

STANDARD
ALBANIAN

A REFERENCE GRAMMAR FOR STUDENTS

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Preface

This book is intended as a reference grammar for English-speaking students who are learning present-day Albanian. It is not a linguist's grammar, not a scientific study of the language for the purpose of advancing our theoretical understanding of language, nor a scholar's grammatical compendium for the purpose of interpreting documents from the historical period preceding the present decade.

A large part of the book is in fact an adaptation (in part, a straight translation) and reworking of A. Dhrimo, E. Angoni, E. Hysa, E. Lafe, E. Likaj, F. Agalliu, and Sh. Demiraj, **Morfologjia**, Tiranë: Akademia e Shkencave e RP të Shqipërisë, Instituti i Gjuhësisë dhe i Letërsisë, 1976, under the editorship of Sh. Demiraj, which was published as the second volume of a planned larger work **Fonetika dhe Gramatika e Gjuhës së Sotme Letrare Shqipe** under the general editorship of Mahir Domi. This work constitutes an important step in the establishment of a modern standard Albanian language, part of a larger undertaking of the Academy of Sciences of the People's Republic of Albania and more particularly of its Institute of Linguistics and Literature.

One of the other works already published as part of this attempt to establish a standard Albanian language was a set of orthographic rules by a commission headed by Androkli Kostallari, and composed of Mahir Domi, Eqrem Çabej, and Emil Lafe, entitled **Drejtshkrimi i Gjuhës Shqipe**; we have made use of the edition published by the Albanian Institute of Prishtinë (Yugoslavia) in 1974. Much more than a set of prescriptive spelling rules, this work reflects a number of popular and scientific decisions over the past twenty-five years determining which forms out of the multitude of regional, generational, and social dialects of Albanian are to be considered to belong to present-day *standard* Albanian. The Albanians refer to this as the **gjuha letrare**, or 'literary language', but since the intention is to establish a general language for popular use throughout the Albanian-speaking community, much more than a language for literature, we have chosen to call it in this book by the broader title "standard."

The third important reference work published in the standardization process is the "orthographic dictionary" **Fjalori Drejtshkrimor i Gjuhës Shqipe**, also published by the Instituti i Gjuhësisë dhe i Letërsisë in 1976, the work of a commission consisting this time of Androkli Kostallari (editor-in-chief), Mahir Domi, Emil Lafe, and Nikoleta Cikulli. In this work too, much more than individual spellings of words have been decided: the inflectional forms of thousands of words are indicated, so that our own reference grammar need no longer provide the numerous alternative grammatical forms that G. Pekmezi felt bound to include in his great *Grammatik der Albanesischen Sprache*, published in Vienna in 1908. Indeed, we have often deliberately made no mention of common variants used in the colloquial language when the **Fjalori Drejtshkrimor** has chosen another variant, as we would have felt required to do in a descriptive grammar, because we accept the standardizing goals of the new prescriptive sources.

In writing this book we have tried to keep in mind its probable audience: we assume our readers will be familiar with many basic grammatical terms and concepts but may need to be refreshed on how they are used, particularly since we occasionally use ordinary terms in a special technical way in this book. We assume that where our explanation of grammatical terms in the body of the book is insufficient, the student will find help in a dictionary. In most cases, the meaning of special terms will be clarified by the examples we give. However, in our

Preface

attempt to guarantee the currency and authenticity of our examples (by taking them directly from the *Morfologjia*, written for people who already speak Albanian), we recognize that the relevance of some examples may not be immediately transparent to beginners in the language.

This book is not a complete textbook for learning Albanian -- it is not meant to be read and studied cover to cover -- but is rather a book to be consulted for clarification and amplification of matters raised during one's study of the language by other means. The student who wants to learn to use the language should also have access to a textbook and a dictionary. As basic textbooks, students who know English might try: Fehime Pipa, *Elementary Albanian: Filltar i shqipes*, Rome: Vatra, n.d. (lessons in Albanian culture and language aimed primarily at American children of Albanian heritage), Nelo Drizari, *Spoken and Written Albanian: A Practical Handbook*, New York: Frederick Ungar, 1947 (3rd printing 1975; sketchy and out-of-date), or Leonard Newmark, Ismail Haznedari, Peter Prifti, & Philip Hubbard, *Spoken Albanian*, Ithaca, N.Y.: Spoken Language Services, 1980 (with accompanying cassette recordings, can be used for self-instruction in the conversational language). To develop reading skill in Albanian, those students may use Leonard Newmark, Peter Prifti, & Philip Hubbard, *Readings in Albanian*, Washington: ERIC, 1980 (1600 pages; designed for self-instruction; includes a short recognition grammar).

