

# On The Cohabitation of Orient and Oxident in the Balkans

- Arabic Loan Words in Albanian -

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The Balkans, as a bridge where the oriental cultures meet the West, is also a space for the coexistence and integration of these two major cultures and civilizations. Indeed, the cohabitation of Oriental and Western cultures in the Balkans has a long history of interaction, and can therefore serve as a real paradigm for multicultural and civilization-building approaches. As one of the basic elements of cultural interaction and influence, language is also the meeting point of cultures and civilizations. Such is the case of the Arabic influence in the Balkans, especially with Albanians who – after their conversion to Islam and integration in the Ottoman civilization – have been in direct contact with the Arabic and Oriental linguistic philosophy and terminology. This, among other things, is the reason why the Arabic language has left traces in Albanian language while on the other hand the philosophical and cultural terms have influenced the formation of the civilizational and cultural worldview of Albanians.

## Arabs and Albanians throughout history

Research on contacts and coexistence between Arabs and Albanians in history is still in its early stages. There have only been a few attempts at partially investigating the issue so far, chronologically and thematically. The situation is more or less the same not only in Albanian, but also in Bosnian, Serbian, Croatian, as well as in other Balkan languages and beyond. However, it is strikingly so in Albanian [<http://www.zerislam.com/artikulli.php?id=225>]. This has been pointed out by the well-known intellectual Hasan Kaleshi some 3-4 decades ago: *“It can be said that Albanians are the only people who have not paid any attention to this aspect... even though the role of Albanians is greater than that of many Balkan peoples, but while the later have studied their writers, among Albanians it is seen with underestimation, not to say with contempt... Let alone Bosnians, even Serbs and Slav Macedonians are far ahead in these studies”* [N. Ibrahim (2011): 5].

According to Albanian historiography, the spread of Islam in Albanian lands began with the Battle of Kosovo in 1389 on a low intensity, to intensify by the end of the 15th century. However, whether due to ignorance or neglect of historical facts, the influence of the early Muslim presence in Illyrian-Albanian lands, namely the period of contact between Albanians and Islam, which is called the pre-Ottoman phase, is more than often ignored [F. Muhiq (2013)].

Although on many academic and intellectual levels there is a belief that Ottoman violent enforcement of assimilation has been permanent, systematic and organized, proper studies by independent researchers show that assimilation has occurred

more in the opposite direction, namely the Illyrian-Albanians and Slavs have generally assimilated those tribes (peoples) who have come later to these lands, such as Bogomils, Turks of Vardar, Pechenegs and other ethnicities [F. Schevill (2002): 91-92].

Their view is supported by recently found documents as well as by the fact that the process of "Islamization" has lasted for centuries and has not been the result of a systemic political-military campaign or anything similar, as is the case in the Christian world with the Crusades, Inquisition, Colonialism, etc.

As is well known, the Balkans and especially the Illyrian territories during the last two millennia have been characterized by a multi-cultural, multi-religious, multi-ethnic and multi-linguistic mosaic. These lands featured a cosmopolitan region where various peoples, languages, traditions and religions coexisted. This situation was also warranted by the geographical position of the Balkans which served as a natural bridge between East and West and North and South.

The importance of investigating the social-political circumstances is significant for an accurate explanation of the factors that effected the acceptance of Islam by the peoples of these lands, in regard to the events that would happen in the Balkans after the 8th century (the beginning of contacts between native peoples and Muslims) and especially after the 14th century.

The Illyrians, who occupied most of the Balkans and constituted the dominant population at the time of Roman incursions, were pagans [A. Stipcevic (1990): 508; Groups of authors (1979): 590]. However especially after the Edict of Milan in 312 which recognized Christianity as an official religion, the Illyrian paganism was gradually replaced by Christianity. The first Christian communities were founded and meanwhile Christianity gained the status of the state religion of Eastern Rome [J. Turčinović (1973): 6; N. Berdajev (1971): 175-183]. Despite reforms and changes in the Roman Empire, Eduard Gibbon considers that in *“The social and political environment in Eastern Rome was always better than in the West where political and military confusion reigned”* [A. Bulaç (1995): 74]. Over time the Roman Church began to consolidate and institutionalize itself better and even established a setting whereby the kings were considered as sovereign in the political scene but at the same time they should recognize the spiritual sovereignty of the Church. Later, with the strengthening of the Church politically and socially, from the 10th century on the Church

started to encroach on the secular domain as well [A. Bulaç (1995): 76-77]. By the end of the 6th century the Eastern began to be raided by Turanic-Bulgarian tribes and in the 6th and 7th centuries by Slavic tribes who noticing the weakness of Byzantium began to attack and plunder the Balkans [J. Turčinović (1973): 6-9; *History of the Albanian People* (1979): 131-133].

