist Party 1941, Prime Minister 1944–54, and First Secretary of the Albanian Communist Party 1954–85. He rigorously isolated Albania from Western influences and implemented a Stalinist programme of nationalization and collectivization.” in: Lexico UK English Dictionary. Oxford University Press. n.d. Retrieved 14 July, 2022.

The revolution left indelible memories in Thoma Dardeli, who later wrote the Albanian-language book “Revolucioni Antikomunit Hungarez” [Hungarian Anti-Communist Revolution (Dardeli, 2015)]. The book describes the historical development of the revolution based on Dardeli’s experiences as an active participant. Many years later, Dardeli also wrote a Hungarian-Albanian conversational dictionary (Dardeli, 2012, 306), dedicating the book to his close Hungarian friends, especially Dr. Ferenc Gerencsér and his classmate Ilona Tóth, who was executed in 1957 for taking an active part in the revolution. Dardeli’s book ends with a chapter of grammatical explanations for both languages (Dardeli, 2012, 274-304).

In addition to these two books, Dardeli also compiled an Albanian-Hungarian Bibliography in collaboration with Klára Rudas in 1955 [*Albán-magyar bibliográfia: bibliográfiai kísérlet* (Rudas & Dardeli, 1956)], which contains information about Hungarian and foreign authors’ works on Albania (Dardeli, 2015, 146). The bibliography was written in Hungarian and published in Budapest in 1956.

After his return to Albania, the regime persecuted Dardeli, and he spent 11 years in political prison². He later worked in the most distant mountain villages of Albania. The cause of this persecution was “*Agitation and propaganda and influence of the Hungarian Counter-revolution*”. In 1962, two people were arrested along with Dardeli, Vangjel Kule and Islam Spahiu. They were accused of being part of a “hostile group”, and their leader was alleged to have been Thoma Dardeli (Kaloçi, 2016). In 1991, immediately after the fall of the dictatorship, Dardeli founded the Albanian-Hungarian Friendship Association in Shkoder (Dardeli, 2012, 305-306), and a street in Shkoder was named “*The Hungarian Anti-Communist Revolution of October 1956*” at his initiative (Ruga “Revolucioni Antikomunist Hungarez”, Shkodër).

2 When Dardeli was in prison, in 1962, he also testified for two Hungarian convicts from Vojvodina, who were very surprised that Dardeli communicated with them in Hungarian. Dardeli does not mention the names of these convicts. Another Hungarian convict, Jozef Fehnvesh, born in Nagy Cakan in 1904, married to Margit, also a Hungarian, is mentioned in Dardeli’s memoirs. This family came to Albania in 1934 and settled in Tirana, where they later owned a shop. Small. Jozef was allegedly arrested as an Anglo-American agent and in 1947 sentenced by a military court to several years in prison. The jury consisted of Captain Faik Minarolli, Captain Shaban Rexha, and Sergeant Halil Grapshi. His wife Margit also requested mercy because they were foreigners. For more information, see: Th. Dardeli, *Revolucioni ...*, p. 169-171.

Beside Dardeli, other Albanian students also took part in the revolution, including Hysni Sinomati, Ramadan Muço, Sanie Lama, and Ilija Dedi, who were described as mouthpieces of the Hungarian counter-revolution and openly portrayed as anti-Soviets (Lalaj, 2015, 101). Ilija Dedi studied journalism at the University of Budapest and experienced the events of the Hungarian revolution up close. Dedi later worked as a journalist at Radio Tirana and the newspaper “Puna” (Work). He also wrote about his memories of the revolution.³ There were also some among the Albanian students who were against the revolution. For example, Muhamed Bala, who later became a doctor. He thought the Red Army had liberated Hungary, and that the Hungarian people should be grateful “because that is what the Communist Party in Albania says about it” (Dardeli, 2015, 19). Based on what Dardeli writes about him, Bala was not involved in the revolution. Beside the names above, medical students Lika Kolani and Zogulla Dhima from Gjirokastra (Southern Albania) studied pharmacy (Dardeli, 2015, 14), but there is no information available whether they participated in the revolution. Students who studied in Hungary also included Hëna Spahiu (1933-1993), one of the most qualified archaeologists of Albania during the communist regime. According to Miklós Takács and Péter Langó, “Hëna Spahiu received her diploma in archaeology at Eötvös Loránd University (Budapest) in 1957. An obituary (Iliria, 1993, 297-299) was published in 1993 commemorating her life and achievement in archaeology, but the author only briefly mentions Hëna Spahiu’s studies in Hungary”⁴ (Takács & Langó, 2019, 318-319).

