

GREEK-ALBANIAN DICTIONARIES PUBLISHED IN THE 1990s AND LATER

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ABSTRACT

In the last century, the compilation of bilingual Greek-Albanian and Albanian-Greek dictionaries did not experience any significant development, despite the fact that educational, scientific and cultural needs for these kinds of dictionaries demanded addressing. It is a fact that for 100 plus years the Greek-Albanian and Albanian-Greek dictionaries can be counted on the fingers on one's hand. This is something inexcusable even though politics has had a negative influence for decades. The situation changed for the better after the 90s, where we have the compilation and publication of three Greek-Albanian dictionaries: The Greek-Albanian dictionary of Niko Gjini published in 1993, The Greek-Albanian dictionary of Kostandin Papafili published in 1997 and The Greek-Albanian dictionary of Hysen Sinani published in 2001. In this article we will talk about the characteristic features of these three dictionaries.

UDC & KEYWORDS

■ UDC: 811.14, 811.18 ■ DICTIONARY ■ BILINGUAL DICTIONARY ■ GREEK- ALBANIAN

INTRODUCTION

The compilation of Greek - Albanian dictionaries dates from the 18th century. Despite the fact that the Greek and the Albanian people have had a centuries-old relationship, as we see, the compilation of dictionaries for both these peoples did not have any special interest. They are few in number as well as of a low quality. The first dictionary of this kind has been included in the book "Protopeiria" «Πρωτοπειρία» of Th. Kavalioti, which was published in 1770. Later on, there was the book «Τετράγλωσσων λεξικόν» (Four language dictionary) of Daniil Moskoropoli published in 1802. In 1809, Marko Bocari wrote «Λεξικόν της Ρωμαϊκής και αρβανιτικής απλής» (Dictionary of Roman and Arvanite simple). In 1928, Koco Tasi published "The Greek-Albanian dictionary".

The period following the 90s saw a different reality regarding the bilingual lexicography of the Albanian. The year 1990 marked the year when Albania opened socially, culturally, economically, scientifically, militarily, religiously and psychologically to the world. Such a thing necessitated the compilation of bilingual dictionaries, especially Greek-Albanian and Albanian-Greek ones. Thus we notice that there are more dictionaries compiled after the 90s than there were in the preceding centuries.

The Greek-Albanian dictionary of Niko Gjini (1993)

In 1993 after a very long and painstaking work spanning 40 years, N. Gjini published the biggest Greek-Albanian dictionary. It is the biggest dictionary published so far in either Greece or Albania. The dictionary is held in great esteem by the linguistic and lexicographical body of experts as well as by the general public, who view it as a milestone in the culture of both peoples. It came in the right time to fill

the void which existed in this field by becoming the most complete and used dictionary to date.

The dictionary is entitled «Ελληνο - Αλβανικο Λεξικο» (Greek-Albanian dictionary), and is published in Janina (Gjini, 1993).

We should acknowledge the fact that it is the most superb bilingual lexicographical work either Greek-Albanian or Albanian-Greek up to date.

Let us argue this claim:

- a. The volume of the dictionary (Thomai, 2006) alone is one of the strongest point of our argument. The dictionary has got 1220 pages and 50.000 entries in Greek and their Albanian equivalents, thus ranking amongst the most voluminous bilingual dictionaries published in the Albanian lexicography. It provides extraordinary material enabling scholars to undertake various studies in different fields, linguistic and extra-linguistic ones.
- b. The dictionary has been compiled by one of the best experts in Greek and Albanian languages, who wrote this dictionary after a long experience in bilingual lexicography: he had published the Albanian-Greek dictionary in 1971.
- c. In order to compile the dictionary N. Gjini drew on an ample theoretical scientific literature and on the best monolingual and bilingual publications in Greek and Albanian (Gjini, 1993).
- d. The dictionary, should be appreciated for the rich lexicographical material it provides.
- e. The dictionary (Memishaj, 2011) has the undisputed credit of placing Albanian language for the first time opposite a dictionary with 50.000 entries and such a thing is achieved thanks to the commendable work of the compiler. So, for the first time in the practice of compiling Greek-Albanian bilingual dictionaries, standard Albanian language is presented in this subsystem, by handling a lexicon which was bigger than the lexicon of its biggest dictionary up to that time (50.000 to 42.000).
- f. In most of the cases the entries are given as a part of phraseological units in order for the meaning(s) to become clear. The author has also masterfully included numerous phraseological unit and proverbs, especially those which have their equivalent in both languages.
- g. However, some mistakes in finding the equivalent Albanian word and in giving the right meaning of the word, mistakes which come as a result of the time and of the situation in which the author of the dictionary grew, can be seen.

The lexicon with 50.000 entries, by default, means that the words cover all the fields of practical and intellectual Greek world, from the past to the present, from culture to psychology, from mythology to nowadays reality, from commerce to production, from psychology to pedagogy, from navigation to construction. So, the users of this

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dictionary not only increase their lexical competency, but are also drawn in the Greek world.

The Greek-Albanian Dictionary of Kostandin Papafili (1997)

Kostandin Papafili published in Athens in 1997 "Λεξικό Ελληνο – Αλβανικό (Greek-Albanian dictionary) (Papafili, 1997). The dictionary consists of 489 pages with a lexicon of 20.000 entries in Greek with their Albanian language equivalents (this author has also compiled an Albanian-Greek dictionary, with 30.000 entries). The book has been structured along the lines of modern lexicographical principles, with Foreword, Abbreviations, Reference, Bilingual Lexicon, Place names, Grammatical assistance.