Despite all attempts, the romanization of indigenous peoples in the Balkans, such as the Dacians in Romania, the Thracians in Bulgaria and the Illyrians in the rest of the Balkans, had failed. This is also asserted by Romanian historian E. Petrovic, who claims that the population that the Slavs found in the eastern parts of today's Serbia had not yet been romanized, a claim he supports over toponyms [B. Beci (1994): 48; Pan K. Christon (1995): 7].

These raids and plunders however did not go without consequences (N. Ibrahim (2011): 191-193]. The frequent conflict and wars by Slavs, Bulgarians, Byzantines, and later Serbs, impoverished the Illyrian-Albanian territories with the population being driven out, killed, enslaved or pushed to the margins of the society.

Alan Ducelie cites a description of the time by Guillaume D'Adam, a propagandist of Crusades, from 1332: "...*These people, both Latins and Albanians, live under the unbearable and heavy yoke of the Slavic prince, whom they despise and hate with all their being because Slavs often chains them and expropriate their nobles... All of them, collectively and individually, believe that they would sanctify their hands if they would wash them in the blood of the aforementioned Slavs*" [A. Ducelie (1996): 15].

These circumstances paved the way for the arrival of the Muslim element in these lands. Thus, the arrival, expansion and settlement of Muslims as residents there and the embracing of Islam by local inhabitants in the Illyrian territories has been treated all in the same line in Albanian writings of all kinds (historical, linguistic, linguistic, cultural, art etc.): the military-economic factor.

But although the military-economic factor is so strongly emphasized there is not a proper study yet that would analyse the supposed military violence in detail, identifying dates, places and leaders, on one hand, or the degree of economic pressure exerted by Muslims, looking for example at the level of taxes and comparing it with the other countries around and the region in general. After all, this has been a thesis put forth, more or less, in the entire Balkans, especially by Serbs, and which continues to be held to vigorously even in the early 21st century.

As it is, Muslims do not disregard the political-military factor, saying it has been present throughout history, but they insist this factor was not systematic and in any case not inspired by the Islamic creed. Moreover, such violence, to the degree it has been the case, is also condemned by Muslims, based on the Qur'anic teachings: "There is no enforcement in religion..." [al-Baqarah, 256].

Muslims assert that there have been other factors more relevant than the emphasized political-military one, but they

are usually ignored in spoken or written lectures. On this line we would mention the Islamic doctrine, the simple and acceptable principles of faith, rituals, morals, decency, business. As Sami Frasher says: "*In addition to the spread of Islam by conquest, there has also been another way, not mentioned by historians, namely the spread of religion by itself and without conquest, without the sword and without an army. Even though not as massive as the first, it has been almost equal*" [S. Frashëri (2004): 15; T. Arnold (1994)].

Among the factors that have played a role in the spreading of the Islamic culture and civilization (by which we also imply the contact of Albanians and Albanian language with the Arabic language and culture) to penetrate into these realms are:

1) *The religious factor*, which involves the religious situation of Albanians before their contact with Islam and the presence and acceptance of Islamic doctrine as a solution to the tension caused by the ecclesial and sectarian pressure of the time. Indeed, Islam recognizes life as a symbiosis of the spiritual and the material, featuring a legislation for all times and places, as affirmed by a European scholar quoted by Sami Frashëri: "Indeed, Islam is a religion that cleanses the earth from idols. It forbids the killing of human beings and cannibalism. It guarantees women's rights. Limits the polygamy to justified and logical boundaries. It strengthens family ties and makes the individual a family member thus opening to him the doors of salvation and freedom... These virtues are some of many graces that Islam brings to uncivilized peoples brought under Islamic rule" [S. Frasher (2004): 35].

2) *The moral factor*, which has left deep traces in both the material and the spiritual culture. This new element among the Abrahamic religions renders the Muslim a creative force who is not confined to matters of personal belief or morals. He acts as an individual, but also as part of a group, a community, a society. These traces can be seen in the material and the spiritual culture, such as we can find in the writings of *bejtexhi* poets and in religious material culture.

