

TOPIC: ALBANIAN – GREEK DICTIONARIES, COMPILED IN THE 90’S

MA Kostando Ksera

“Eqrem Çabej” University of Gjirokaster, Faculty of Education and Social Sciences
Department of Greek Language, Literature and Greek Civilisation, Gjirokaster, Albania

Abstract

The compiling of Greek - Albanian and Albanian - Greek dictionaries after the 90’s has been a necessity due to the contacts which were established between the Greek and Albanian people after the fall of Communism in Albania and after the Albanian people came out of the half- century isolation.

The efforts for compiling bilingual dictionaries during this period have been very important although there didn’t exist models which could be used to compile such dictionaries.

Keywords: Dictionary, author, bilingual dictionary, Greek – Albanian, Albanian – Greek, lemma, phraseological dictionary

Introduction

Through this article, we will present the three Albanian – Greek dictionaries which were compiled during the 1990’s and here they are:

“*The Albanian – Greek Dictionary*” of Konstandin Papafili, which was published in Athens in 1997.

“*The Albanian – Greek Dictionary*” of Niko Gjini which, was published in Ioannina in 1998.

“*The Phraseological Dictionary of the Balkans*” compiled by Jani Thomai, Xhevat Lloshi, Rusana Hristova, Kosta Qirioazati and Ana Melonashi, published in 1999.

Main Text

In 1997 Konstandin Papafili publishes the Albanian – Greek Dictionary, [K. Παπαφίλη, *Λεξικό Αλβανο - Ελληνικό*, Αθήνα, 1997]²²⁷, which contained 30.000 words in Albanian and their Greek equivalents. The dictionary is of the same quality as the Greek-Albanian Dictionary that this author published at the same time. This dictionary also has a pronounced pragmatic character, aiming to lead the reader easily from the Albanian word into its corresponding Greek.

The dictionary has the undisputed merit of displaying in a small and very useful volume a relatively great number of words. It is the Bilingual Albanian – Greek Dictionary which up till now has the greatest Albanian lexicon with the greatest number of *lexemes*.

The dictionary is equipped with a short Preface, with Bibliography and with the Abbreviations used in both languages, with the Lexicon, the Geographical Names, and also with Grammatical charts, so technically, it meets all the necessary parameters of a contemporary dictionary.

The dictionary was published at a time when the Albanian lexicography, monolingual and bilingual, had made many great achievements. That’s why the work of compiling a quality book might have been eased on many levels.

²²⁷ K. Παπαφίλη, *Λεξικό Αλβανο - Ελληνικό* (Albanian-Greek Dictionary), Αθήνα, 1997.

But we can't say that the quality is the best one:

1. The Albanian lexicon, apart from the expertly selected words, often leaves much to be desired: words which are not found at all in Albanian might be found in it, either in the standard or in the dialects or social parlance, like *keverim*, -i, -e, -et [o]. *η διακυβέρνηση, η διοίκηση*. In the dictionaries of Today's Albanian, we don't find even the word *qeverim* which could lead the author to an acceptable mistake. A few lines below in the dictionary we have also the word *qeverisje* of Standard Albanian which the author gives with the same meaning, but not as a synonym: *qeverisj/e, -a [η]. η διακυβέρνηση, η διοίκηση*.
2. The author doesn't respect the orthographical and orthoepic norm in selecting many words, by giving often phonetic variants. We believe that he hasn't made use at all of the explanatory dictionaries of Standard Albanian, although in the Bibliography, he has actually made reference to the Dictionary of Modern Albanian Language (1980), the Dictionary of Today's Albanian (1984)²²⁸. Perhaps he might have been influenced by the Albanian- Greek Dictionary of N. Gjini (1971) or by the Dictionary of Albanian Language (1954). For example, we have tens of words like: *çpartallim, çpartalloj, (i, e) çpartalluar, çpëlahem, çpëlahaj, (i, e) çpëlarë, çpërdor, çpërdorim, çpërdoraj, çpërndahem, çpërndaj, çpërndarje, çpërngul, çpërngulem, çpërngulje, çpraps, vendos, vendoset, vendosje, çvoshket, çvoshk, çkëlqen, çkarkim, çkarkohem, çkarkoj, çkrep, mvar, mvarësi, mvartës, mvartësi* etc.
3. He gives a lot of derivational paradigmatic families, but quite often they are truncated: *çpërbëhem, çpërbërje (shpërbëj and (i, e) shpërbërë are missing) ; çpërblehem, (i, e) çpërblyer (shpërblim and shpërblej are missing, words which are often commonly used);* whereas for some other words like *çvaros* and *çpraps*, not only do we see a normative incorrectness in their display, but not a single word derived from them is given in the dictionary, etc.
4. In the dictionary we find also dialectical and obsolete variants like *çapuar (i, e). [ε] τροπημένος* (which stands for *i shpuar*), *druar* (which stands for *druvar*), *dukuni* (which stands for *dukuri*) etc.
5. We also see barbarisms which Albanian might have once used but hasn't really made them its own in the monolingual or bilingual dictionaries, like *mylfiz, -i [o], χρεωκοπημένος; emboli* etc.
6. There are borrowed words in Albanian which in the dictionary are given with distorted pronunciation, which lead to double mistakes, like *byrokratizoj (burokratizoj), byrokrat (burokrat), byrokraci (burokraci), byrokratik (burokratik), byrum (bujrum, urdhëroni)* etc.

Many mistakes which are seen in the dictionary might be explainable, because the author of the Dictionary (of 2 dictionaries) is not a lexicographer, but a writer. In the preface it is said that "The writer worked a lot to make the dictionaries as correct and as complete as possible".²²⁹

* * *

1. In the year 1986, Niko Gjini, now retired from 1971, and with a life dedicated to Greek and Albanian, after he had finished compiling (but without giving the final touch) the biggest Greek – Albanian dictionary, gets back to work and revises, completes and updates *the Albanian – Greek Dictionary* published in 1971.

So after an extraordinary work, spurred by the great changes in both countries, in Albania as in Greece, historical and economic changes, but also linguistic ones (Albanian was standardized at the Congress of Equalization, while the Greek language chose *Dhimotiqi*

²²⁸ Κ. Παπαφίλη, *Λεξικό Αλβανο - Ελληνικό (Albanian-Greek Dictionary)*, Αθήνα, 1997, pg. 14.

²²⁹ Κ. Παπαφίλη, *Λεξικό Αλβανο - Ελληνικό (Albanian – Greek Dictionary)*, Αθήνα, 1997.

as its standard variant), in 1998 at the University of Ioannina in Greece, he published *Αλβανο-Ελληνικό Λεξικό (Albanian-Greek Dictionary)*²³⁰, as a book under the direct care of the philologist, Jeorgjio Kapsalis.

Like the work (Greek – Albanian Dictionary), published in Ioannina in 1993, this dictionary is also highly praised by the lexicographical and linguistic Albanian and Greek communities, and also by the educated layman, by considering the publication of the work as a great event in the culture of both groups.

We should admit that, this dictionary, viewed in its entirety, is the most accomplished Albanian – Greek lexicographical work until today

Lets argue this assertion:

a. The author, in the three dictionaries, doesn't give us any information regarding the number of words contained in any of them (neither for the Albanian – Greek Dictionary published in 1971, nor for the Greek – Albanian Dictionary published in 1993, and also not for the Albanian – Greek Dictionary published in 1998). But given the volume of the Dictionary, which contains 1.310 pages, about 100 pages more than the Greek – Albanian Dictionary of 1993, which contains 50.000 words in Greek and their equivalent in Albanian²³¹, we think that this dictionary also **contains 50.000 words or at least up to 45.000**, which means, more words than the “*Dictionary of Today's Albanian Language*” (1980). (From a comparison made superficially in both dictionaries concerning the letter **A**, we see more words in the dictionary of N. Gjini, designations regarding especially the sphere of religion).

