

Compiling and Editing Bilingual Dictionaries in Albania

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The history of Albanian lexicography and linguistics in general (cf. Kostallari 1970) begins with a bilingual dictionary, the *DICTIONARIUM LATINO-EPIROTICUM*, published in 1635 with about 5000 words in Latin and 2500 in Albanian (see the chronologically arranged bibliography of dictionaries at the end of the paper). Since that time, to the middle of our century about 100 dictionaries have been compiled, but almost half of them were never published, so from the historical point of view we may speak of the existence of an Albanian lexicography in manuscripts, which preserves its value up to our days as a document of Albanian in the past. All these dictionaries are bilingual, some of them are also multilingual. It is known that in general lexicography in many countries commenced with bilingual dictionaries, but in Albania this is linked to several particular circumstances. As early as the beginning of the 15th century up to 1912, Albania was under Ottoman domination. For a long period of time dictionaries served as one of the ways of defending and cultivating the Albanian language. Together with a few religious translations and several poetic creations, they constituted *the* Albanian literature and even *the* study of Albanian. The bilingual dictionaries testified to the fact that the Albanians had become conscious of the threats to their culture and were trying to protect and promote it.

During the 19th century, several other factors began to operate. The cultivation of literary written Albanian and the development "*Les études linguistiques en Albanie*" of mother-tongue education were the basis of the programme of National Renaissance, and the creation of a dictionary became a pressing need. The efforts made in this direction were expressed in the work of K. Kristoforidhi (C. Christophorides), who compiled a specific type of Albanian dictionary, which at the same time served as bilingual dictionary (cf. Kostallari 1968. Lloshi 1977). This specific type was later followed by the Dictionary of the "Bashkimi Society" (1908) and that compiled by Hondro (1927; cf. Lloshi 1982).

A second factor was the development of historical-comparative linguistics, which attracted the interest of European linguists in Albanian. In 1854 the *Albanesische Studien* by Johann Georg von Hahn was published, which also marks the beginning of Albanology. Worth a mention also is the fact that it was again C. Christophorides who helped Hahn with the compilation of his dictionary. But it must be stressed that this trend had begun with the dictionaries of William Martin-Leake (1814) and J. R. Xylander (1835), to be followed later by those of August Dozone (1879), Holger Pederson (1894) etc.

The third factor was political: although the Ottoman rulers remained in Albania for almost 5 centuries, they showed no interest at all in any kind of dictionary. (On the contrary, it was a distinguished Albanian, Sami Frashëri, who compiled a codifying dictionary of Turkish "Kamus-i türki" (1901); bilingual dictionaries: "Kamus-i fransevi" (1882), "Kamus-i fransevi" (1885), "Kamus-i arabi" and an encyclopaedia "Kamusul alam" (1900) in 6 volumes.) Neither were the neighbour-

ing monarchies interested in bilingual dictionaries, because this would have signified the silent acceptance of the existence of an autonomous Albanian culture, something which they deliberately negated. The other European powers which were more distant were greatly interested in finding ways of penetrating into this part of the Ottoman empire, which was becoming fragmented. Bilingual dictionaries were to serve these aims, hence we notice the compiling of bilingual dictionaries, especially for Italian, German and English. This political factor was active up to the Second World War, and it is understandable why the first place was occupied by the Italian language.

During the period of Independence (1912—1939), several bilingual dictionaries were published, to meet especially the needs of school pupils. The dictionaries were also important because they continued the tradition of codifying the lexical treasury of Albanian which, even though at a slow pace, was becoming a language of a contemporary culture (cf. Lloshi 1975).

By the middle of the current century, an entirely new stage begins in the history of the Albanian bilingual dictionaries. New Albania set out on the road of an all-round economic, social and cultural development. It is impossible to mention even briefly all the fields which demanded an entirely new quality of the bilingual dictionary. Therefore, we cite only a few facts. The teaching of foreign languages is now a common thing in our schools, beginning from the elementary school. At the "Enver Hoxha" University of Tirana there are chairs of English, Russian, French and Italian, and separate groups have been created for German, the Balkan languages, Classical languages, etc. Every day, Radio Tirana broadcasts 82 hours in 20 foreign languages, while a magazine such as *New Albania* is published every two months in 7 foreign languages and it is translated by Albanians. More than 2000 titles of fiction translated from a wide range of foreign languages, from Homer to modern authors, as well as many technical books are published. In addition, many socio-political books and literary works have been translated into foreign languages, and scientific and literary magazines are also published in foreign languages.