3) *The cultural and scientific factor*, which means that Islam does not recognize mythology and superstition, favouring rationality. Islam appeals to reason and to man as the pillar of this life: "...Say: Are those who know and those who do not know the same?" [Zumer, 9]; "Read in the name of your Lord Who created..." [Alaq, 1-5]. The first obligation to a Muslim in Islam is to learn and the first criterion, piety. This factor had a positive influence on the local population from among which great personalities in culture, civilization, arts, crafts etc., emerged.

4) *The political and economic factor*. The first principle of the Islamic political system is that supreme sovereignty belongs to God. The second principle predicates that all men are equal before the law, as well as before God. The third principle predicates that all affairs of general importance are entrusted to Allah and the ruler governs according to His commandments and the Apostle's instructions. The fourth and last principle is that all state affairs must be decided upon by agreement, in consultation with citizens [U. Azizussamed (1992): 76-77].

On the economic plane Islam emphasizes the well-being of man, rightful earning, rightful possession of material means and fair spending of wealth. Allah is the possessor of everything and man is their manager and user. Resources, rivers, seas, trees and their fruits are for all people.

5) *The social factor*, which has to do with the fact that Muslims found a social mess in the Balkans. Various rulers such as the Romans, the Byzantines, the Slavs, the Bulgarians had each in their own way made life difficult for people. Racial, linguistic and local differences are regarded as values rather than barriers by Islam which doesn't tend to eradicate but rather to cherish them: (Qur'an, Al-Hujurat, 13). Muhammad, peace be upon him, in the Farewell Sermon says: "An Arab has no superiority over a non-Arab, nor a non-Arab over an Arab. A black man has no superiority over a white man, nor a white man over a black man..." The equality enjoyed by non-Muslims with the ruling people in practicing their respective faiths, opportunity for work, freedom of movement, education, etc., made non-Muslims lean towards Muslims and, in many cases, adopt the Islamic faith.

6) *The ecological factor*. Research on the relationships of humans, as well as of other beings, with nature indicates that at the beginning that relationship was characterized by full cooperation with nature as a great organism in contrast to later, especially modern, times when man has been dealing with nature in a destructive manner. The perception of nature as an object, which is a Western feature, is stripped of moral responsibility and of wisdom, giving rise to the terrible increase of technological power. On the other hand Islam does not divide the world into profane and sacred, as is the case with the Western worldview, but rather attributes sanctity to the world as a whole. Man is the *khalif* (vicegerent) of God on earth, as its steward and cultivator, not its greedy exploiter. These responsibilities are regulated by law in Islam whereby these moral obligations are sanctioned through *fiqh* (jurisprudence) (N. Ibrahim (2005): 195-197).

### The ways and manners through which Islam spread in the Balkans

Although the overwhelming majority of writings in the Albanian language on the spread of Islam in the Balkans exclusively emphasize the factor of military force and economic pressure, the results of research show the opposite. This finding is consistent especially with regard to the pre-Islamic stage of the spreading of Islam in the Balkans, specifically in Illyrian-Albanian territories. At that time Islam did not penetrate through armies and state administration, but through individuals, small trading groups, religious enthusiasts, and other similar ways. This is attested by authors of different ideological and linguistic affiliations.

The Serbian Orientalist RadeBozovic considers that contacts and confrontations between Muslims and Europeans, and especially between Muslims and Slavs, but also the mutual impacts, have developed in three main directions:

- Through Byzantium, namely through the Byzantine-Arab border and through the wars between these two empires;

- Through the Mediterranean basin, namely through Spain, Fatimid Egypt, and Sicily, where the Arab civilization had reached great heights;
- Through Hungary, namely through the North and the nomadic fighters, the Pechenegs [RadeBožović (1977): 175].
- This methodology reveals a number of ways of penetration:
  - Commercial and maritime relations;
  - Political, diplomatic and military relations;
  - Missionary movements of various profiles (military, commercial, religious, mystical) etc.
  - Individual, group and mass migrations with various motives that have left a mark to some extent on the spread of Islam as a religion, culture, civilization and mentality [S. Shaw (s.a): 19-20].