3 Some of his memories about the revolution can be read in American-Albanian newspapers “Dielli, 14 November, 2021”.

4 “Hëna Spahiu took interest in the Koman culture of the Migration Period and she enjoyed the full confidence of the Albanian party bureaucracy when in 1953 she started her studies in Budapest. She chose Gyula László, a famous professor at Eötvös Loránd University, as her mentor. Spahiu’s thesis on the Koman culture clearly demonstrates that she was fully qualified to become an expert of Koman-Avar relations and perhaps to lead research on the Vrap Treasure. Her career, however, was cut short after the Albanian-Soviet split in 1961. As the country moved closer towards China and then shifted to isolationism, Hëna Spahiu could not stay in touch with her Hungarian colleagues, even though in Budapest she had come to know Ilona Kovrig, another excellent researcher of the Avar era. Hëna Spahiu’s Hungarian education was no longer considered an asset; the cultural bodies of the party state disregarded her even in the 1980s when, in return for financial compensation, the country allowed some German and Austrian researchers to examine certain items of Albania’s medieval archaeological heritage. She was also not selected when a group of Albanian archaeologists along with the already mentioned Joachim Werner were requested to authenticate the archaeological site of the Vrap treasure. It should be noted that Albanian archaeologists were never invited to participate in research projects on the Vrap treasure, apart from providing on-the-spot help to Werner during his field survey.”

Willingly or not, almost all the Albanian students returned to Albania immediately after the revolution, since if someone did not return home, the communist regime would persecute the whole family on account of them. There are dozens of such cases of persecution against the families of dissidents in the history of the communist period of Albania. Some of the students were later persecuted and did not have a career in their chosen field due to persecution for their alleged participation in the Hungarian revolution (Instituti i Studimit të Krimeve dhe të Pasojave të Kumunizmit, 2013, 54; Kaloçi, 2016).

On the other side, there is no information to suggest that Hungarian students studied in Albania during this time period. The first university in Albania was the University of Tirana, which was founded in May 1957. Since relations between Albania and Hungary only lasted until 1962 (Dardeli, 2015, 164),⁵ it was difficult to have Hungarian students at the University of Tirana when relations between the two countries were severed four years after its foundation.

Publications on Hungarian Language and Literature in Albania

In terms of the publications that were made in Albania about the Hungarian language and culture, we cannot talk about publications in Hungarology during this time. “*Swallows. Hungarian Stories*” (Kokona, 1956, 204), a volume of Hungarian stories was translated from Russian by Vedat Kokona and published in 1956. The edition was completed by March 1956, some time before the Hungarian revolution. The volume includes several short stories written by Sándor Petőfi, Kálmán Mikszáth, Zoltán Ambrus, Zsigmond Móricz, György Gera, Erzsébet Gallgbeti, and Anna Balázs. This gap in publications on Hungarian literature, language, and culture continued for decades, although some sporadic translations

⁵ As mentioned above, diplomatic relations between Hungary and Albania were established on 16 September, 1947, at the rank of legates. The embassies functioned from 14 February, 1954 until 1961, when relations deteriorated. From then until 1989, there was only an official in charge temporarily. After this year, relations were raised to the rank of embassies again.

were published. For example, Zsigmond Móricz's tale "The Seven Krajcers" (Moric, 1983) was translated from Russian by Aurel Plasari in 1983. Plasari also translated a volume of poetry by Attila József entitled "Forest friend, rustle!" from Russian. Other books of Hungarian literature translated into Albanian between the 1940s and the 1990s include:

- Ferenc Molnár: The Paul Street Boys. This novel has several translations into Albanian, before and during the communist regime⁶;
- Zsigmond Móricz: Relatives, translated by Afrim Koçi (Moric, 1980);
- Zsolt Harsányi: Franc List, translated from French by Ramazan Hysa (Harshanji, 1991),
- Arthur Koestler: Darkness at Noon (Koestler, 1993).