In these circumstances the vocabulary of Albanian is enriched in two principal ways: by the formation of new words and by an ever deeper knowledge of the spoken language. As a result, modern Albanian successfully confronts other languages both in translations and bilingual dictionaries. But the most important linguistic factor is the final crystallization of Albanian as a unified national standard language (cf. Kostallari 1984). To promote the development of Albanian linguistics, qualified specialists have been trained and special scientific and publishing institutions established. Today Albanian lexicology and lexicography constitute separate linguistic disciplines, with a corresponding theory (cf. Lloshi & Thomai 1969; Hartmut 1981; Thomai 1984). What influence do these factors exert on the compiling and editing of bilingual dictionaries in Albania today?

In comparison with the three previous centuries, from the middle of our century to this day about twice as many dictionaries have been projected. These bilingual dictionaries cover 15 foreign languages, and there are now dictionaries of many language pairs, such as Hungarian-Albanian and Esperanto-Albanian.

One of the fundamental features of the bilingual dictionaries now is that they reflect the wealth of the lexicon of present-day Albanian, relying on national literary norms and contemporary linguistic theory. The period of efforts to codify the established conventions of written and spoken language as an aid to human

communication in different fields begins in the 1950s with the Albanian-Russian and Russian-Albanian dictionaries. In this manner the problem was surmounted when the lexicography was engaged only with the empirical recording of linguistic usage. The main shortcoming of previous dictionaries was that with the exception of certain dictionaries, e.g. that of K. Kristoforidhi, they relied on a narrow dialectal base, as their titles frequently reveal. Moreover, some of the dictionaries were compiled by foreigners and thus contained many errors, which were passed on from one book to the next.

With the establishment of a literary norm, another important change took place: now the lexicon of the Albanian language is presented in a comprehensive system: in the form of lexical fields, grammatical categories, historical and stylistic strata, and as types of word-formation (cf. Kostallari 1968, Lloshi 1965). Linked with this is also the problem of neologisms in the dictionary. In previous dictionaries, because of the fact that the lexicon of spoken and written language was not very well known to the authors, very often they created their own equivalents ad hoc and in particular foreign authors created words and expressions which were often inaccurate and fictitious. A typical example of this was the dictionary by Maria von Godin, but we have also seriously criticized S.A. Mann's ENGLISH-ALBANIAN DICTIONARY for this reason (cf. Lloshi 1971). Today the dictionaries of Albanian are based only on documented lexical items as collected in the File of Albanian Vocabulary. But difficulties still arise for the bilingual dictionaries when they have a word-list of more than 40,000 foreign words. The problem is that these words must be matched by a similar wealth of words and expressions in the Albanian language.

The creation of neologisms is now considered by lexicographers as an undesirable practice. But one of the most important problems of the present-day literary norms in Albania is precisely the removal of unnecessary borrowings, and this is often treated as part of the issue of the purity of the Albanian language. Many compilers prefer neologism based on Albanian existing models and living derivation patterns, hence integrating new words into the language naturally. In the Preface of the ITALIAN-ALBANIAN DICTIONARY (1986) the authors write: "Conscious efforts have been made to give priority to the Albanian words and terms and to remove unnecessary foreign words". The principal concern is to avoid slipping into positions of purism, which is not accepted either by linguistic theory or by cultural practice.

Today relations between bilingual lexicography and the monolingual dictionaries of Albanian are fruitful and complex. In the past bilingual dictionaries often served as a stimulus to study Albanian words, assisting the introduction into active circulation of unknown vocabulary. After the publication of the DICTIONARY OF THE ALBANIAN LANGUAGE in 1954 and particularly of the fundamental work DICTIONARY OF MODERN ALBANIAN in 1980, bilingual dictionaries have a new basis, because the vocabulary of the Albanian language has been subjected to profound linguistic study and lexicographic codification. In the meantime the collection of words and expressions from living speech and from written publications continues in Albania, and authors of bilingual dictionaries participate in this activity, a practice which is not very common for other languages. These relations are connected with organizational matters.

