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# Albanian Grammar

with Exercises, Chrestomathy and Glossaries

Collaborated on and translated by Leonard Fox

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Otto Harrassowitz · Wiesbaden

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## FOREWORD

The present *Albanian Grammar* was originally conceived as a second edition of my *Lehrbuch der albanischen Sprache* (Otto Harrassowitz, Wiesbaden, 1969), which is now out of print. During more than a decades's use of this latter work as a textbook for my classes in Albanian (in my capacity as Professor of Albanian Studies at the University of Munich), I came to recognize certain weaknesses and shortcomings in it, some of which were also drawn to my attention by the remarks of students and colleagues. The elimination of such inadequacies and the incorporation of new material led to a change in the arrangement and consequently in the methodological process involved. As a result of this new conceptual approach, a completely new work resulted in which I have incorporated grammatical forms derived from the literary tradition, as well as from older Albanian texts and grammars, which were omitted from the *Lehrbuch*.

In view of the fact, therefore, that the *Albanian Grammar* and the *Lehrbuch der albanischen Sprache* represent two different aims and modes of presentation, the publishing firm of Otto Harrassowitz, Wiesbaden, is preparing a second edition of the *Lehrbuch* which will include corrections and a few minor additions.

This restructuring was, to a certain extent, also influenced by the language reform in Albania, begun in 1952 and officially completed in 1972. The results of this reform are incorporated in the present work, without regard to the personal opinions of the author respecting certain aspects of the "unified language".

The aim of this *Albanian Grammar* is to present a complete picture of the language in its three most important variants: Geg, Tosk and Arbëresh. Viewed methodologically, the contrasts among the three are presented here not only in the lexicon, but in all elements of the grammar, in order that an insight into the basic structure of the language (here also termed Common Albanian) may be obtained. The formation of the standardized literary language has, of course, also been based upon this procedure.

The following are presented in **notes**:

- a) particulars of Arbëresh;
- b) older linguistic phenomena documented in early authors and in archaic or peripheral dialects.

The **notes** attempt to complete the presentation of Albanian grammar by giving a diachronic dimension which will be of undoubted interest to linguistic historians.

In this *Albanian Grammar*, the Tosk variants are given in parentheses (cf. the *Lehrbuch*), as the Geg variants are more numerous and have all been included herein. It should be noted, however, that the occurrence of a variant outside of parentheses or **notes** does not imply any priority on the level of the standardized forms of the language.

In the interests of completeness, I did not want to omit either Tosk or Geg lexical variants which frequently occur in both the spoken and written language; they are presented with the sign ~ between them. Such doublets often arise in the plural, as e.g.: sg. *kopsht-i* 'garden'—pl. *kopshte~kopshtije* (Tosk *kopshtinj~qipshite*) 'gardens'. From among these variants *kopshte* was finally chosen as the standard form—in the glossary of the present work it is given in *italic*.

Taking account of the process of standardization, the exercises are translated in the *Key* from English into the contemporary official, normalized form of the language whose foundation is Tosk.

This *Albanian Grammar* is divided into three basic sections, aside from the Introduction: (I) **Phonology**, (II) **Morphology** and (III) **Syntax**. In the **Phonemic Changes** part of Section (I), dialectal transformations are given as well, in order to facilitate learning the spoken language and also for those who happen to speak one or another Albanian dialect with which they wish to compare the standard variants.

The **Morphology** is divided systematically into 19 chapters. Form and function are conceived as a unity, based upon which rules are constructed and illustrated by examples. At the end of each chapter or 'Lesson', exercises and texts in the normalized language are presented (together with appropriate Geg and Tosk variants, if any), so that clear access to the results of the language reform as expressed in the contemporary literary language is made possible. An attempt has been made throughout to bind together all the parts and phenomena of the language by means of copious examples in order to explain typologically, as well, the correlations of the language. In the morphological section of the book, great care has been taken with the word order in syntagms, as the order of words and their linkage by means of prepositive and postpositive elements or articles are fundamental characteristics of the language. In this manner, one part of the syntax is *de facto* built into the morphology in order to elucidate the analytical mechanism of Albanian directly in the structure of the syntagms.

The **Syntax** is comprised in one chapter or 'Lesson' and provides the essential structure of **clause construction**. The **Chrestomathy** which follows includes samples of the three variants of Albanian, as well as of the contemporary literary language. Finally, there is a **Glossary** to the whole

book *exclusive* of the Chrestomathy, and an Index which refers to paragraph numbers, rather than page numbers.

The material, form and divisions of this *Albanian Grammar* are naturally geared to the practical requirements of students interested in the language. At the same time, this book is also intended for young people of Albanian ancestry in the United States, Australia and elsewhere who have perhaps learned Geg or Tosk at home and who wish to master the contemporary literary language; this applies, as well, to the Italo-Albanians (Arbëresh) of Southern Italy who, for the first time in any Albanian grammar, will be able to compare the particular characteristics of their written or spoken dialect with those of Common Albanian. The interests of specialists and university students have, of course, also been taken into account. The author has always been closely connected with the latter and without their collaboration this grammar would never have been written.

I wish to thank Mr. Leonard Fox for translating this work from German, for preparing the *Key* by translating directly all the Albanian exercises, and for adapting various grammatical rules, explanations and vocabulary definitions to accommodate the special requirements of English-speaking students.

I am gratefully obliged to the publishing firm of Otto Harrassowitz, with which I have worked for many years, and especially to its Director, Dr. Helmut Petzolt, for their continual harmonious cooperation. I would also like to thank the Otto Harrassowitz Verlag for its fine typographical work, as well as for the handsome appearance of this book.

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