As shown above, these works were not translated from the original Hungarian but from other languages, such as Russian, French, or German. Although these literary works were written by well-known Hungarian authors, their texts did not present any "threat" to the Albanian communist state, which is why they were allowed to be translated and published.

Many of the students who studied Hungarian found it impossible to publish and translate especially during the first decades of the communist dictatorship. Some of them ended up in prison and internment camp, as mentioned before. The ideas of the Hungarian revolution left their mark on them, they had changed their political worldview, and they could no longer find themselves in their own country, which was under savage communist dictatorship. Therefore, during the decades until the fall of the dictatorship, there were neither dictionary nor grammar publications of the Hungarian language from the Albanian side, nor were there direct translations from Hungarian. The only dictionary that was published in Tirana during the communist period is the dictionary of Hungarian Albanologists.

6 I first cite here *Spiro Dedaj's* translation of this novel from Hungarian into Northern Albanian in 1939: Molnar Ferenc, *Djelmët e Rrugës Paal*. Përktheu S. Dedaj. Botim II. Shkodër: A. Gjergj Fishta. 1944. Spiro Dedaj studied in Budapest and he obviously translated the novel from the Hungarian language. The second translation belongs to Andon Frashëri (*1892-†1965), an Albanian dissident, who was put in prison in 1946 by the communist regime. The novel was translated from French, and was published in 2003, many years after the death of A. Frashëri: Molnar, Ferenc, *Çunat e rrugës Palë*. Roman. Përktheu: Andon Frashëri. Tiranë" Redona 2003.

After the fall of the communist dictatorship, some translations of Hungarian literature were published in the Albanian language, including the volume of Hungarian tales “The Golden-haired Princes” (Arany, 2004, 212) by László Arany, translated by Lazam Loldashi.

Publications on the Albanian Language, Literature, and Culture in Hungary

Various Translations

Albania and Hungary signed a Cultural Convention in 1950, which was ratified a year later (Albanian Official Gazette, 1951, 1011-1015). An indirect result of this convention included two publications: an anthology of well-known Albanian authors published in 1952⁷, and *The complete Albanian-Hungarian dictionary* published in 1953 mentioned above (Tamás et al., 1953). The anthology contains texts by well-known Albanian authors, also including writers who were loyal to Enver Hoxha’s political system. The following authors were included in the anthology and some of the most important the titles of the texts and their translators are in the footnotes, too:

Mark Ndoja, Naim Frashëri, Anton Zako Çajupi, Vaso Pasha Migjeni (Millosh Gjergj Nikolla), Qemal Stafa, Shevqet Musaraj, Zihni Sako, Aleks Çaçi, Kolë Jakova, Qamil Guranjaku, Fatmir Gjata, Llazar Siliqi, Drago Siliqi, Luan Qafezezi, Dalan Shaplllo, Vehbi Skënderi, Mark Gurakuqi, three folksongs about Enver Hoxha, “A brief overview of new Albanian literature” by István Schütz (Schütz, 1952). Many translators contributed to the creation of the anthology. The anthology and the dictionary include well-known names in linguistics, such as Lajos Tamás, editor-in-chief of this publication, and later Director (1966-1973) of the Research Institute of Linguistics of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences (Stammerjohann, 2009, 1468), and further editor István Schütz.

⁷ I am grateful to Ferenc Németh for showing me this anthology. A copy of this book is held in the National Library of Albania (*ar.120.d.17* and *87b.f.47*).

Contributions by István Schütz, Lajos Tamás, and others

The above-mentioned *Albanian-Hungarian dictionary* had some additions by Albanian linguist Aleksandër Xhuvani. Albanologist Lajos Tamás, who stayed in Albania for ten weeks of research in 1952, collected material for the dictionary (Draçini, 2017, 128-129). István Schütz compiled the dictionary, assisted by two Albanian students, Zef Rakacolli and Kudret Velça (Schütz, 2005, 155). The group submitted the manuscript of the dictionary to the Academy of Sciences in Tirana in 1952. Schütz relied on a previous Northern Albanian-Hungarian dictionary, published in 1913 by Zoltán László, which was a Malësor-Hungarian dictionary [malësor means 'highlander' (Csaplár-Degovics & Jusufi, 2019, 266)]. "What promoted the publication of (this) dictionary was the 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" (Csaplár-Degovics & Jusufi, 2019).⁸ The new dictionary of 18,000 words was mostly in the southern Albanian dialect, while the rest of the work includes a short "Grammar for the Albanian language" (Draçini, 2017, 130).

