

*Sonderdruck aus/Offprint from*

# MEDITERRANEAN LANGUAGE REVIEW

edited by  
Matthias Kappler, Werner Arnold,  
Till Stellino and Christian Voß

with the editorial assistance of  
Maria Petrou

29 (2022)

Harrassowitz Verlag · Wiesbaden

The MEDITERRANEAN LANGUAGE REVIEW is an interdisciplinary peer-reviewed forum for the investigation of language and culture in the Mediterranean, South-Eastern Europe and the Black Sea region. The editors of this periodical welcome articles, reviews, review articles and bibliographical surveys in English, French, German, Italian and Spanish relating to the following aspects of Mediterranean languages, past and present:

- linguistic contact and diffusion in the Mediterranean and Black Sea area, its hinterland and the Balkan Peninsula;
- interaction of language and culture in the region; cases studies of linguistic relativity; culturally determined language behaviour;
- sociolinguistic aspects: dialectology, language policy, koiné and levelling, sociolects, diglossia and bilingualism;
- the historical evolution and present state of languages spoken by small nations and ethnic minorities (e.g. Berber, Albanian in Italy and Greece, Neo-Aramaic, Judeo-Arabic, Judezmo, the languages of Gypsies, etc.); language problems endemic to small speaker communities in the region; ethnolinguistic research on Bedouin;
- religion and language: confessional affiliation and language use; liturgical languages;
- ethnolinguistic studies on island communities in the Mediterranean (Corsica, Sardinia, Cyprus, Malta, the Greek islands, etc.); linguistic obsolescence;
- linguistic stratification: areal typology and the languages of the Mediterranean and Black Sea littoral and of South-Eastern Europe; substratal phenomena;
- interlinguas: Kultursprachen of the Mediterranean (Greek, Latin, Italian, Arabic, etc.); the lexical impact of globalisation; Mediterranean Lingua Franca; maritime linguistics; lexical convergence; relics of colonial and maritime English, e.g. in Maltese, Egyptian Arabic, Cypriot Greek, etc.; marginal language;
- approaches to Mediterranean lexicology (Wörter und Sachen); ethnolinguistic studies of traditional professions; the levelling linguistic impact of globalisation.

Manuscripts for publication, books for review and other correspondence should be sent to one of the following addresses:

Prof. Dr. Matthias Kappler, Università Ca' Foscari di Venezia, Dipartimento di Studi sull'Asia e sull'Africa mediterranea, San Polo 2035, 30125 Venezia, Italy, e-mail: mkappler@unive.it;

Prof. Dr. Werner Arnold (Semitic world), Hochschule für Jüdische Studien Heidelberg, Landfriedstr. 12, 69117 Heidelberg, Germany, e-mail: werner.arnold@hfs.eu;

Dr. Till Stellino (Romance world), Universität Heidelberg, Romanisches Seminar, Seminarstraße 3, 69117 Heidelberg, Germany, e-mail: stellino@uni-heidelberg.de;

Prof. Dr. Christian Voß (South-Eastern Europe), Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin, Institut für Slawistik, Dorotheenstraße 65, 10099 Berlin, Germany, e-mail: christian.voss@hu-berlin.de.

© Otto Harrassowitz GmbH & Co. KG, Wiesbaden 2022

This journal, including all of its parts, is protected by copyright. Any use beyond the limits of copyright law without the permission of the publisher is forbidden and subject to penalty. This applies particularly to reproductions, translations, microfilms and storage and processing in electronic systems.

Printing and binding by Hubert & Co., Göttingen

Printed on permanent/durable paper

Printed in Germany

<https://www.harrassowitz-verlag.de/>

ISSN 0724-7567

eISSN 2747-4445

## Contents

<i>Nachruf auf Ingeborg Hauenschild</i> (Matthias Kappler) .....	VII
---	-----

### Articles

Valentina Retaro <i>Riflessi linguistici dell'emigrazione dei pescatori flegrei in Algeria: il caso di Mers el Kebir</i> .....	1
Maciej Klimiuk & Maria Lipnicka <i>Fishing and Cyclone Cutting: A Text from the Area of Għasri within the Dialect Continuum of Gozo (Malta)</i> .....	19
Mladen Ćirić <i>A Sociolinguistic Profile of the Brazilian Female Diaspora in Serbia</i> .....	53
Svetlana Ćirković & Mirjana Mirić <i>Serbian Loanverb Adaptation in the Gurbet Romani Variety in Eastern Serbia</i> .....	89
Monica Genesin & Joachim Matzinger <i>Urban Streetscapes in Albania – The Street Names of Tirana, a Preliminary Report with Special Emphasis on the Italian Influence until 1944</i> .....	129
Popi Theophanous & Marilena Karyolemou <i>From Local to Global and Back Again: Language Use in Corporate Communication in Cyprus</i> .....	149
GWilhelm Nebe <i>Zu neuen ostaramäischen Inschriften aus Kifrīn vom mittleren Euphrat (193–235 n. Chr.) und zu zwei altsyrischen Mosaik-Inschriften aus der Osrhoene (3. Jh. n. Chr.)</i> .....	173
<b>Book Reviews</b>	
Daniel Birnstiel and Na'ama Pat-El (eds.) <i>Re-engaging Comparative Semitic and Arabic Studies</i> (Maciej Klimiuk) .....	185

Mordechai Akiva Friedman <i>A Dictionary of Medieval Judeo-Arabic: In the India Book letters from the Geniza and in other texts</i> (Assaf Bar-Moshe) .....	186
Manfred Woidich <i>Wörterbuch Deutsch – Ägyptisch-Arabisch</i> (Maciej Klimiuk) .....	189

# Urban Streetscapes in Albania

## The Street Names of Tirana, a Preliminary Report with Special Emphasis on the Italian Influence until 1944

Monica Genesin (University of Salento) & Joachim Matzinger (Austrian Academy of Sciences) \*

### 1

The following paper is a preliminary report on the research about the role that street naming has played in the urban streetscapes of the Albanian cities. On this occasion we will limit ourselves to the case-study of the Albanian capital Tirana, both because of the relatively greater amount of information available so far for this largest settlement in Albania, and because of the semiotic value that these changes of odonymic character have assumed in the capital, given the representative role of Tirana for all Albania. Another limitation refers to the time frame, which ranges from Albania's independence in 1912 to 1944, the beginning of communist rule. Landry & Bourhis in their seminal work<sup>1</sup> make a distinction between the informational and the symbolic functions of linguistic signs in public spaces, a distinction which is also relevant in odonymy. As Bouvier (2007: 25–26) notes, it is necessary to distinguish on a conceptual level between two different typologies:

– Les toponymes descriptifs, qui disent des caractéristiques et plus largement un usage des lieux et qui, pour cette raison, peuvent être appelés des toponymes d'usage: par exemple rue Etroite, rue de la Verrerie [...]