Usable dictionaries exist for both English-to-Albanian and Albanian-to-English: Nelo Drizari, *Albanian-English and English-Albanian Dictionary*, Enlarged edition, New York: Frederick Ungar, 1957 (5500 headwords, 135 pages in Albanian-English section; its small size makes it popular, but undependable); Gaspar Kiçi, *Albanian-English Dictionary*, privately printed in Italy, 1976 (27,000 headwords, 447 pages); and Gaspar Kiçi and Hysni Aliko, *English-Albanian Dictionary*, privately printed in Italy, 1969 (26,000 headwords, 627 pages; designed for the Albanian user). The two Kiçi dictionaries are available only by writing to Gaspar Kiçi, at P.O. Box 1855, Washington, D.C. 20013.

The serious student of Albanian may wish to know of other dictionaries and textbooks, listed below with an indication of their particular value. The student should be warned that finding copies is not likely to be easy.

Oda Buchholz, Wilfried Fiedler, and Gerda Uhlisch, *Worterbuch Albanisch-Deutsch*, Leipzig: VEB Verlag Enzyklopadie Leipzig, 1977, (27,000 headwords, 739 pages; the most recent and best bilingual dictionary of Standard Albanian).

K. Cipo et al., *Fjalor i gjuhës shqipe*, Tirana: Institute of Sciences, 1954 (27,000 headwords, 648 pages; the predecessor of the Kostallari dictionary listed below).

M. Domi, Sh. Demiraj, A. Dhrimo, et al., *Morfologjia*, Tiranë: Akademia e Shkencave e RP të Shqipërisë, Instituti i Gjuhësisë dhe i Letërsisë, 1976, (400 pages; the most recent prescriptive and descriptive account of standard Albanian for Albanian users; the book from which the present book has been adapted, as mentioned above).

D. Nikollë Gazulli, *Fjalorth i ri*, Tirana: Shtypshkroja "Gurakuqi", 1941 (5,000 headwords, 527 pages; contains Gheg forms not found in other dictionaries).

Androkli Kostallari, et al., Tirana: Instituti i Gjuhës Shqipe, 1981 (41,000 headwords, 2273 pages; the largest, most up-to-date dictionary for establishing standard forms, collocations, and meanings).

Angelo Leotti, *Dizionario Albanese-Italiano*, Rome: Istituto per L'Europa Orientale, 1937, (26,000 headwords, 1708 pages; before 1954, the largest and most reliable dictionary of Albanian; exclusively Tosk forms; contains many contextual examples).

Stuart E. Mann, *An English-Albanian Dictionary*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press,

1957 (21,000 headwords, 434 pages; especially rich in bird and plant names: Albanian forms in central Gheg dialect).

Stuart E. Mann, *An Historical Albanian-English Dictionary (1496-1938)*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1938-48 (27,000 headwords, 601 pages; contains many historical and dialectal variants).

I. Radovicka, Z. Karapici, A. Toma, *Gjuha shqipe*, Tirana: Shtëpia Botuese e Librit Shkollor, 1975 (graded lessons for foreigners learning Albanian in Albania; has many illustrative pictures, but not designed for self-instruction).

For an excellent summary and lengthy bibliography of scholarship on Albanian, the student should see Eric Hamp, "Albanian", *Current Trends in Linguistics*, Vol. 9, part 2. The Hague: Mouton, 1972, pp. 1626-92.

The authors wish to thank the MIT Press for permission to reprint here "A Sketch of the Country and the People" from Peter R. Prifti's *Socialist Albania Since 1944: Domestic and Foreign Developments* (1978). We owe special thanks to our helpful editors at Stanford University Press, William W. Carver and J.G. Bell, for their help in reading our manuscript so sensitively and making such reasonable suggestions for improving it. Some of the physical characteristics of the book -- for example, the rather cumbersome, inelegant numbering system used for identification of sections and hence referencing of locations -- reflect constraints of the computer hardware and software used to produce it, rather than editorial judgments made with a free hand. Other defects and inconsistencies are attributable to the authors themselves; in defense, we offer to incorporate improvements suggested by observant readers in a future edition, if one is desired.