These commercial and naval, military and diplomatic relations enabled the arrival of Arabic loanwords since before the 15th century. This has been written about by the famous Albanian linguist prof. EqremÇabej who came to the conclusion that the Illyrian-Albanian territories came under Islamic influence much earlier than the 15th century. This, he argues, is not only historically proven, but also evidenced by facts. These influences, according to him, begin with the recruitment of Turkish mercenaries in the 13th and 14th centuries by the Anjou Franks, Byzantines and sometimes by Albanian feudalists. The Muslim presence, he says, is also attested by linguistic facts, such as old names like *Menschumanus* from 1388 (*Maria filiaMenschumaniAlbanensi*), which he thinks corresponds with the word *mushkumëndi*, by which the Arbëreshë of Italy at that period denoted Muslims [E. Çabej (1977): 275; 274-279]. From the same period is also the loanword *Kulla* which appears in 1386 (*de bonis et suentibusballistarius, ques ipe deposit asdeustodicus del cula*) [E. Çabej (1988): 10]. Of this category are also such names as the Arabian Sailor Mosque in Ulcinj, the village of Arapaj in the district of Durrës, some coins minted by early Muslim caliphs that have been found, etc. Although no detailed research has been carried out on the Muslim (Arab) presence on the Adriatic, it can be said in general that this presence, political-military, but also commercial, religious and cultural, lasted for almost two centuries. In 840 and later the Arab took Taranto, then Budva, Kotor, Rosin and Rijeka and reached the Susak island. In 866 Muslims even surrounded Ragusa (Dubrovnik) for 15 months, but failed to conquer it. Their efforts continued until 1023 when they undertook the latest raid from Sicily against the eastern Adriatic coast [M. Mufaku (1990): 20].

On the same line argues the German linguist Gustav Meyer, who claims that, for example, the word *anije*(ship) originates from Arabic. Since it is not an Ottoman loanword, that means it belongs to the pre-Ottoman period of contacts with Arabs. His opinion is shared by other Albanologists, such as Jokli, Popovic, etc. [E. Çabej (1988/2): 13; 52].

Although there are many arguments and proofs that Arabs and Islam had reached Albanians before the Ottoman period, such as the movements of various missionaries, Muslims in medieval Bulgaria, those in medieval Hungary, Turks of the Vardar, Pechenegs and other peoples [N. Ibrahim (2011)],

the period of intense contact of Albanians with the Arab came especially after the arrival of the Ottoman Empire in the Balkans.

Our research points out to three ways of the penetration of Arabic words into Albanian:

- 1) Words that have entered the Albanian language through direct contact with Arabs or through European cultures, such as *algjebra*, *alkimia*, *algoritmi*, *almanak*, *alamiado*, *alkool* etc.;
- 2) Words that have entered the Albanian language through the Islamic culture, such as *asbesmelja*, *shehadeti*, *shejtani*, *iblisi*, *dexhalli* and hundreds of other words, and;
- 3) Words that continue to penetrate into the daily usage of Albanians today through the interpretation of Islam by preachers who have studied and continue to study Arabic in various countries of the East, through communication in business and other fields, and also through contacts with Albanian colonies in the Arab world [M. Mufaku (1990, 2009)]. Such terms are even used by Albanian Catholic and Orthodox Christians.

From an estimation we have made, it turns out that there are a total of 274 basic Arabic loanwords in the FGJSSH [FGjSSh (2006)] with 420 derivative words.

#### **The contacts of Albanian language with the Arabic during and after the Ottoman period**

The arrival of Ottomans in Albanian territories began in the mid 80s of the 14th century [*Historia e popullitshqiptar I* (2002)]. They were led by Rumelibeylerbeyi Timurtash Pasha. In 1385, after taking Sofia, they entered the territory of today's Macedonia and Albania taking the towns of Shtip, Prilep, Manastir and Kostur.

The intensification of Ottoman raids and their rapid expansion in the Balkans forced the Balkan rulers to set aside their disputes and conflicts in order to plan and undertake joint military actions for protecting their domains. In 1387 a large Balkan coalition was created, while in 1388 the Sultan concentrated many forces in Plovdiv, Bulgaria, to pursue conquest in the Central Balkans. The Serbian knjaz Lazar Hrebelanovic took the initiative and invited the other Balkan rulers to unite their forces in order to halt the Ottoman march. Some of the Albanian rulers, such as Teodor II Muzaka, ruler of Berat and Myzeqe, Demetrius Jonima, ruler of territories along the commercial road Lezha-Prizren, Andrea Gropa, the ruler of Ohrid and its territories, rulers of Lower Albania and others too responded to his call. They were joined by other Balkan rulers, such as the Romanian voivode Mircea, the Croat ban Ivan Horvat, king Tvrtko I of Bosnia, the Serbian ruler of Kosovo Vuk Mladenovic, commonly known by the surname Branković (VukBranković) whose family possessions lay in the northern part of Drenica and Fushë-Dardania.