– Les toponymes commémoratifs et/ou symboliques, qui peuvent avoir un rapport de proximité avec les lieux aux quels ils sont affectés, mais qui sont déconnectés de leur référence spatiale.

The former refer to odonyms that reflect specific characteristics and often have an orientational value, while the latter are not anchored to precise spatial references, but are placed in a symbolic sphere, linked to events and people who have played a role in local, regional or international history. Bouvier 2007: 26 notes that it is not always easy to distinguish between odonyms that have a purely descriptive character

---

\* Paragraphs 1 and 4 by Monica Genesin, paragraphs 2 and 3 by Joachim Matzinger.

<sup>1</sup> Landry & Bourhis 1997: 25.

and those that have been chosen for their symbolic character, as, for example, the case of Rue des Rosiers attested in a district of Paris since the thirteenth century and linked to the presence of gardens, compared to an identical toponym attested in an area of recent construction and chosen for its purely symbolic and evocative value. On the basis of the fact that place names are not “mere signifiers of ‘objective facts’ in space, but are embedded into systems of meaning and partake in social and ideological discourses” (Azaryahu 2012: 388), there is a particular interest in this second category of commemorative and/or symbolic toponyms, by the so-called research of “critical toponymy”<sup>2</sup> that, as Azaryahu (2012: 388) notes, explores “power relations, public memory, identity formation and commemorative street naming.” This research interest was initially pursued in the field of social geography and later developed within sociolinguistic studies focusing, in general, on two types of contexts, one related to the colonial legacy of street and square names in non-European areas, the other, instead, to the process of identity reconstruction in some Eastern European countries, particularly after the fall of the communist regimes, such as, for example, Šakaja & Stanić 2018 on the changes which took place in the toponymic nomenclature of streets and squares in the city of Zagreb from 1878 until today, Palmerberger 2018 on the city of Mostar, and Marin 2018 on street renaming in Leningrad/St. Petersburg.

## 2

The history of the names of streets and squares<sup>3</sup> in Albania, more precisely in Albanian towns and cities, is a history not written so far.<sup>4</sup> In fact, it is a history that must take into account several specific historical aspects of the country itself. First of all, the fundamental fact that Albania, after it was conquered by the Ottomans during the 15th century remained part of the Ottoman Empire and its culture for almost 500 years. The Ottoman conquest marked a reorganization, if not a rupture in many socio-cultural areas, including urban structures and the organization of cities. Actually, there were relatively few of them in Albania prior to the arrival of the Ottomans, most on the Adriatic coast, a few in Albania’s hinterland.<sup>5</sup> Before the Ottoman conquest, these cities were organized in the same way as the medieval Christian cities of the upper Adriatic (Dalmatia, Istria); in the case of the Northern Albanian town of *Shkodra* (Italian *Scutari*), fortunately, the city charter was also preserved.<sup>6</sup>

---

2 Buchstaller, Fabiszak, Brzezińska et al. 2021; Buchstaller & Fabiszak 2021; Rose-Redwood et al. 2018.

3 In the following, the term “street name” is used for all traffic routes in simplified terminology.

4 Although scientific treatments of the topic are largely lacking, a relatively large number of articles and commentaries can mostly be found on the internet in various newspapers, magazines, and online forums of which we would like to mention especially Ndreca 2020.

5 See the “classic” contribution of Šufflay 1924 and see also Schmitt 2020: 109–115.

6 Cf. Nadin 2002. As for the streets within the city, nothing is known about whether they bore specific names. Šufflay 1924: 47 thinks that this might have been the case (“Die alte Sitte,

After the incorporation of the Albanian cities under the Ottoman Empire, the Ottoman urban culture spread into these Albanian cities and shaped their specific character. This Ottoman influence is manifested in their architecture with mosques, tekke,<sup>7</sup> mektep and medrese (schools), türbe (tombs) and hamam (public baths). Another aspect is the apparent lack of “official” designations of urban streets and squares. One can assume that, as in other Ottoman cities, orientation in the urban area took place through specific “landmarks”, i.e. the (central) mosque or some other natural or man-made object (rock(s), bridge, tomb, fountain, etc.). As for the appearance of street names in the cities of Albania, there is a lack of information. Documents up to the beginning of the 20th century do not provide any data in this regard. However, this is not specific to Albania, because also for the other cities of the Ottoman Balkans, one can mostly only speculate and assume that “official” street names, or more precisely the odonymic system as it appears on (modern) maps is a relatively recent achievement. Orientation towards landmarks was the norm and still remains a typical phenomenon of residents of all Albanian cities.<sup>8</sup> In general, it can be said that the issue of odonymy in Balkan cities, more precisely in those cities that belonged to the Ottoman Empire, is still largely unexplored.

The period of “official” names of streets and squares in Albania therefore seems to begin only at the dawn of the 20th century. In fact, the independent and autonomous state of Albania has existed only since 1912, and it is only since then that state and municipal structures have existed, in whose area of responsibility and authority the assignment of official toponymy falls, including therefore also the official odonymy.<sup>9</sup>

Before dealing with street names in modern times, the question of terminology for traffic routes for the older periods of Albanian shall be presented in a historical perspective. This perspective is derived from the documents of the 16th–18th centu-

---

Straßen nach den Gewerben, die hier vorwiegend betrieben wurden, zu benennen, war in den albanischen Städten gewiß heimisch. Aber Belege wie für Ragusa ... fehlen hier vollständig.” Transl. ‘The old custom of calling streets by the names of the trades predominantly practiced there was certainly present in Albanian cities. But evidence like this for Ragusa ... is completely lacking here.’).

- 7 In the Muslim world a monastic complex, usually the centre or a settlement of a Sufi brotherhood.
- 8 See some contributions published online, e.g., Rob Cameron, “Tirana: Where the streets have no name”, <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/europe/4062429.stm> (online since Dec 3, 2004) or the Sy\_Shqiponjë blog, “Tirana, where the streets have no name” (<https://bit.ly/3ExhSgE>; online since Aug 15, 2015). See also Rando Devole’s contribution “Albania, Berlusconi and odonyms” under the link: <https://www.balcanicaucasos.org/aree/Albania/L-Albania-Berlusconi-e-gli-odonimi-142204> (online since Oct 7, 2013).
- 9 At least in modern day Albania, the respective municipalities are responsible for naming public areas (roads, etc.), see the legal regulation in the official law, Ligi no. 9208 of July 31, 2000: Për organizimin dhe funksionimin e qeverisjes vendore, article 32 under the link: <https://bit.ly/3MnQYtF>.

ries written in Old Albanian (specifically in the Old Gheg dialect). These are almost exclusively theological works, but two dictionaries are also available (the printed Latin-Albanian dictionary by Frang Bardhi and the handwritten Italian-Albanian dictionary by Francesco Maria da Lecce).<sup>10</sup> From these documents, the Old Albanian terminology for the various traffic routes can be elicited. In a further step, these lexical items can be compared with the modern terminology. The following expressions are attested in these Old Albanian texts: *udhë* ‘street, road’, *shtek* ‘path’, *rrugë* ‘narrow road, alley’, *pazār* ‘market; square’, *pjacë* ‘square’ and *trek* ‘market; market square’.