István Schütz started teaching Hungarian to Albanian students in 1948, when he was 25 years old. He learned about the Albanian language through his Albanian students, and he fell in love with the Albanian language, literature, and culture (Haxhi & Priku, 2017, 8). He learned Albanian under difficult conditions because there was a lack of grammar books and exercises, and yet he learned Albanian so perfectly that it was later difficult to distinguish whether he was Albanian or a foreigner (Haxhi & Priku, 2017). Later he could introduce Albanian even at university. Professor Schütz also mentions the contribution of Professor Béla Köpeczi (1921-2010), who served as Deputy Secretary-General of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences, as well as Minister of Education and Culture. Köpeczi personally supported the introduction of Albanian language studies.

8 The two works of Steinmetz have the titles "Steinmetz, Karl, *Albanische Grammatik. Nordalbanische Mundart*. Sarajevo: J. Studnička 1912; and "Steinmetz, Karl, *Albanisches Notwörterbuch. (Nordalbanischer Dialekt)*. Sarajevo: J. Studnička 1912."

Schütz translated into Hungarian the works of many Albanian authors, including Dritëro Agolli, Ismail Kadare, Petro Marko, Qamil Buxheli, Mihal Hanxhari, Fatos Kongoli, Fatmir Gjata, Rexhep Qosja, Ali Podrimja, Brunilda Zllami and Përparim Kabo. These include the following (Library and Information Center of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences, n.d.):

Independent volumes and contributions

- *Albanian-Hungarian dictionary*. Editor-in-Chief Tamás Lajos. Budapest: Akadémiai Kiadó. 1953. 379 p. [Grammar examples and dialect guide by István Schütz] (Albán–magyar szótár. Főszerk. Tamás Lajos. Budapest: Akadémiai Kiadó. 1953 [A nyelvtani példatár és nyelvjárási útmutató Schütz István munkája])
- István Schütz: *The Army of the Albanian People*. Budapest: Zrínyi Kiadó. 1958. = *Our Weapons of Friends*, 5. 64 p. (Schütz István: *Az albán néphadsereg*. Budapest: Zrínyi Kiadó. 1958. = *Fegyverbarátaink*, 5.)
- Schütz István: *White Spots in the Balkans: An Introduction to Albanology and Balkan Studies*. Budapest: Balassi Kiadó. 2002. (Schütz István: *Fehér foltok a Balkánon: Bevezetés az albanológiába és a balkanisztikába*. Budapest: Balassi Kiadó. 2002.)
- István Schütz: *Albanian language book*. Budapest: Balassi Kiadó. 2002. 177 p. (Schütz István: *Albán nyelvkönyv*. Budapest: Balassi Kiadó. 2002.)

Translations

His many translations include:

- *The Beauty of the Earth: Albanian Folk Tales*. 241 p (A föld szépe: Albán népmesék. Ford. és az utószót írta Schütz István. Budapest: Európa Kiadó. 1957)
- Fatmir Gjata: *Love in the Valley*, 166 p. (Fatmir Gjata: *Szerelem a völgyben*. Ford. Schütz István. Budapest: Európa Kiadó. 1960.)
- *Pomegranate blooms: Albanian historical songs, ballads and folk songs*. (Virágzik a pomagránát: Albán históriás énekek, balladák és népdalok. Vál. és az utószót írta Schütz István. Budapest: Európa Kiadó. 1968. 350 p.

- Ismail Kadare: *General of the Dead Army*: Novel. (Ismail Kadare: A halott hadsereg tábornoka: Regény. Budapest: Európa Kiadó. 1972. 335 p.
- Qamil Buxheli: Mr. Maksut's career: Novel. 317 p. (Qamil Buxheli: Maksut úr karrierje: Regény. Ford. Schütz István. Budapest: Európa Kiadó. 1978)
- Ismail Kadare: *Aeschylus, this big loser*. 166 p. (Ismail Kadare: Aiszkhülosz, a nagy vesztes. Ford. Schütz István. Budapest: Európa Kiadó. 2001)

Schütz contributed not only to linguistics but also to other fields of Albanology, for example, through a volume of Albanian tales published in 1957 (Schütz, 1957).⁹ In 1958, Schütz travelled to Albania as an interpreter for a Hungarian parliamentary delegation, and he continued to work as a translator for various delegations until relations between the two states broke down. His name, according to him, was then put on a blacklist, and he could not travel to Albania until 1988 (Haxhi & Priku, 2017, 10).