In June 1389 the armies of the Balkan coalition engaged with the Ottoman army in Gazimestan near Pristina (Fushë-Kosovë). At the start of the battle, VukBrankovic withdrew his troops from the coalition. On June 15th, the coalition waged a bloody battle against Ottoman forces commanded by Sultan Murat I. After some initial successes by the coalition armies, the Ottomans eventually managed to turn the battle and win it, with great human losses on both sides. During the battle, a warrior named Milos Kopilic by trickery

managed to kill Sultan Murat I but was caught by the Ottomans and executed together with knjaz Lazar. Among those killed in the battle was the Albanian Teodor I Muzaka, as well as many of his comrades and other Albanians [M. Krasniqi (2015): 43-53; <http://lajmi.net/milazim-krasniqi-kjo-eshte-e-verteta-per-betejen-e-kosoves-1389>].

The defeat of the Balkan coalition in the Battle of Gazimestan of 1389 put an end to the large Balkan coalitions against the Ottomans and paved the way for the successor sultan, Bayazit I (1389-1402) to make new conquests in the Balkans. The Ottomans made the Serbian ruler of Kosovo VukBranković their vassal. At the beginning of 1392 they forced him to hand them over Skopje and then Zvečan (a castle near Mitrovica). With the takeover of Skopje the Ottomans strengthened their rule in the eastern part of Central Albania (today's Macedonia), especially in the Vardar River plains, which are among the most fertile land in the Balkans.

The very favourable geographic position of Skopje where the shortest roads linking the Ottoman Empire's capital with all Albanian lands and other Balkan regions crossed, inspired the Ottoman sultans to make it a powerful military base as a *pashasanjak*, i.e. the headquarters of Rumelibeylerbeyi.

In terms of the Ottoman Empire's approach to the Albanians after establishing itself in these lands, it can be said that unlike other conquered peoples the Ottoman Empire began to consider Albanians as their partners in government which is indicated by the prominence of hundreds of Albanian politicians, commanders and intellectuals in key offices of the state and of cultural, religious, and economic institutions. If we would refer to the Turkish historian Abdulkadir Ozcan, "*the Ottoman Empire had 34 Albanian viziers (prime ministers) during its entire existence. In other words Albanian were at the head of the government for approximately 100 years or 1/6 of the time during the existence of this empire.*"

#### **The spread of Islam among Albanians and the contacts of Albanian with Arabic**

The acceptance of Islam by Albanians happened voluntarily and without compulsion. In his study Thomas W. Arnold [T. Arnold (2004); M. Ahmad (1997)] shows that Albanians have enjoyed a semi-autonomous state of affairs throughout the Ottoman rule. This was because Albanians enjoyed much respect and a high credibility as we pointed out above. Moreover, the arrival of the Ottomans eliminated the great danger of assimilation for Albanians since the first signs of it by Serbs in the north as well as by Greeks in the south had already appeared. The arrival of the Ottomans eliminated this danger. Meanwhile the Ottomans had tried to expand their rule in Central Albania. So by the end of the 1460s over 60% of Skopje and Manastir residents were Muslims. However Islam did not spread among the Slavs who had their own national churches. In the Ottoman cadastral records of the 15th century almost no spahis described as Serbian or Slavic, unlike many others who bear the surname *Arnaut*.

The conversion of Albanians to Islam detached many of them from the influence of Slavic and Greek Orthodox churches (where the liturgy was in Slavic or Greek), thus interrupting the momentum of the centuries-old process of Slavicization and Greecization of Albanians. Moreover, the acceptance of Islam allowed the Albanians to integrate into the life of the Ottoman Empire and to maintain, to a certain extent, their economic, social and political positions [http://www.forumishqiptar.com/threads / 2906]. Although the Ottomans were not Arabs, they continued to use Arabic because they had accepted Islam and believed that by their political expansion they also spread the Islamic religion. Besides the religious life which of course was in Arabic (especially rituals) they continued to use Arabic in the greatest part of administration and books of non-religious sciences. Therefore prof. Hasan Kaleshi rightly concludes that “*Arabic as the language of Islamic culture and civilization has begun to be taught simultaneously with the onset of the spread of Islam*” [N. Ibrahim (2011): 28].