Table 1: Old Albanian terminology for the traffic routes

	<i>udhë</i>	<i>shtek</i>	<i>rrugë</i>	<i>pazār</i>	<i>pjacë</i>	<i>trek</i>
Buzuku 1555	+	+	–	–	+	+
Budi 1618-21	+	+	+	+	–	+
Bardhi 1635	+	–	–	+	–	(+) <sup>11</sup>
Bogdani 1685	+	+	+	–	–	+
da Lecce 1702	+	+	+	+	–	+
Kuvendi 1706	+	+	–	(+)	–	–

This table shows that the usual expression in Old Albanian for a road-type traffic route is the term *udhë* followed by the term *shtek*, which denotes a small road, i.e. a path. The term *rrugë* appears later with Pjetër Budi. The attestations show that this term, like *udhë*, also designates a street, respectively a road. A semantic difference can be seen in the fact that, in contrast to *udhë*, *rrugë* represents a rather narrow street, an alley.<sup>12</sup> What is interesting, however, are the terms for the square, which

10 For an overview of the Old Albanian literature in general see Rusakov 2018.

11 Symbol (+): Attested in metaphorical or in a slightly different semantical meaning.

12 Cf. the following attestations: Pjetër Budi, *Rituale Romanum* 232.28: “e me e lulëzuom si



reflect the different urban concepts. In the book by Gjon Buzuku, who lived and worked in Venice and was therefore at home in a Western European type of city, just like the Albanians of Venice for whom he wrote his book (Nadin 2015), we find the expression *pjacë*, which is a borrowing of the Italian term *piazza*.<sup>13</sup> In the documents of the remaining Old Albanian authors (from the beginning of the 17th century), whose works take into account the conditions of “Ottoman” Albania, the term *pazār* is attested, which is a loan from Turkish *pazar* ‘market, market square’ (Dizdari 2005: 755–756). Almost all authors, however, use the term *trek*, which denotes the area where trade takes place, the market place.<sup>14</sup>

These terms can now be compared on the one hand with the street terminology of the beginning of the 20th century and on the other hand with present-day street terminology. For the beginning of the 20th century, the Albanian-Italian dictionary of 1908 (Gheg dialect) edited by the Bashkimi literary society can serve as a source, which presents the following terminology: p. 503: *Udhe, a*, Via, strada, ..., p. 438: *Shtek e shteg, u*, Sentiero, viaggio, p. 385: *Rruge, a*, Strada, p. 385: *Rrugine, a*, Viottolo, corridoio, p. 385: *Rrugxe, a*, Straduccia, p. 324: *Paxare, i*, Bazar, mercato, prezzo, p. 463: *Treg, u*, Piazza del mercato, contratto and p. 418: *Shesh, i*, Piano, pianura, piazza.

In comparison, modern street terminology as it appears on Albanian city maps is quite limited. In the case of Tirana, e.g., the following terms are used: *bulevard* ‘avenue’, *rrugë* ‘street’, *shesh* ‘square’,<sup>15</sup> see the map of Tirana city center:

---

kishëtë e il-teretë e sakërstûtë e tyne, ashtu ende gjithë udhëtë e rrugatë e trigjetë” (‘and also decorate the churches, altars and their sacristies, as well as all streets, quarters and squares’), Pjetër Budi, *Speculum Confessionis* 147.19: “tue u pënguom gjithë shtiqetë e rrugatë e mkatevet” (‘to prevent all the paths and alleys of sins’), Pjetër Bogdani, *Cuneus Prophetarum*, 1.3.1.3 “shkonte ndë për rrugat” (original Italian translation by Bogdani: “passando per le contrade”), Francesco M. da Lecce, *Dittionario Italiano Albanese*, 40v.1881: *calla, contrada stretta*, 62v.2962: *contrada*, 243r.11703: *strada stretta*, 261v.12603: *vicolo*.

13 See Jorgaqi 2001: 151. This Italian borrowing also appears in the Albanian diaspora in Italy, taken from the form of the local variety, for example in San Marzano di Taranto in Apulia, where the term /cats:a/ from local Italian *chiazza* is used (see Genesin & Matzinger 2018: 211–212).

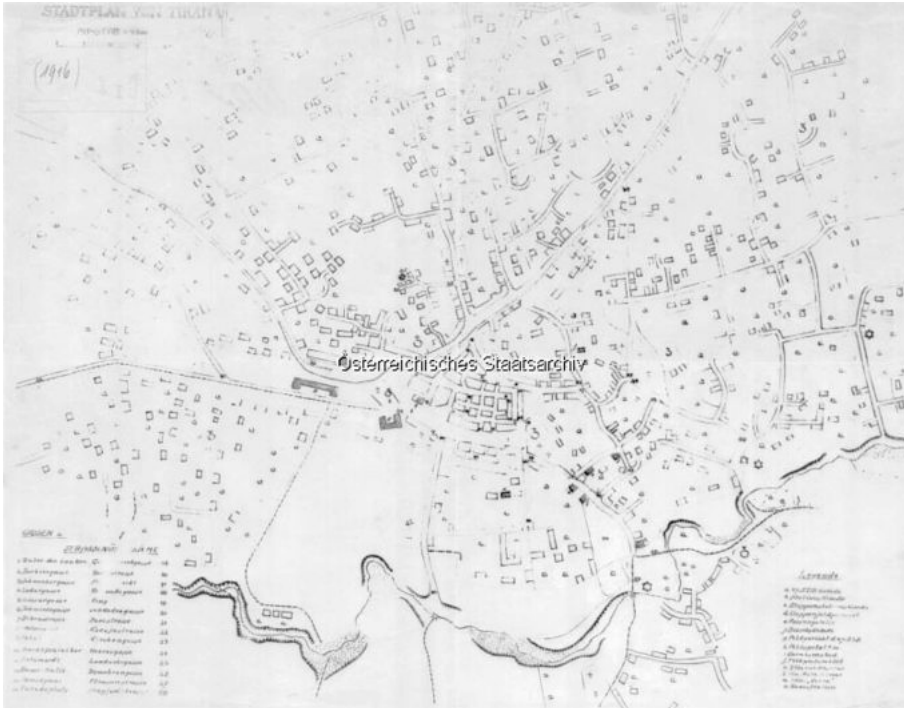
14 Both *trek* and *pazār* refer to an area where commerce takes place, in contrast to the term *pjacë* from Gjon Buzuku (cf. fol. 98v.67: *për gjithë pjacë e tregj* ‘for all squares and markets’), which clearly refers to a representative urban open space (i.e. *piazza*, Engl. *square*, Franc. *place*, Ted. *Platz*) which did not exist in Ottoman cities. Also interesting in this context is the testimony of Frang Bardhi’s Latin-Albanian dictionary, who struggled to render the terms lat. *platea*, ital. *piazza*. In fact, the lack of such a representative square in Albanian cities led to the translation (99.29) *udha e gjanë e e gjatë* ‘wide and long street’ which appears alongside the registration (27.15) *pazār* as a translation of lat. *forum*, ital. *piazza* which seems to refer more to a trade area.