b. The dictionary of N. Gjini (**Albanian – Greek Dictionary**) like the other dictionary with the same size of this author (**Greek – Albanian Dictionary**), **is mainly a table dictionary** (this is also of a medium type and not convenient to be carried like a text book by students) and as such *it offers an extraordinary material enough to undertake scientific studies of different fields, in the linguistic or non linguistic fields.*

c. N. Gjini writes this dictionary after he had a long experience in the bilingual lexicography. The author had published the *Albanian-Greek Dictionary* in 1971²³², and (*Greek –Albanian Dictionary*)²³³ but in 1998 he comes with another publication of a different size and much better in every other way, either in the amount of words, in the quality he gives the equivalent Greek word, also in the lexicographical techniques and even the visual representation.

d. In compiling the dictionary N. Gjini has been based on a theoretical scientific literature and **on the best monolingual and bilingual lexicographical publications in Greek and Albanian**, scientific literature which is much richer than the one used in the dictionary published in 1993²³⁴.

e. The dictionary written by N. Gjini gives the reader, especially the students of Greek nationality who learn Albanian, but also every Greek person who is interested in learning Albanian, a dictionary which contains more than **50.000 entries**. This great corpus of words means that in there it is represented almost the entire material, spiritual, intellectual world of the Albanian people, because the words lead us to the history and to the present situation of this nation, to its culture and psychology, which often revolve on a common sublayer. So, the user of the dictionary not only increases his linguistic competence with words, meanings,

²³⁰ N. Γκίνη, *Αλβανο - Ελληνικό Λεξικό (Albanian-Greek Dictionary)*, Αθήνα, 1998.

²³¹ J. Thomai, “*Lexicology of the Albanian Language*”, Tiranë, 2006, pg. 326.

²³² N. Gjini, “*Albanian-Greek Dictionary*”, Tiranë, 1971.

²³³ N. Γκίνη, *Ελληνο - Αλβανικό Λεξικό (Greek-Albanian Dictionary)*, Ιωαννίνων, 1993.

²³⁴ N. Γκίνη, *Αλβανο – Ελληνικό Λεξικό (Albanian-Greek Dictionary)*, Αθήνα, 1998, pg. XLVII – XLVIII.

Albanian phraseology, but he is also involved and involuntarily becomes part of the Albanian culture.

f. The dictionary has another undeniable merit, because **the entire lexical, semantic material, and explanatory examples etc, belong to the Standard Albanian**, thus giving a very great contribution in this direction. We would like to emphasize this fact, because as we have said, in 1997, only a year ago, in Athens **K. Papafili** publishes *Λεξικό Αλβανο - Ελληνικό (The Albanian-Greek Dictionary)*²³⁵, a book which had made use of the lexicon of dictionaries written before the 1972, which means prior to the Congress of Orthography of 1972 and thus they do not represent the established Standard.

g. N. Gjini, based on the best tradition of bilingual Albanian lexicography²³⁶, in a professional way shows that he was able **to move ahead and write not just a simple synonymical bilingual Albanian-Greek Dictionary**, by giving only the words in Albanian and the equivalent lexical correspondent in Greek. He gives in a detailed way the semantic structures of the words, thus rendering the dictionary almost in an explanatory one, in the way he had done with the dictionary published in 1993.²³⁷

It is known that Albanian is a polysemantic language (compared to the Greek which is a synonymical language), and N. Gjini shows how good he has been in giving not only its lexical richness when confronted with the Greek one, but also in giving the semantic richness, something which is difficult to achieve in bilingual lexicography. There are thousands of words which are given in semantic structures with more than just one meaning, in fact there are a lot of words with more than 5 meanings which in general are content words (meaningful). For example the verb *bie (rashe, rene)* has 20 meanings.

h. The dictionary does not only give the word in Albanian or in Greek, **but has the extraordinary merit of featuring thousands of phraseological units**, in which can be seen not only the distinctive particularities of each language, but mostly it serves as an indicator of the ethnolinguistical richness of the Greek and Albanian languages, etc.

