

Albanica. A Journal of Albanological Research and Criticism. Washington, Vol. 3-4 (winter 1992). *Special issue. The language question and Konitza's pioneering role.* 222 pp.

Great hopes were awakened by the initial publication of *Albanica* in winter 1990. With the French-language *Studia Albanica* and *Les Lettres albanaises*, the Albanian-language *Studime Filologjike* and the literary *Nëntori* of Tirana at least temporarily suspended, and with *Gjurmime Albanologjike* of Prishtina pretty well brought to a standstill because of the appalling political and economic situation in Kosovo, *Albanica* seemed destined to fill the gap as the only international scholarly periodical devoted exclusively to Albanian studies. Its editorial board, under the management of Arshi Pipa (b. 1920), evinced an impressive list of scholarly collaborators from the United States, Albania, France, Germany and Italy. Following the deaths of two of its three founders, Anton Logoreci (1910-1990) of London and Martin Camaj (1925-1992) of Munich, Professor Pipa has, however, now been forced to announce suspension of publication with the present issue, volume 3-4.

Volume 1 (winter 1990) of *Albanica* was devoted to *Kosova's tragedy and its actors* and volume 2 (spring 1991) to exile scholar and writer *Martin Camaj*. Volume 3-4, is devoted, not surprisingly, to the *language question*, Pipa's 'pet peeve', and is divided into four sections: (I) *Albanological research and criticism*, (II) *Albanian language and literature*, (III) *Book reviews*, and (IV) *Documentation*.

The first section offers articles by historian and Byzantinologist Alain Ducellier (Toulouse) on the *Modalités et conséquences de la présence latine sur les côtes albanaises du XIème siècle à la chute du duché Vénitien (1213)* (p. 15-31); Arshi Pipa (Washington) on the *Umanisti italo-albanesi* (p. 32-44); the late Martin Camaj on *Il contributo degli albanesi alla cultura europea* (p. 45-49); musicologist Ramadan Sokoli (Tirana) on *Nuove scoperte archeomusicologiche in Albania* (p. 50-57) and Odile Daniel (Paris) on *La faillite de l'idéologie albanaise; vers un changement de la situation géopolitique* (p. 58-77).

The meat of the volume to be found primarily in the second section. It has long been acknowledged that the key to the lexical component of the Balkan 'Sprachbund' lies in the early strata of Albanian and in the pre-Latin vocabulary preserved in Romanian. Wilfried Fiedler (Munich), in his *Ist das Albanische, "dem Typus nach", die entscheidende Sprache des ganzen balkanischen Gebietes?* (p. 78-95), investigates the morphological component, in particular the Albanian verbal system, and comes to the conclusion that Albanian is indeed "the decisive language of the Balkans" since it has "made the most extensive usage of [morphological] means available and has attained the highest degree of morphologization of all the Balkan languages." *Die arvanitischen Mundarten Griechenlands* (p. 96-108) by Hans-Jürgen Sasse (Cologne) is a reprint of chapter one of his monumental *Arvanitika. Die albanischen Sprachreste in Griechenland. 1. Band. Die Mundart Nordost-Attikoböotiens* (Wiesbaden 1991). Sasse's work offers the first substantial treatment of the archaic Albanian dialects spoken in over 300 villages of central Greece since Claus Haebler's *Grammatik der albanischen Mundart von Salamis* (Wiesbaden 1965). Also reprinted is *Les dialectes albanais et la nécessité de leur fusion* (p. 109-111) by noted Albanian publisher and critic Faik Konitza (1875-1942), to whom the volume is also devoted. Appended to this is *Vështrim mbi rolin e Vatrës në historinë dhe kulturën shqiptare* (On Vatra's role in Albanian history and culture) (p. 112-120) by Tirana scholar Ardian Klosi (b. 1957), an overview of the Albanian-American Vatra Federation, closely associated with Faik Konitza.

The of necessity more controversial section on language politics in Albania begins with the declaration by Shkodër linguists, of which Arshi Pipa, in the wake of the language

conference "*Gjuha Letrare Kombëtare dhe Bota Shqiptare Sot* (The national literary language and the Albanian-speaking world today)", held in Tirana on 20-21 November 1992. Pipa has been at the forefront of the struggle against the imposition of 'standard literary Albanian', which he regards as a southern Tosk communist invention designed to subdue and culturally colonize the north, and for the revival of his Scutarine Gheg dialect as the literary language it once was. His article *Géopolitique de la langue albanaise: La fraude de l'ULLA* (p. 129-152), also published in *Nations, Etats et territoire en Europe de l'Est et en URSS* (Paris 1992), edited by Michel Roux (Toulouse), sets forth his controversial and often polemic ideas on a topic which can no longer be swept under the red carpet. A calmer Tosk viewpoint is offered, as a contrast, by Kolonjë-born Peter Prifti (San Diego) in *A Commentary on Prof. Pipa's critique of Unified Literary Albanian [ULLA]* (p. 153-164), followed by Ardian Vehbiu (Naples/Tirana) in *Albanese standard: peccato originale e redenzione* (p. 165-170). The topic will be with us for some time, at least as long as Prof. Pipa continues to publish.

On a lighter note, mention must be made, in passing, of the delightful double-headed Albanian eagle on the book cover, one head of which is biting off the other. This illustration is, needless to say, symbolic of many aspects of post-Communist Albanian culture.

Despite the lack of a clear editorial profile and the proportion of reprints rather than of original contributions, *Albanica* will be missed, not least in view of the dearth of other Albanological periodicals. Albanian studies remain neglected for a number of obvious reasons. Publications on Bulgarian and Serbo-Croatian find their place in periodicals devoted to Slavonic Studies, Romanian in Romance Studies, and Modern Greek often in Classical Studies and Byzantinology. Albanian, however, has no larger framework to rely on and, as such, cultural, linguistic, historical and political information on Albania and Kosovo is wanting, even though the isolationist dictatorship is over (in the former at least). It can only be hoped that a new Albanological periodical of equal intensity and devotion will soon follow suit.

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