Since the Qur'an was in Arabic and all religious rites were held in Arabic and most of Islamic literature was in Arabic, in addition to the masses of the people - those who accepted Islam - who were in direct contact with Arabic at their level and according to their religious needs, a greater impact was effected by the Islamic schools (*meyteps*, madrasa, Qur'an memorization schools and hadith schools, as well as in some lodges where the *Mathnawi*, *Ihya* and other works of importance were taught) that operated in Albanian territories. Prof. Kaleshi says that “There were 100 madrasas in Bosnia only during the Ottoman period” and states that there were more in Macedonia and Kosovo (N. Ibrahim (2011): 29]. Also, citing Evliya Çelebi, he

says that in the Albanian territories there were also special schools of hadith and mentions such schools in Ohrid and Shtip, while stating that there were ten schools for Qur'an memorization in Skopje (N. Ibrahim (2011): 30]. All these schools, the Islamic rituals, the language of administration, the language of courts, inscriptions, epitaphs, and especially literature, have been the main lines of the penetration of Arabic into Albanian. As it is well known, besides these relations, during the Ottoman centuries in the Balkans Albanians also began to create works in Albanian using the Arabic alphabet adapted for the Albanian language [M. Hysa (1995; 2000)]. Thus, since 1724 when the first poem with Arabic alphabet in Albanian (*My Lord don't leave me without coffee* by Muçi Zade) appears until the 30s of the 20th century, the tradition of writing with Arabic letters in Albanian was very vivid [I. Ahmedi (1999)]. Although the Alphabet Congress in 1908 laid the foundations of the Latin alphabet for Albanian, this did not prevent many authors from continuing to write with an Arabic alphabet in Albanian until half a century later.

This literary tradition brought into Albanian works with Islamic religious content mostly, such as: *qasidas*, *mawluds*, *nasheeds*, *divans* etc. Among the most famous writers of this period are: Ibrahim Nezimi (Nezim Frakulla), Hasan Zyko Kamberi, Muhamed Kyçyku (Çami), Sulejman Naibi, Dalip Frashëri etc. Such works have often been described by the (ideologically biased) Albanian literary criticism as containing endless Oriental loanwords, most of which are in fact of Arabic origin, but which as such had created a stratum and were being used by both Muslims and Christians. Below I give some examples of these texts in order to give an idea to the extent the Arabic loanwords were present in the Albanian literature of this period:

**Velehu**

Mosqoftënjerisiunë  
Lëdnyjanënënkëmbë,  
Vallëç'ështëkëpunë  
Kam ukbanënënkëmbë.  
Axhabanukëkehaber  
Se ç'ështënesërnëmahsher,  
Zalimkaqë fort pseimerr  
Fukaranënënkëmbë!  
Nëhiqe(sh) se je musliman,  
Si ezhderecëmmëxhihan,  
Allah Allah, more nadan  
Ban imanënënkëmbë.

\* \* \*

Undriçuejeta, kur leu Ai Resul,  
Qjell e tok' m'at sahat u mbush me Nur.  
Kushdotë don prejxhehenemitxhatë,  
Le të bin tujqa me lot ai salavatë.

(from *Mevlud* by Hafiz Ali Ulqinakut)

\* \* \*

Përsilsilet'shejtigtjithëvintekymur  
Deri bëniMuhamedin'jetëzuhur  
Pasiqë e gjetkynurvendin e vetë  
Pas Resultaskujtmëmirass'imbet

(from *Mevlud* by Tahir Efendi Popova)

[A. Hamiti (2008): 170].

Another very well-known poem from this period:

From these few examples in the written language, and even more so in the spoken language, it can be clearly seen to what extent the Albanian language contained Arabic loanwords in its lexicon which has been quite a normal and natural phenomenon of Albanian literary communication.