15 For discussion of the etymology of Albanian *shesh* ‘square; plain’ see, e.g. Bonnet 1998: 341.



Finally, urban cartography in Albania initiates at the beginning of the 20th century. Concerning the capital Tirana,<sup>19</sup> the first city map appears in 1916 in the scale 1:3500.<sup>20</sup> It presents a small list of street names in the lower left corner, all in German, but it seems without clear reference to the map itself.

*Figure 2. Map of 1916 (Österreichisches Staatsarchiv, sign. AT-OeSta/KA KPS KS G I B, 201, <https://www.archivinformationssystem.at/detail.aspx?ID=1423910>).*



Soon after, in the following year 1917 another, graphically better map of the city was published. This too was designed by the Austrians, precisely, by the army.<sup>21</sup> This map (scale 1:5000) is interesting because it works with landmarks, mainly buildings housing public facilities (prefecture, schools, and especially several mili-

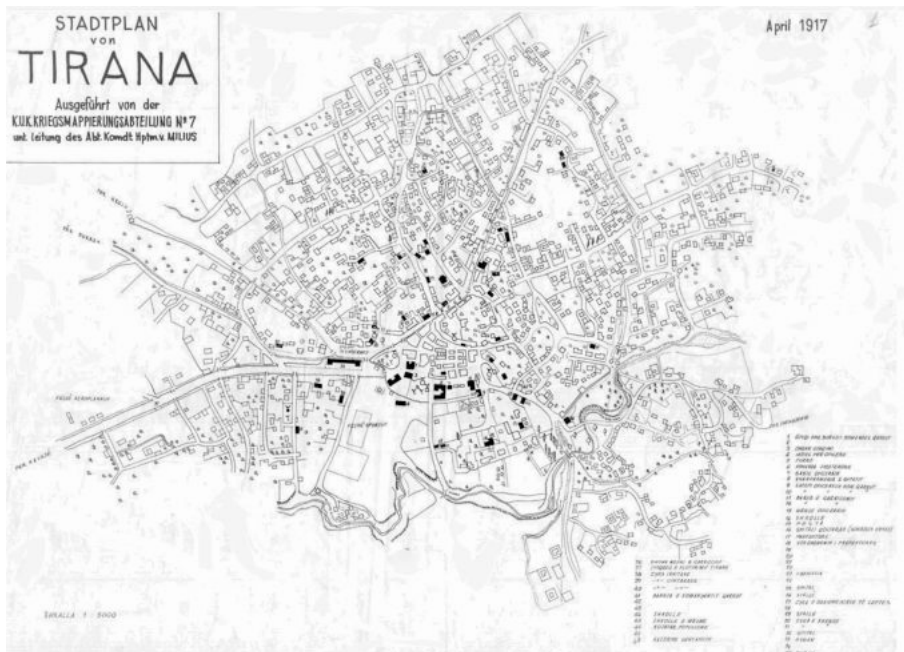
19 Since 1920, decided at the constitutional congress in Lushnja (see Elsie 2010: 88–89).

20 The exact date of the creation of this map seems to be unknown. Information about this first phase (1916–1918) of surveying the city and regulating it under Austrian occupation can be found in Shkreli 2010: 22–26, Aliaj & Lulo & Myftiu 2004: 27–41, Dharmo et al. 2016: 16–18, Kera & Pandejmoni 2020: 407–413.

21 Made by the k.u.k. Kriegsmappingungsabteilung N° 7 (= office of war maps).

tary facilities such as the military hospital). Altogether, there are only three toponyms recorded on this map that are probably second-hand, because they are Albanian names:<sup>22</sup> *Sheshi Skenderbej*, *Rruga Dibres* and *Rr. Shkodres*.

*Figure 3. Map of 1917 (Adolph Stiller, Tirana. Planen, Bauen, Leben [= Architektur im Ringturm XXII]. Salzburg/Wien: Müry Salzmann Verlag: 10, <http://www.vidiani.com/large-scale-old-map-of-tirana-1917/>).*



The next map to be mentioned dates from the year 1921 (*26 Mars* “March 26”) and was published by Skënder Frashëri in Tirana.<sup>23</sup>

22 The literature does not seem to provide any information about the circumstances of the creation of this map.

23 At the time of writing, no information about the exact circumstances of the creation and publication of this city map can be found in the literature.

Figure 4. Map of 1921 (<http://www.vidiani.com/large-old-map-of-tirana-1921/>).



This map (scale 1:3300) finally contains an index of street and square names (*Emërtimi i rrugëve dhe shesheve*), a total of 90 entries, including 83 streets (*rrugë*), 6 squares (*shesh*) and 1 market place (*treg*), as can be seen in the enlarged section below:

Figure 5. Index of street and square names (Map of 1921) (<http://www.vidiani.com/large-old-map-of-tirana-1921/>).