Another Albanologist who also contributed to the field of Albanology and was a member of the Albanian-Hungarian dictionary project, was Lajos Tamás [Trem]. He studied Albanian at the University of Sorbonne during 1927-28, where he received a certificate in Albanian (Szerecz, 2016, 43). He travelled to Albania for a study tour in 1952 (Haxhi & Priku, 2017, 10) and brought the above-mentioned manuscript of the Albanian-Hungarian dictionary with him.

Beside the dictionary, several volumes of Albanian folklore were published in Hungary during the 1960s (Schütz, 2000, 106). After the publication of the dictionary, the compilation of an Albanian grammar for Hungarians began, but it was never published. The Institute of Sciences of Albania supervised and approved the manuscript, but the disruption of interstate relations in 1962 also brought the “death” of cultural-scientific relations (Schütz, 2000, 106).

Therefore, although in June 1955 several treaties of friendship were ratified between the People's Socialist Republic of Albania and other (communist-socialist) republics, including the Republic of Hungary (Albanian Official

9 An exemplar of this book is in the Biblioteka Kombëtare e Shqipërisë (National Library of Albania) (al.2.g.7.)

Gazette, 1955, 233), these friendly relations did not last long, as they were frozen in 1962, which interrupted any kind of project that was in progress. An anthology of Albanian poems, which was being enthusiastically prepared in Budapest, suffered the same fate (Schütz, 2000, 105-106), since with the freezing of relations between the two countries it was not possible to publish it any more. The talented Hungarian painter Lajos Vincze visited Albania on a scholarship during the 1950s (Schütz, 2000, 105-106), staying for several months and painting folk costumes and characteristic tools around the country. The anthology was called “*The pomegranate is in bloom*” (Virágzik a pomagránát) (Schütz, 1968), and 980 copies of it appeared years later, in 1968, disappearing from the market within a short time.

György Réti's Contribution

Another scholar who lived in Albania during the communist period was György Réti, who worked at the Embassy of Hungary in Tirana during the 1970s¹⁰. He wrote several articles and books in Hungarian and English on Albania, which are not yet accessible in Albania (Réti, 1989, 109-126) because they have not been translated into Albanian. His articles include “*Albania's Foreign Policy after the break-up with China*” (Réti, 1983, 189-199), while his books include “*Main Directions in International Relations of the Albanian Labor Party (1941-1961)*” (Réti, 1985). In this book, Réti talks about the activity of the Labour Party of Albania (the former Communist Party) from its inception in 1941 to 1961. His books of Albanological value include the book “*Albania*” (*Albánia*) (Réti, 1991), published in 1991, which is a small encyclopaedia about Albania, giving a general overview of the history of the Albanian people, starting from the Illyrians to the period that coincides with the last decade of the communist dictatorship.

After the fall of communism, Réti wrote another book about Albania entitled “*The turning points of Albania*” (*Albánia sorsfordulói*) (Réti, 2000). In this book, the author talks about the relations and alliances that

¹⁰ I could not find more detailed information about György Réti's activity at the Embassy of Hungary in Tirana.

Albania made during the twentieth century. The author describes the key prominent figures who influenced Albanian history, such as Skanderbeg, the Frasheri Brothers, Ismail Qemali, Fan Noli, Ahmed Zogu, Enver Hoxha, and Sali Berisha. The book also presents the history of Albanian-Hungarian relations (Réti, 2000, 18-24, 49, 51-54). With the fall of the communist dictatorship and the beginning of democracy in Albania, the situation changed for the better regarding the translation of Hungarian works in Albania, but this topic is beyond the scope of the present paper and could be the object of further studies regarding the cultural relations between the two countries and peoples.

Today's Relations in the Field of Cultural Education

After the fall of the communist dictatorship, new opportunities emerged for educational and cultural relations between the two countries. The respective ministries of education signed several bilateral agreements in the fields of education, science, and culture in the years 1992, 1993, 2008, and 2016. (Kopliku & Dibra, 2017, 136-137). Although these agreements are beyond the scope of this article, for example, a program for scientific, educational, and cultural cooperation was established between the Government of the Republic of Albania and the Government of the Republic of Hungary for the years 1992-1993 (Albanian Embassy in Hungary, n.d.).