These facts only would suffice to argue what we mentioned above to show the commonalities, but also the distinctions between the languages. The word *zemer* alone has more than 20 phraseological units, where we could mention: *mori zemër / πήρε θάρρος, me gjithë zemër / μ' όλη την καρδιά, πρόθυμα e kam në zemër / τον έχω στην καρδιά, zemër e thjeshtë / απλή καρδιά, e pastër / καθαρή καρδιά, zemër e madhe / μεγάλη καρδιά, zemër fisnike / ευγενική καρδιά, zemër e mirë / καλή καρδιά, zemër e artë / χρυσή καρδιά, with the word *mend* there are about 30 phraseological units, whereas with the word *mendje* there are over 20, among which we would choose: *kam ndër mend / έχω κατά νουν, e lanë mendtë / ξεκούτιανε, αποβλακώθηκε από τα γεράματα, ia mori mendtë / τον ξετρέλανε, του πήρε τα μυαλά, τον μάγεψε, with the word *gojë* there are over 20 phraseological units etc.**

i. The author has masterfully given many examples to illustrate the meaning or the meanings of the words. Their selection has greatly increased the values of the dictionary. The illustrations are simple phrases (two – member syntagms) simple sentences but also a lot of ephemeral words, in the way he has used in the *Greek –Albanian Dictionary*, published in 1993.

j. The dictionary gives the Albanian word marked with all the grammatical elements. But it is very important to stress the fact that when the Greek word is given in the dictionary, although this language is a second language, its main grammatical indicators are also given, by showing first its appartenance to the lexical-grammatical field.

k. The dictionary has another merit. The lexico-graphical material might attract the attention of the scholars of history of Albanian and Greek languages, because the borrowings

²³⁵ Κ. Παπαφίλη, *Λεξικό Αλβανο - Ελληνικό (Albanian-Greek Dictionary)*, Αθήνα, 1997.

²³⁶ Ν. Γκίνη, *Ελληνο - Αλβανικό Λεξικό*, Ιωάννινα, 1993, pg. XLVII – XLVIII.

²³⁷ Ν. Γκίνη, *Ελληνο - Αλβανικό Λεξικό*, Ιωάννινα, 1993.

from Greek language can be detected easily, either those of scientific terminology (it is well known that the majority of terms are Greek or Latin) or those which have entered the language in the old times or in the Byzantine period, or the contemporary ones, which could be related to the revival of terminology of orthodox religion, etc.

The dictionary is the best published so far of the Albanian-Greek kind, also because of some other particularities:

a. The dictionary contains 35 pages of ample information regarding the alphabet of Albanian and Greek and the transcription of phonemes from one language to another, instructions how to use it, especially instructions related to the complementary elements of grammar.

b. The dictionary has an appendix containing a glossary with main **Abbreviations** (like **acronyms**), which are related to the Albanian, Greek and world culture, a phenomenon which is seen for the first time in any Greek-Albanian dictionary.

c. The dictionary has a list of hundreds of units of toponyms, which are related to the world in general, but in particular to the Albanian culture, by giving hundreds of place names of Albania.

d. The dictionary has also another dimension, it is an indicator of very good interstate relationships between Greece and Albania, because it also features the greetings of the presidents of both countries, Mr Rexhep Mejdani, president of the Republic of Albania, and Konstandinos Stefanopulos, president of the Republic of Greece, which view the publication of this dictionary as a positive development in every way.²³⁸

3. A special multilingual dictionary, where Greek is placed as a second foreign language, after the Bulgarian, is *The Phraseological Dictionary of the Balkans*²³⁹, compiled by Jani Thomai, Xhevat Lloshi, Rusana Hristova, Kosta Qiriazati e Ana Melonashi, which was published in 1999. The dictionary contains about 5.000 phraseological units in five languages: *Albanian- Bulgarian-Greek-Romanian- Serbo-Croatian*.