The dictionary has got a practical character, of a small format, almost like a manual. Differently from the dictionaries of Gjini and Sinani, (which was published later, in 2001) the dictionary of Papafili has been compiled to meet the market's demands due to the lack of a Greek-Albanian dictionary. Up to that time only the dictionary of Gjini existed, which is a table dictionary and was aimed mainly at those who are experts in Greek language than at those who wanted to learn Greek, whereas the dictionary of Papafili is aimed mainly at those who want to communicate in Greek and with this he had in mind the great number of Albanian economic migrants who were either in Greece or were heading towards Greece and needed to either understand or employ some words in Greek in order for them to make a living in that country. This fact has also determined the amount of words and the way they are given. The dictionary is a direct bilingual dictionary, almost synonymic, because the words in Albanian and Greek are mostly given as headwords. As a manifestation of this is the fact that only the main meaning of many words which have more than one meaning is given whereas the proverbs through which one could, even to a small degree, see the real texture of the word have been avoided to a large degree. This has given the dictionary a pragmatic function, resembling travel phrase books, to find as quickly as possible the Albanian equivalent of the Greek word (Memishaj, 2011).

To compile this dictionary (Papafili, 1997) the author has drawn on some bilingual dictionaries (Greek-Albanian or Albanian-Greek dictionaries) published, but we are impressed that he has not consulted the Greek-Albanian dictionary of N. Gjini, published in 1993. (As he has himself confirmed, he was utilizing the Albanian-Greek dictionary of this author, 1971 edition).

The Greek-Albanian dictionary of Hysen Sinani (2001)

Hysen Sinani published at the beginning of XXI century The Greek-Albanian dictionary (Ελληνο – Αλβανικό Λεξικό), Tirane, 2001, published by "Artemida" (Sinani, 2001).

From the first page the dictionary distinguishes itself from the other dictionaries published as bilingual Greek-Albanian dictionaries. There it is strongly emphasised that "it is a contemporary modern dictionary which contains about 20.000 entries thoroughly explained with pronunciation assistance, with explanations, synonyms and phraseology, with an appendix of proper and geographical names and grammatical assistance".

The dictionary opens with a very brief foreword which conveys important messages, written by Prof. Xh. Lloshi. The author of the dictionary himself also makes some prefatory remarks, trying to tell the users how to use this book, emphasising some of the achievements that he calls "qualities of this dictionary".

H. Sinani (2001), in his capacity as the author of this book, underlines the fact that the compilation of this book has been based on the latest bilingual dictionaries in Greece, England, France and Italy and that the Greek words have been semantically compared with the best explanatory dictionary (according to him) of the Greek language, the Ελληνικό Λεξικό (Greek Language Dictionary), of Τεγόπουλος – Φιτράκης (Tegopoulos - Fitraki).

We agree with the fact that "only the words which are used the most in everyday language and those which have to do with the fields of work, economy and culture etc., have been selected"

Without denying the values of the book, regarding not only the selection of the Greek lexicon, but also the finding of its Albanian equivalent, we should admit to the fact that the dictionary is similar to the dictionary of K. Papafili. The dictionary has a very pronounced paradigmatic character, the Greek words have their Albanian equivalents, which means that a lexical equilibrium exists between the two languages in the dictionary. But we also know that in the Albanian language like in the Greek language there are thousands of words that belong to the lexical-semantic fields which the author admits to have represented lexically in the dictionary, which are not monosemic, but which are polysemous.

The simple fact that a dictionary features for the first time the pronunciation of the Greek words in a Greek-Albanian dictionary is one of the greatest merits of this dictionary (Memishaj, 2011). Anyone who wants to learn the Greek language faces two difficulties: Greek script which is different from Latin script and the discrepancy between spelling and pronunciation, with Greek being mostly a non-phonetic language. H. Sinani (2001) explains "that the pronunciation of each Greek word has been given in brackets, trying in this way to stay as close as possible to the pronunciation of present-day Athenians, without pretending an absolute phonetic transcription".

Because of this particularity the dictionary is very useful for the persons who might not have a very good command of Greek grammar. Thus the dictionary displays extraordinary values, not only for the Albanian economic migrants (but also for a wider audience) living in Greece or Cyprus.

The author (2001) has kept in mind this fact while compiling the dictionary, that is why he writes that "considering the qualities the dictionary has, it is handy and quite useful to different categories of readers, from the student of the Greek language who seeks to deepen his knowledge to the economic migrant looking for a daily job at the "Omonia" square, who simply needs to pronounce properly a few words in Greek".

Despite distinguishing itself by its pragmatic nature, the dictionary has an extraordinary value because it not only helps the Albanian-speaking persons to learn Greek, but it increases perceptibly the lexical competency of the Albanians. Although the dictionary has 20.000 entries in Greek, it obviously surpasses this mark in Albanian because of the many synonyms the author has used as a means of translating or a means of "explaining" the Greek words.

The author also has the credit of including for the first time in a Greek-Albanian dictionary a list of illustrious names of world history and culture. The dictionary includes also the most necessary grammatical assistance, especially that relating to the conjugation of irregular verbs etc.

In 2012 after an extensive revising process the author published an updated dictionary, which is an improvement on the one published in 2001.

Conclusion

From the beginning of XIX century until the 90s no Greek-Albanian dictionaries were compiled or published. After the 90s three such dictionaries have been compiled and published: "The Greek-Albanian dictionary" of Niko Gjini (1993). It is the best dictionary published up to date. Its compilation was done based on scientific principles and it is the most useful dictionary. "The Greek-Albanian dictionary" of Kostandin Papafili (1997). It mostly has a practical character, it is of a small format, almost like a manual. "The Greek-Albanian dictionary" of Hysen Sinani (2001). Which increased numerically and quality-wise the number of Greek-Albanian bilingual dictionaries, as a dictionary of small type and of a medium format (easily usable), it is close to the reader. It paved the way for the compilation of other Greek-Albanian dictionaries which include phonetic transcription.

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