At the Institute of Sciences, founded in Tirana in 1947, there was a Section of Language, Literature and Folklore. Its main duty in the field of lexicography was to

work on the *DICTIONARY OF THE ALBANIAN LANGUAGE* (1954), but it had also compiled the *SERBOCROATIAN-ALBANIAN DICTIONARY* (1947) and the *RUSSIAN-ALBANIAN DICTIONARY* (1954). In 1955 the Institute of History and Linguistics (today the Institute of Linguistics and Literature in the Academy of Sciences of the P.S.R. of Albania) was founded, within which a Section on Lexicology and Lexicography was created, the main duty of which is to draft dictionaries of the Albanian language as a scientific academic activity. From that time on bilingual dictionaries have been published by other bodies. In 1974 an Editorial Board was set up at the "8 November" Publishing House for cultural and encyclopedic editions, which issues bilingual dictionaries according to unified criteria under permanent specialized editors. Until the liberation of Albania in 1944 about 60 per cent of the dictionaries were foreign language-Albanian, three quarters of which were published outside Albania and 5 of whose 8 authors were foreigners. Consequently these dictionaries were compiled on the basis of different criteria, reflecting different lexicographical trends and often lacking proper theoretical principles. Today the situation is quite different. The authors of bilingual dictionaries base themselves on the theoretical and practical achievements of Albanian lexicography and specialists of the Institute of Linguistics and Literature or professors at the University take part as compilers or editors of the dictionaries published by the "8 November" Publishing House. This publishing house has plans focussing on the principal European languages, including Balkan languages. Following the publication of the *DICTIONARY OF MODERN ALBANIAN* in 1980 a new qualitative advance can be observed, testified by the *ENGLISH-ALBANIAN DICTIONARY* (1986) with about 30,000 words and the *ITALIAN-ALBANIAN DICTIONARY* (1986) with about 50,000 words. In the meantime, a *FRENCH-ALBANIAN DICTIONARY* with 38,000 words has gone to the printers. Work is continuing on an English-Albanian Dictionary with more than 65,000 words, a Russian-Albanian Dictionary with about 30,000 words, a Greek-Albanian Dictionary of 20,000 words etc., and a series of other bilingual dictionaries are scheduled for publication, including German-Albanian, Rumanian-Albanian and Arabic-Albanian dictionaries. We can quite safely claim that foreign language-Albanian dictionaries are today drafted exclusively by Albanian authors on the basis of scientific criteria.

To fulfil the demands of the schools, different bilingual dictionaries are issued by the Publishing House of School Books, which until 1967 was known as the Directory of School Publications and the Institute of School Studies and Publications. Bilingual dictionaries for students in higher education are put out by the Publishing House of University Texts. The majority of these works are terminological dictionaries, something with which I have not dealt in this paper. Apart from the Section on Terminology at the Institute of Linguistics and Literature, these dictionaries are also published by other specialized institutions in given fields.

From the 1950s onwards Albanian lexicography also developed in Kosova (Socialist Autonomous Province in Yugoslavia). The majority of the dictionaries published in Albania have been reprinted in Prishtinë and outstanding results have been achieved, particularly in the publication of Serbocroatian-Albanian and Albanian-Serbocroatian dictionaries. For historical reasons (cf. Lloshi 1984) there are Albanians residing in several other countries, constituting what is called the Albanian diaspora. This explains the publication of English-Albanian dictionaries in the USA at the beginning of our century, as well as of several other dictionaries in

Italy. There are also a considerable number of bilingual dictionaries by Albanians of Italy which have remained in manuscript form. Several Albanians have taken part in the compilation of the Bulgarian-Albanian Dictionary. Over the last decades there has been a revival of Albanian culture among the Albanians in Italy, something which has led to the publication of dictionaries such as that of E. Giordano (1963). The multilingual dictionary published in Damascus in 1970 is also a result of the diaspora.

In conclusion we can say that the compiling and editing of bilingual dictionaries in Albania today is an organized and systematic activity based on the experience of Albanian lexicography as well as on theoretical principles current around the world. These dictionaries meet the demands of modern culture, and we believe that they are of interest to lexicographers of other countries and to all those interested in the Albanian language and culture.

The duties facing bilingual lexicography in the future in our country are evident: to extend the geography of foreign languages, to increase the variety of bilingual dictionaries, and to improve their quality. To achieve this it must attentively follow the development of Modern Albanian and attain new standards of scholarship, utilising many of the new techniques developed in descriptive and applied linguistics.

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