EMËRTIMI I RRUQËVE DHE SHESHEVE				
1. RRUQA DËRRËSIT	24. RRUQA MUZAKËS	47. RRUQA KOMANDËS	70. RRUQA MËSUESIT	FARKËS
2. " KAVAJËS	25. " FARKËTARVE	48. " KAZANIT	71. " 72. SHESHI RRAPËVET	TABAKVE
3. " VOGËLË	26. " 28. NËNDORIT	49. " GIJTHEVE	73. RRUQA JEVQËVËT	MYEZINËT
4. " KRUIJËS	27. " HASRAVET	50. " BUKBAMSVË	74. " 75. " KANDIT	KODRËS
5. " VROMI QOKUT	28. SHESHI PAZARIT	51. " VIJËS	76. " 77. " URISË	HOKHË VOSHIT
6. " VERI-PERËNDIMIT	29. RRUQA RE	52. " SHEHUT	78. " 79. " ELBASANIT	LIVADHEVE
7. " TOPIJAS	30. " KËPUQBAMSVËT	53. " HOKHA TASIM	80. " 81. SHESHI SKËNDERBUT	SHQIPTARVE
8. " KAMBANËS	31. " TELLALLIT	54. " MULLAHIT	82. " 83. RRUQA KANDIT JUGOR	SHESHIT USHTRIMIT
9. " KISHËS	32. " MILLIT	55. " BAMI	84. " 85. " QJELLTORËS POPULLORË	TE QËS
10. " ALI BEUT	33. " GURIMIT	56. " MYFTIUT	86. " 87. " LANËS	S PAHIUT
11. " ZOG	34. TREGU KRYPËS	57. " XOKONOZIT	88. " 89. " AEROPLANAVE	MULLINIT
12. " HAXHI JASËS	35. RRUQA PRUSVET	58. " TRANDAFILAVE	90. " SHËNGJËRËJIT	
13. " BRAKËS	36. " RROBAGËPSËVE	59. " MOLLEVE		
14. " LUMIT	37. " FARKËTARËVE	60. " SMUNJETORËS		
15. " KODRËS KUQE	38. " ARGJENDIT	61. " PAZARIT		
16. " BERRAVE	39. " 40. " TRISHIT	62. " SHKABËS		
17. " VERIUT	41. " SHKABËS	63. " KATUNDARIS		
18. " DIBRËS	42. " 43. " SH KOLLËS	64. " QEVERIS		
19. " MBRETËNËSHËS DONIKA	44. " 45. SHESHI SUNDIMTARVE	65. " SULEJMAN FASHËS		
20. " SH PATËS	46. " 47. " SHËNGJËRËJIT			
21. " KATROSHIT				
22. " KOLONJËS				
23. " FIQVET				

This map includes, with regard to the classification of odonyms, both orientational (or descriptive) street names and commemorative street names. However, it is noted that the orientational street names are in the majority, of which e.g. N° 9 *rruga kishës* ‘church street’, N° 14 *rruga lumit* ‘river street’ or N° 30 *rruga këpucbamsvet* ‘shoemakers’ street’ can be mentioned here. This category also includes those odonyms which indicate their point of destination: N° 1 *rruga Kavajës*, N° 2 *rruga Durrës*, N° 4 *rruga Krujës*, N° 18 *rruga Dibrës* and N° 79 *rruga Elbasanit*. The number of commemorative names is lower, of which only No. 54 *rruga Hoxha Tasim*<sup>24</sup> needs to be mentioned here, since it is a constant in urban toponymy, as will be seen. The central square of the city bears the name of Skanderbeg, i.e. N° 81 *sheshi Skënderbeut*.<sup>25</sup> At the present state of knowledge, it is not possible to say when, by whom and under what circumstances these odonyms were assigned. The question remains whether some of these names had already been in use for some time, or whether they are largely names assigned top-down, precisely during the phase of Tirana’s urban restructuring.<sup>26</sup>

An interesting aspect is offered by the following 1930 map of the city, taken from a travel guide to Albania by Léon Rey. At the time of December 1928 Albania is already a kingdom with King Zog as regent, but with close contacts with Italy. This Albanian monarchy is also visible in the odonymy of Tirana,<sup>27</sup> which refers to the ruling house of King Zog (thus *Bulevard Zog I*, *Rruga Mbretnore*, *Rruga Mbretneshë Nanës*). But, the map also anticipates to some extent the later Fascist nomenclature. This is reflected in the fact that *Rruga Kavajës* is listed as *Bulevard Mussolini*.<sup>28</sup>

---

24 Hasan Tahsini (1812–1822) was an Albanian scholar working in Istanbul, among other things, as rector of the first Ottoman university (see Elsie 2010: 436–437).

25 Incorrectly listed in the index as *Skënderbut*.

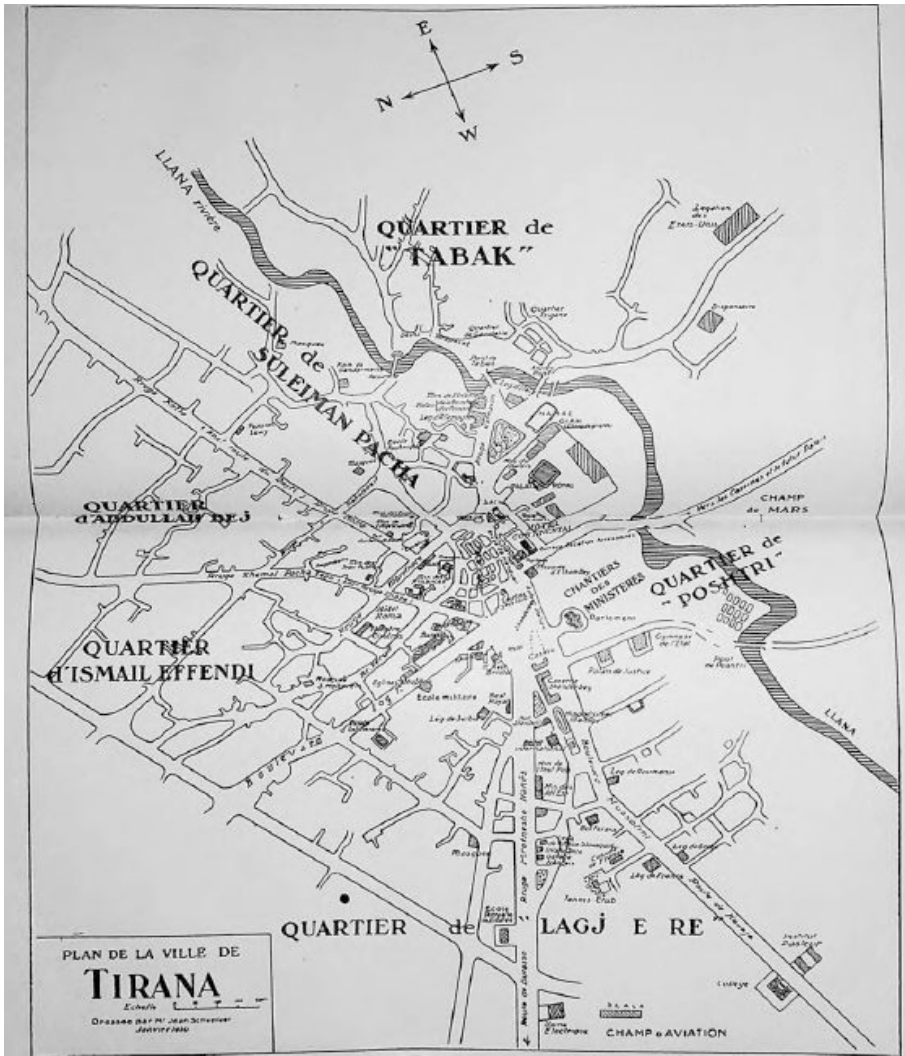
26 Some data on street naming in the period before the Fascist occupation can be found in Mëhilli 2014: 76–85. According to the information presented in this book these designations were assigned by the municipality (*Bashkia*) of Tirana.