Regarding university relations, an agreement of cooperation was signed between the University of Shkoder and the University of Pécs in 2006. This agreement included all branches of studies and aimed to provide exchanges between faculties of education and research, as well as joint study and research opportunities for students at the two universities, a joint sponsorship of courses, study visits, the organization of seminars and conferences, the implementation of joint research projects, the promotion of exchanges in the field of sports, music, theatre, and dance, as well as exchanges for administrative staff. The agreement was signed for a three-year term, with the right to renew (Kopliku & Dibra, 2017, 138).

Minister of Education Evis Kushi held a meeting with Minister of Foreign Affairs and Trade Péter Szijjártó in February 2021 (Albanian Embassy in Hungary, 2021). In this meeting, the Albanian Minister praised the relations between the two countries, deeming them quite good, and stating that there was no lack of cooperation, especially during the previous two years. Kushi also mentioned the Hungarian scholarships available to Albanian students through the Stipendium Hungaricum grant to study in Hungary, as well as the summer courses available to Hungarian students in Albania since 2015. Thanks to Stipendium Hungaricum 2021-2024, twenty Albanian students receive a scholarship from the Hungarian government every year to study in Hungary (Albanian Ministry of Education, Sports, and Youth, 2021). Research projects such as Erasmus+ and Horizon 2020 also have joint programs between Hungary and Albania, and there are many opportunities to study in Hungary through different programs today (Albanian Ministry of Education, Sports, and Youth, n.d.).

Conferences on Albanian-Hungarian relations include the international scientific conference “Albania and Hungary - yesterday, today, and tomorrow”, held in 2016 at the University of Shkoder, which was also the first conference of Hungarian and Albanian historians. This conference was organized in collaboration with the Hungarian Embassy of Tirana, the Municipality of Shkoder, the Luigj Gurakuqi University of Shkoder, and other institutions (Heizer, 2017, 6).

Conclusion

This article addressed Albanian-Hungarian relations in education and culture, focusing on the period between 1947 and the present time. It first discussed the education issues of Albanians in Hungary. Relations in education began in 1948, when 70 Albanian students travelled Hungary to conduct studies in various fields, including journalism, pharmacy, medicine, and archaeology. Albanian students first had to learn Hungarian, quickly and well. The Albanian students could continue their studies until the outbreak of the Hungarian

revolution in 1956. Some of the Albanian students were involved in the Hungarian revolution, including Thoma Dardeli. He became active in the anti-communist movement in Hungary and participated in the Petőfi Club revolt, which was mostly attended by students. Dardeli wrote a book on the Hungarian revolution, as well as a dictionary comprising important Hungarian and Albanian words, phrases, and dialogues.

Publications of Albanian literary and linguistic works in Hungarian, and of Hungarian literary works in Albanian were also discussed. In Albania, Hungarian literature was typically not translated from the original Hungarian but from other languages, such as Russian or French. Regarding literary translations from Albanian to Hungarian, the situation was more favourable. There were several translators of the Albanian language in Hungary. The most important Albanologists included István Schütz and Lajos Tamás, who made their contribution either in the translation of literature or in the compilation of Hungarian-Albanian dictionaries. István Schütz was one of the most important professors of the Albanian language in Hungary. Another Hungarian scholar who lived in Albania during the communist period was György Réti, who worked at the Embassy of Hungary in Tirana during the 1970s. He wrote several articles and books on Albania.

The last part of the paper provided information about the cultural relations between the two countries during the years 1992-2022, i.e. the period after the fall of communist dictatorship in Albania. During this time, new opportunities emerged for education and cultural relations between the two countries. The respective ministries of education signed several bilateral agreements in the fields of education, science, and culture in 1992, 1993, 2008, and 2016. Thanks to Stipendium Hungaricum 2021-2024, twenty Albanian students receive a scholarship from the Hungarian government to study in Hungary every year. Research projects such as Erasmus+ and Horizon 2020 also include joint programs between Hungary and Albania, and various opportunities to study in Hungary through different programs are available today.

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