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Abbreviations

1st = First Person	Ind = Indicative
2nd = Second Person	Indef = Indefinite
3rd = Third Person	Inf = Infinitive
Abl = Ablative	Jus = Jussive
Acc = Accusative	Masc = Masculine
Act = Active	Mid = Middle
AdjP = Adjectival Phrase	NP = Nominal Phrase
Adm = Admirative	Nom = Nominative
AdvP = Adverbial Phrase	Non-act = Non-active
Cond = Conditional	Opt = Optative
ConjP = Conjunctional Phrase	Part = Participle
Dat = Dative	Pass = Passive
Def = Definite	Pl = Plural
Fem = Feminine	Pres = Present
Fut = Future	Recip = Reciprocal
Gen = Genitive	Reflex = Reflexive
Ger = Gerundive	Sg = Singular
IjP = Interjectional Phrase	Sub = Subjunctive
Imp = Imperative	Sub-Adm = Subjunctive-Admirative
Imperf = Imperfect	VP = Verbal Phrase
Inch = Inchoative	

Standard Albanian

CHAPTER I

Introduction

1.1 A Sketch of the Country and the People

Albania has a reputation as a land of great natural beauty and romantic remoteness. These two characteristics have made it all the more attractive, mysterious, forbidding, challenging, or exasperating to outsiders, be they travelers, scholars, diplomats, or merchants. For example, in a work he published in 1913, the Croatian scholar Milan von Sufflay called Albania *regio mirabilissima*. "a most singular country" or "a most marvelous country." Others have referred to it as the "Switzerland of the Balkans" or as the "rock garden of southeastern Europe." On the other hand, the country's uncommon isolation from the world, arising generally from its rugged, mountainous terrain, has led foreigners to speak of it as "the Tibet of Europe" or as a country more mysterious than central Africa. It is an attitude that has had currency for centuries. We find it, for instance, in the writings of Edward Gibbon, the great eighteenth-century British historian. Speaking of Albania, Gibbon said that it is "a country within sight of Italy, which is less known than the interior of America."

The remoteness and isolation of the country became practically legendary and all too frequently gave rise to reports and descriptions of the land and the people—even in books and encyclopedias—that were closer to legends than to reality. Perhaps because of its romantic remoteness and other reasons, Albania has exerted a continuous fascination on artists, including poets, playwrights, composers, and more recently film-makers and producers of television programs. Shakespeare set his comedy *Twelfth Night* in Illyria—a common name for Albania in former times. Lord Byron, who visited southern Albania in 1810, wrote some stirring lines about her landscape in his poem *Childe Harold*:

Morn dawns and with it stern Albania's hills...
Robed half in mist, bedewed with snowy rills.

In Mozart's comic opera *Così fan tutte* the principal male characters, Ferrando and Guglielmo, appear for the most part in disguise as two "Albanian noblemen" in a clever scheme to test the love of their fiancées. (The women fail the test when they succumb to the charms of the Albanians but succeed nevertheless in winning back the love of their men.) In our own time, we find that Peter Ustinov—taking a cue from Shakespeare—set one of his comedies, *Romanoff and Juliet*, in post-World War II Albania. Ustinov's Albania is a somewhat fanciful land but serves him well as a neat laboratory to grapple with and overcome the Cold War enmities between American and Soviet diplomats stationed in that country. Three films dealing with Albania and Albanians are *Five Fingers*; *Action of the Tiger*; and *The President's Analyst*. All three are action films involving intelligence operations, but the last two lack artistic merit and—as is so often the case where Albania is concerned—tend to give a misleading picture of the country.

What then, are the "basic facts" about Albania, as far as we have knowledge of them? The smallest country in the Balkan Peninsula, Albania is bordered on the north and northeast by Yugoslavia, on the southeast by Greece, and on the west and southwest by the Adriatic and Ionian seas. It lies less than 100 km (60 mi) from Italy at the nearest point of the Strait of Otranto. In area, the country encompasses 28,000 sq km (11,000 sq mi), yet it is bigger than Massachusetts (8,200 sq mi) or any other state in New England except for Maine. Its population in 1976 was about 2,500,000; again, not large at all, yet larger than the combined populations of the three New England states of Vermont, New Hampshire, and Rhode Island, which totaled 2,130,000. The capital of Albania, Tiranë, had a population of 190,000 in 1973; all the rest of the nation's cities had populations under 60,000.