27 In addition to the street names shown on the city map, the following streets are also mentioned in the scrolling text of the city description: *Sheshi Scanderbeg*, *Sheshi i Tregut*, *Rruga e Abdi-Begut*, *Rruga e Dibrës*, *Rruga 28 Ndanduer*, *Rruga e Komandës*, *Rruga Tabak*, *Rruga Carnavon*, *Rruga e Dukagjinit*, *Rruga Kotta*.

28 Cf. Bashkia 1937: 30 (“... në vitin 1928–1929 u zgjanue dhe sistemue Boulevard Mussolini që u ba një nga arteret ma kryesore të Kryeqytetit i cili në vjetet 1937–1938 u asfaltue.” Transl. ‘In 1928–1929, Bulevard Mussolini was widened and arranged. It became one of the main arteries of the capital and was paved in 1937–1938.’).



Figure 6. Rey's map of 1930 (Rey 1930).



Tirana was completely transformed by Italian architects so that it could assume its role of capital city, as deliberated in 1920 by the Constitutional Assembly (Pallini Scaccabarozzi 2014: 192 ff.). The other urban centers were to develop according to

precise functions:<sup>29</sup> Durazzo a city-port with a bathing area; Saranda, the small port opposite Corfu in the extreme southern part of Albania was reconceived as a seaside resort and renamed Porto Edda (1940; see Elsie 2010: 396). The urban layout of the capital Tirana underwent a radical reorganization (Pallini & Scaccabarozzi 2014: 197) overseen by several Italian architects, Armando Brasini (1924–1925), Gherardo Bosio with Ivo Lambertini and Ferdinando Poggi (1939–1943), who worked within the Central Office for Construction and Urban Planning. The various projects included a large central avenue on which, from 1931 onwards, government ministries would be built and from which fanned out the streets that connected the urban core with the outskirts of the city. In April 1939, before the outbreak of World War II, Albania was occupied by Italian troops and in June of that year the Albanian Parliament was replaced by the Fascist Grand Council. The crown of King Zog, who fled at the arrival of the Italian army, was offered to Vittorio Emanuele II who assumed executive power. This conquest represented the crowning of a long pursued objective to strengthen the role of Italy in the Balkans, also in consideration of the increasingly important role assumed by Germany on the Balkan-Danubian chessboard. The interest in penetrating beyond the Adriatic had its roots in the liberal era and was aimed at strengthening the Italian presence through economic, financial and commercial penetration. Great attention was also paid to the cultural aspect through propaganda and penetration into the school system in order “to implant the Fascist educational and cultural model at any cost in view of a conquest of the country that was believed to be inevitable”.<sup>30</sup> The diffusion of the Italian language was significantly strengthened through a law issued in 1933 that made the teaching of this language compulsory in all schools of the Albanian kingdom. Action on the urban level was also intense in order to give a new face to the main Albanian cities (Basciani 2012: 94), in line with the aesthetic and cultural models typical of the Fascist regime.

#### 4

The incorporation of Albania into the Fascist Empire had multiple consequences and is reflected, among many other things, also in the toponymy of Albanian cities, which were redesigned through a top-down process. The goal of this renaming is, of course, the visibility of the new government in Albania. This very aspect is evident in the 1940 map of the city (scale 1:15.000), placed as an insert (between pages 152 and 153) of the volume *Albania* published by the *Cosociatione Turistica Italiana* in the “*Guida d’Italia*” series, of which Sestilio Montanelli was the director (Montanelli 1940).

---

29 Cf. Shkreli 2010: 26ff., Godoli & Tramonti 2012, Pallini & Scaccabarozzi 2014, Dharmo et al. 2016: 14ff.

30 Basciani 2012: 92 (“... di impiantare a ogni costo il modello educativo e culturale fascista in vista di una conquista del paese che si credeva ineluttabile.”).



Figure 7. Map of 1940, supplement to the “Guida d’Italia: Albania” (original size 19.5cm × 14.5cm).



This map of the city of Tirana is very different from that of 1921, because of the completion of the road network that had been realized in the meantime. This gradual transformation, which began in 1923,<sup>31</sup> finds one of its most visible expressions in the construction of the great north-south axis, at the center of which is Skanderbeg Square (*Piazza Scanderbeg*).<sup>32</sup> Since this axis was to assume a representative value for a new empire, it is natural, in line with the designations of the time, that it should also bear the name of the sovereign. And so the street which runs north of Skanderbeg Square is therefore called: *Corso Vittorio Emanuele III*. The adjacent part to the south bears the name of the same reigning house: *Viale Savoia*. In both cases these are new street names which do not replace previous denominations; in other cases, however, there are also commemorative redenominations that make crystal clear

31 For the history of this transformation, see Dhamo et al. 2016: 14–55.

32 The events of Tirana as a capital city are described by Dhamo et al. 2016: 14–55, Gresleri 2019.

Albania's affiliation to the Fascist empire and honor important figures, including the Duce (Fascist leader) Benito Mussolini:

*Table 2. Changes in principal street names in Tirana between 1921-1940*

Tirana 1940	Tirana 1921/1930
<i>Corso Vittorio Emanuele III</i>	<i>Bulevard Zog I</i>
<i>Via Regina Elena</i>	<i>Rruga Mbretnore</i>
<i>Via Principe di Piemonte</i>	<i>Rruga Mbretneshë Nanës</i>
<i>Via Mussolini</i> <sup>33</sup>	<i>Rruga e Kavajës</i>
<i>Via Galeazzo Ciano</i>	<i>Rruga Kotta</i>

*Figure 8. Postcard dated 1930 circa with a view on the “Bulevardë Mussolini” (Bakiu 2000: 50).*