**Albanians and Islamic culture after the Ottoman Empire**

After the withdraw of the Ottoman state from the Albanian lands in 1912, with the awakening of Albanian nationalist movements, as was the case among the other nations around, great attempts were made to cut off any links with Istanbul and to cleanse Albanian language from Oriental loanwords. For this end a book titled "Përpastërtinë e gjuhësshqipe" (*On the Purification of Albanian Language*) was published. It was the best example of the rejecting approach that was adopted against Arabic loanwords in Albanian language, so now only few of them have managed to "escape" and be included in FGJSSH (*Albanian Language Dictionary*). Of course, the Arabic loanwords continued to communicate with Albanians who continued to communicate through them although they were unjustly removed from the standard Albanian language.

In the same context, under a system that overly restricted religious freedom, the publication of Islamic literature in Albanian was also very limited. Few works on Islam in Albanian were published, most of which during King Zog's period - such as those by Hafiz Ali Korça, Hafiz Ibrahim

**PARAJA**

Mbreti, ç'urdhërondynjanë,  
Që ka vënëtaraphanë  
E ipresënëparanë,  
Ja di kimenëparasë.  
Dheveziri, q'ështëveqil,  
Zësikurtëbënet'adil  
E mosthotë dot kaly-kil,  
Ja di kimenëparasë.  
ShehIslami, q'epfetfanë,  
Që di qitapëtëç'thanë,  
Nukëkaçirdisëparanë,  
Ja di kimenëparasë.  
MËftiedhemyderizë  
Edhekyrra e vai-ë  
Kanëujdisur'iblizë,  
Ja di kimenëparasë.  
Dhekadiuimehqemesë,  
Qërrisipërsixhadesë,  
Edheshehuiteqesë,  
Ja di kimenëparasë...  
Dhepashallarë, bejlerë,  
Edheavamëtëtjërë,  
Përparaapënëkrerë,  
Ja di kimenëparasë...  
Kadiut, t'irrefeshparanë,  
Ters e vërtitsherianë,  
Përpara se ç'eshett'anë,  
Ja di kimenëparasë..."

(Hasan ZykoKamberi)

[*Poezia e bejtexhinjve* (2010): 116-118]

Dalliu, Hafiz Ali Ulqinaku and others, as well as some periodicals (*Zani iNaltë*, *KulturaIslame*, *Njeriu* etc.), because after the establishment of the Communist regime in Albania, Islamic literature in Albanian was completely prohibited, so there very few texts on Islam in Albanian remained, published in Albanian parts of the former Yugoslavia.

The regress of Islamic literature in Albanian caused the Arabic loanwordsthat had entered the Albanian language during the past five centuries of Ottoman rule and even earlier, that had created a stratum that was intensively used in the spoken language, to vanish, often violently and artificially, thus impoverishing Albanian in many aspects, not only in lexicon but also in style. Unfortunately, no similar campaign undertaken against Oriental loanwords (Arabic, Persian, Ottoman) was undertaken against words of other origins, such as Serbian, French, Italian, Greek, etc. Later, with the collapse of Communism many books on Islam in Albanian language, especially in Macedonia and Kosovo but also in Albania, have been published.

However the rejection of Arabic loanwords from the standard Albanian language has not changed as an attitude even today when FGJSSH has been republished a number of times, so the wide corpus of words used in Islamic literature in Albanian language remain excluded from the main Albanian lexicon (and often characterized as "barbarisms") as not belonging to Albanian.

## Conclusions

We will conclude that, although there are indications of medieval contact, the most intense interaction of Albanian with Arabic has developed especially with the establishment of Ottoman rule in these lands and with the acceptance of Islam by the majority of the Albanians. In fact it is Islam that continues to keep the connection of Albanians with the Arabs and the Arabic language unbroken. Generally speaking, from all these we can conclude that the paths the Arabic loanwords have entered Albanian through are the following:

- 1) Direct contacts of Albanians with the Arabs through their arrival as soldiers and civilians, diplomats or traders to Albanian territories in the 13th and 14th centuries, or the contacts of Albanians with European languages which had direct contact with the Arabic, through which Albanians borrowed linguistic elements from Arabic;
- 2) Indirect contacts through the acceptance of Islam by Albanians during the five centuries of Ottoman rule;
- 3) The contacts of Albanian with Arabic continues to this day through religious ties, the education of Albanians in Arab countries, through commercial and industrial relations, through the Albanian colonies in Arab countries and, most recently, through electronic media.

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