According to Sipas J. Thomai “this dictionary is the first of its kind, not only in the linguistics of the Balkans, but also in the European one, it is valuable from the theoretical-scientific and practical point of view”.

We could mention some of the values:

a. The dictionary shows also through phraseology *the affinities that these languages share since ancient times and reinforces the idea of a linguistic community in the Balkans*; over half of these phraseological units are the same considering their construction and meaning in the five languages, the rest is common to 3 or 4 languages.

We should mention here the opinions expressed by lexicographical community, that in dictionaries we discover that *“the Albanian language has greater affinities with Greek in the field of phraseology, and then with Romanian”*, which shows ancient ties between Albanian and these languages; through these linguistic relationships can be understood also some common elements of the history of their peoples, of their ethnoculture and mentality²⁴⁰.

The authors of the dictionary were very careful in selecting the most semantically and structurally similar phraseological units²⁴¹. That is why we immediately see the great similarity between Albanian and Greek, which quite often it seems like we have to do with calques: *e ka gojën të ëmbël* έχει γλύκο στόμα, *e ka gjakun të ëmbël* / έχει το αίμα του γλυκό,

²³⁸ N. Γκίβη, *Αλβανο - Ελληνικό Λεξικό (Albanian-Greek Dictionary)*, Αθήνα, 1998.

²³⁹ J. Thomai, Xh. Lloshi, R. Hristova, K. Qiriazati, A. Melonashi, *“The Phraseological Dictionary of the Balkans”*, Tiranë, 1999.

²⁴⁰ J. Thomai, *“Lexicology of the Albanian language”*, Tiranë, 2006, pg. 328.

²⁴¹ J. Thomai, Xh. Lloshi, R. Hristova, K. Qiriazati, A. Melonashi, *“The Phraseological Dictionary of the Balkans”*, Tiranë, 1999, pg. 5-9.

*ëndrra në diell / ονειράτα στον ήλιο, ëndrra me sy hapur / όνειρα με τα μάτια ανοιχτά, nuk pi ujë / δεν πίνει νερό etc.*²⁴²

Nevertheless, in the phraseological units (which are mostly created by the figurative conversion of the corresponding non-lexicalized syntagm) more than anywhere within the linguistic system it is also seen the peculiarity of each nation, the ethnic elements of the countries are obviously displayed. Here we can mention some examples. Of course there cannot a parallelism in Greek regarding the phraseological unit *flet si e ëma e Zeqos majë thanës*, but the closest phraseological unit to it could be *μιλάει στο βρόντο* (which literally means *to be speaking about lightnings and thunders*), which in Albanian would be translated to *speak in the wind*. In the same way, the unit in Albanian *sot i bën hunjtë nesër i djeg* in Greek could be translated into *σήμερα σου δίνει το λόγο και αύριο τον πατάει* (which word for word means *to give the word today and the break the word tomorrow*, which also exists in Albanian) in Albanian there is *m'u bë mendja dhallë*, whereas in Greek *μου έγινε το μυαλό σαλάτα (ζύδι, κουρκούτι)*, word for word means *my mind became salad (vinegar, porridge)* etc.

The dictionary doesn't have a lexicon with lexemes, nevertheless it has a great importance, because firstly it is of great use to the scholars of the linguistics of the Balkans, but also to all of those who want to learn Albanian in our case (when they are Greek) and Greek (when they are Albanians). But considering the special material it contains it serves also the translators and writers, etc., and all those who need interlanguage comparisons in phraseology.

Conclusion

"The Albanian – Greek Dictionary" of Konstandin Papafili, which was published in Athens in 1997 has the undisputed merit of displaying in a small and very useful volume a relatively great number of words. It is the Bilingual Albanian – Greek Dictionary which up till now has the greatest Albanian lexicon with the greatest number of *lexemes*.

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²⁴² The examples have been taken from the book *"Phraseological Dictionary of the Balkans"* J. Thomai, Xh. Lloshi, R. Hristova, K. Qiriazati, A. Melonashi, Tiranë, 1999.