33 In the text of the guidebook (p. 153) it is called instead *Viale B. Mussolini*.

In the odonymy of Tirana, not only changes occur,<sup>34</sup> but also some constants in naming can be observed, such as: Hoxha Tahsinit Street (*Rruga Hoxha Tasim* in the 1921 map) and November 28 Street (*Rruga 28 Ndanduer* in the 1921 map).<sup>35</sup> It is interesting to note that King Zog's name has disappeared from the odonymy, but that of his father Xhemal Pasha Zogolli (see Elsie 2010: 498, Fischer 2012: 1–4) has remained unchanged in *Via Xhemal Pascià* (Xhemal Pasha Street). What is striking about the 1940 city map is the inconsistent notation of street names. In addition to purely Italian spellings, Albanian spellings appear (*Via Ismail Qemali*, *Via e Zhabës*) and “mixed forms” such as *Via Xhemal Pascià* (in Albanian orthography *pasha*). Other orientational odonyms which have remained unchanged include *Via Elbasan*<sup>36</sup> and *Via Scutari*.<sup>37</sup>

In the context of urban streetscapes studies, the question of odonymy and its orientational and commemorative function presents interesting aspects. Especially in those European contexts where street names have a long tradition, their historical development can be traced and, in many cases, thoroughly analyzed thanks to an abundant documentation. In the case of Albanian cities, however, the situation is much more difficult. The cities of Albania have been shaped by the long Ottoman<sup>38</sup> cultural influence, consequently the names of the streets have a reduced importance because the orientation, usually, is made through “landmarks”, as is still the case today in many places in the world. Another element that complicates the Albanian case is, on the one hand, the fact that there are only a few city maps that can be used as research material and, on the other hand, that there is no obvious documentation at all accessible on the historical-administrative processes that explain the naming of streets, roads and squares between 1917/1921, until the incorporation of Albania into the Fascist empire.<sup>39</sup> It remains to be seen if there are useful documents in the Albanian and Italian archives waiting to be analyzed and evaluated. For the time being, it is only possible to sketch, in a rudimentary way, the changes that occurred in the urban streetscape of the Tirana odonymy and to make minor remarks in relation to the years between 1921, 1930 and 1940:

---

34 It would be interesting to understand if the changes in odonymy have been accepted in the daily communication of the residents, or if the old names have continued to be used in daily communication. This question is a matter of oral culture and, given the number of years that have passed, it will no longer be ascertainable, unless written records (literature, publicity) exist somewhere.

35 It should be noted that the most important constant in Tirana's odonymy is the naming of the central square, which, despite all the (political) changes, has always been known as Skanderbeg Square or, in Albanian, *Sheshi Skënderbej*.

36 In the map it is *Str. per Elbasan*, in the text of the guidebook, however, it reads *Via Elbasan*.

37 It is noted on the map as *Vecchia Via per Scutari* (Old Shkodra Street). Other orientational names on this map include: *Via Shingjergjit*, *Via Cimitero Musulmano* or *Via Tabakvet*.

38 This observation also applies to other cities of the Balkans once subject to the Ottoman Empire.

39 At least at the present time when this contribution was written during the time of a global pandemic.

— In 1921, orientational street names predominate. Commemorative street names, on the other hand, are few and refer to local or national Albanian personalities (e.g. Hoxha Tahsin).

— In 1930, there was already an increase in commemorative street names, reflecting the new political conditions in Albania. The ruling house of the time finds its mention (e.g. *Bulevard Zog I*).

— In 1940, Albania enters a new phase of its history with the occupation by Fascist Italy, an occupation that is also reflected in the toponymy. The traces of the past are largely erased and the new power relations are made visible in the map. Due to the fact that Tirana was neither a very large nor a city undergoing significant expansion, the conditions for a far-reaching renaming or fresh naming of streets were relatively limited. Nevertheless, the Italian royal family and the Fascist Duce found their way into Tirana's toponymy.<sup>40</sup>

This examination constitutes a first attempt to deal with a subject that, for the Albanian area, is still largely unexplored. The specific history of Albania, characterized by profound socio-political changes (Ottoman Empire > Independence > Kingdom > Fascist Occupation > Communist Regime > Democracy) that have occurred in the last hundred years, is also reflected in the street names. Therefore, research in this field must be intensified, especially through long and laborious archival work, provided, of course, that the material is available and that access is guaranteed.

---

40 According to the maps of the cities of Durrës, Shkodër, Korçë and Vlorë included in the Guide of Albania of the Cosociazione Turistica Italiana (1940), the Italian king Vittorio Emanuele III was honored in these cities with the dedication of a street.

## References

- Aliaj, Besnik; Lulo, Keida; Myftiu, Genc 2004. *Tirana. The challenge of urban development*. Škofja Loka.
- Azaryahu, Maoz 2012. Renaming the past in post-Nazi Germany: Insights into the politics of street naming in Mannheim and Potsdam. *Cultural Geographies* 19/3: 385–400.
- Bakiu, Gazmend 2000. *Tirana në kartolina deri në vitin '44*. Tiranë.
- Basciani, Alberto 2012. Tra politica culturale e politica di potenza. Alcuni aspetti dei rapporti tra Italia e Albania tra le due guerre mondiali. *Mondo Contemporaneo* 2: 91–114.
- Bashkia 1937. *Tirana 1604–1937. Botue prej Bashkis në rastin e 25 vjetorit të Pamvarsis*. Tiranë.
- Bonnet, Guillaume 1998. *Les mots latins de l'albanais*. Paris.
- Bouvier, Jean-Claude 2007. Le langage de la toponymie urbaine. Approche méthodologique. *Onoma* 42: 23–38.
- Buchstaller, Isabelle & Fabiszak, Małgorzata 2021. Editorial: Ideology and commemoration in the urban space. *Linguistics vanguard: multimodal online journal* 7,5. <https://www.degruyter.com/document/doi/10.1515/lingvan-2021-0010/html> (14.02.2022).
- Buchstaller, Isabelle; Fabiszak, Małgorzata; Brzezińska, Weronika; Alvanides, Seraphim; Griese, Frauke & Schneider, Carolin 2021. Ideology in the linguistic landscape: towards a quantitative approach. *Discourse & Society* 32/4: 405–425.
- Dhamo, Sotir; Thomai, Gjergj & Aliaj, Besnik 2016. *Tirana – Qyteti i munguar*. Tiranë.
- Dizdari, Tahir 2005. *Fjalori i orientizmit në gjuhën shqipe (Rreth 4500 fjalë me prejardhje nga gjuhët turke, arabe dhe perse)*. Tiranë.
- Elsie, Robert 2010. *Historical Dictionary of Albania. Second Edition*. Lanham, Toronto, Plymouth UK.
- Fischer, Bernd 2012. *King Zog and the struggle for stability in Albania*. (East European Monographs.) Tirana.
- Genesin, Monica & Matzinger, Joachim 2018. Linguistic Landscape and Urban Toponymy in a Minority Enclave in Italy: the Case of San Marzano (Apulia). In: F. Altimari; G. Gurga & Sh. Sinani (eds), *Matteo Mandalà dhe albanologjia sot. Në 60-vjetorin e lindjes*. Tiranë: 205–219.
- Godoli, Ezio & Tramonti, Ulisse (eds) 2012. *Architetti e ingegneri italiani in Albania*. Firenze.
- Gresleri, Glauco 2019. Neugründung der Stadt/Albania: A suspended dimension between public works and the re-establishment of the city. In: A. Stiller (ed), *Albanien. Bauen im politischen Kontext der Jahrzehnte/Albania. Decades of architecture in political context*. (Architektur im Ringturm LVI.) Salzburg, Wien: 47–57.
- Jorgaqi, Kristo 2001. *Ndikimi i italishtes në letërsinë e vjetër shqipe (XVI-XVII)*. Tiranë.
- Kera, Gentiana & Pandelejmoni, Enriketa 2020. Urban Development in Interwar Albania. Tirana and Shkodra. In: S. Gruber et alii (eds), *From the Highlands to Hollywood. Multi-disciplinary Perspectives on Southeastern Europe. Festschrift for Karl Kaser and SEEHA*. Wien, Zürich: 399–414.
- Landry, Rodrigue & Bourhis, Richard 1997. Linguistic landscape and ethnolinguistic vitality: An empirical study. *Journal of Language and Social Psychology* 16/1: 23–49.
- Marin, Anaïs 2018. Toponymic changes as temporal boundary-making. Street renaming in Leningrad/St. Petersburg. In: R. Rose-Redwood; D. Alderman & M. Azaryahu (eds), *The Political Life of Urban Streetscapes. Naming, Politics and Place*. London: 132–149.
- Mëhilli, Spiro 2014. *Tirana 1920-1944*. Tiranë.

- Montanelli, Sestilio 1940. *Albania con 7 carte geografiche, 6 piante di città e 2 piante in edifici*. (Guida d'Italia della Consociazione Turistica Italiana 25.) Milano.
- Nadin, Lucia 2015. Ancora sul Meshari di Gjon Buzuku – Nuovi dati e nuovi scenari. *Hylli i Dritës* 1–2: 43–66.
- Nadin, Lucia et alii (eds.) 2002. *Statuti di Scutari della prima metà del secolo XIV con le addizioni fino al 1469*. Roma.
- Ndreca, Ardian 2020. Si ta shkruiej qytetin? (Rasti i Shkodrës). *ExLibris gazetë e përjavshme letrare & kultorore*, 6th May 2020. <https://exlibris.al/ardian-ndreca-si-ta-shkruiej-qytetin-rasti-i-shkodres/> (01.02.2022)
- Pallini, Cristina & Scaccabarozzi. Annalisa 2014. L'urbanistica corporativa e i piani italiani per le città d'Albania. In: G. Ernesti & R. Riboldazzi (eds), *L'urbanistica moderna italiana nel contesto internazionale. Atti della XVII Conferenza Nazionale SIU. L'Urbanistica italiana nel mondo. Milano 15-16 maggio 2014*. Roma, Milano: 192–200.
- Palmberger, Mai 2018. Nationalizing the streetscape: The case of street renaming in Mostar, Bosnia and Herzegovina. In: R. Rose-Redwood; D. Alderman & M. Azaryahu (eds), *The Political Life of Urban Streetscapes. Naming, Politics and Place*. London: 168–184.
- Rey, Léon 1930. *Guide de l'Albanie. Avec une carte des voies d'accès, une carte routière et les plans de Scutari, Tirana et Kortcha*. Paris.
- Rose-Redwood, Reuben; Alderman, Derek & Azaryahu, Maoz 2018. The urban streetscape as political cosmos. In: R. Rose-Redwood; D. Alderman & M. Azaryahu (eds.), *The Political Life of Urban Streetscapes. Naming, Politics and Place*. London: 1–24.
- Rusakov, Aleksander 2018. The documentation of Albanian. In: J. Klein; B. Joseph & M. Fritz (eds), *Handbook of Comparative and Historical Indo-European Linguistics*. (Handbücher zur Sprach- und Kommunikationswissenschaft 41.3.) Berlin, Boston: 1716–1731.
- Šakaja, Laura & Stanić, Jelena 2018. The spatial codification of values in Zagreb's city-text. In: R. Rose-Redwood; D. Alderman & M. Azaryahu (eds), *The Political Life of Urban Streetscapes. Naming, Politics and Place*. London: 150–167.
- Schmitt, Oliver Jens 2020. *Gli albanesi*. Bologna.
- Shkreli, Artan 2010. 25 Jahre Stadtplanung in Tirana von 1916–1941/25 Years of Tirana's Urban Planning from 1916–1941. In: A. Stiller (ed.), *Tirana. Planen, Bauen, Leben*. (Architektur im Ringturm XXII.) Salzburg, Wien: 21–42.
- Šufflay von, Milan 1924. *Städte und Burgen Albaniens hauptsächlich während des Mittelalters*. Wien.
- Topalli, Kolec 2017. *Fjalor etimologjik i gjuhës shqipe*. Tiranë.

## Texts

- Bardhi, Frang 1635. *Dictionarium Latino-Epiroticum. Una cum nonnullis usitatoribus loquendi formulis. Per R. D. Franciscum Blanchum Epirotam Coll. de Propag. Fide Alumnus*. Botim kritik nga Bardhyl Demiraj (2008). Shkodër.
- Bashkimi 1908. *Fialuer i Rii i Shcypës. Perbâam prëie Shocniët t' Bashkimit*. Shkodër.
- Bogdani, Pjetër 1685. *Cuneus Prophetarum (Çeta e profetëve)*. Botim kritik nga Anila Omari me një studim hyrës, faksimile të origjinalit, transkripim e shënime (2005). Tiranë.
- Budi, Pjetër 1618. *Dottrina Christiana. Tradotta in lingua Albanese dal Rever. Don Pietro Budi da Pietra Bianca*. Roma.
- Budi, Pjetër 1621. *Rituale Romanum et Speculum Confessionis. In Epyroticam linguam à Pietro Budi Episcopo Sapatense et Sardanense translatum*. Roma.

- Buzuku 1555. *Il «Messale» di Giovanni Buzuku*. Riproduzione e trascrizione a cura di Namik Ressuli (1958). Città del Vaticano.
- Da Lecce, Francesco Maria 1702. *Dittionario Italiano-Albanese (1702)*. Botim kritik me hyrje dhe fjalësin shqip nga Gëzim Gurga (2009). Shkodër.
- Kuvendi 1706. *Concili Provintiaali o Cuvendi j Arbenit (Romæ 1706)*. Botim kritik nga Bardhyl Demiraj (2012). Shkodër.