

ВКЛАД НЕМЕЦКОГО АЛБАНОЛОГА ГУСТАВА МАЙЕРА В АЛБАНСКИЙ ЯЗЫК
Обзор

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Аннотация

В контексте различных учёных, занимающихся проблемой албанского языка, нельзя отрицать, что немецкий учёный Густав Майер занимает особое место. В этой статье мы рассмотрим вклад этого исследователя, особенно в защиту тезиса о происхождении албанского языка от иллирийского языка, и его позиции как язык, занимающий отдельное место в индоевропейских языках.

Мы также рассмотрим вклад Майера в этимологические исследования, разработку исторической албанской грамматики и т.д. Таким образом, попытаемся дать более полную картину вклада этого исследователя в области альбанологии в целом, и в области албанского фольклора в частности.

Ключевые слова: албанский язык, этимология, албанология, албанский фольклор.

GERMAN ALBANOLOGIST GUSTAV MEYER ON THE ALBANIAN LANGUAGE

Review

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Abstract

In the context of various scholars dealing with the problem of the Albanian language, it is clear that the German scholar Gustav Meyer occupies a special place. In this paper we will address the contribution of this scholar, especially in defending the thesis on the origin of the Albanian language from Illyrian and its position it holds in the Indo-European language family.

We will also address Meyer's contribution to etymological studies, and the development of Albanian grammar history, etc., thus trying to give a full picture of the contribution of this scholar in the field of Albanology in general, and in that of Albanian folklore in particular.

Keywords: Albanian language, etymology, Albanology, Albanian folklore.

Gustav Meyer: a prominent scholar

At the end of the 18th century – specifically in 1774 – the renowned historian Johann Erich Thunmann in his work *"Studies on the history of the eastern European peoples"* – (*Untersuchungen über die Geschichte der östlichen europäischen Völker*) wrote "No other people in the part of the world in which we live are as unknown to us Western Europeans in terms of ancestry, history and language as Albanians and Aromanians. And yet they are key people, ancient and important people that every historian would want to know: their history would fill the great gaps in Europe's ancient and new history" [7].

It is a well known fact that among foreign scholars who have dealt with the Albanian language, the role of German and Austrian scholars has been dominant. Their Albanological studies have formed an excellent and long tradition over 3 centuries, a tradition that has continued to develop over time and is still preserved today. The beginning of historical-comparative linguistics put the study of the Albanian language on a scientific basis starting in the mid-nineteenth century. One of the founders of these linguistics, the prominent German scientist Franz Bopp, proved the Indo-European character of the Albanian language, while Gustav Meyer, Norbert Jokl, etc., more closely defined the place of Albanian in the Indo-European language family [5].

Gustav Meyer – who was termed by N. Jokl as the "Master of Albanology" – is regarded by today's linguistic scholars as "The greatest Albanologist of his time". David Luka, on the occasion of the 145th anniversary of the birth of this erudite intellectual, noted that Meyer should be regarded as "scholar with unusual intuition" whereas, according to the General Encyclopedia of Zagreb, Meyer is also described as "the founder of Balkan linguistics." A scholar with an unusual intuition, and with excellent training, Meyer also excelled in both Neo-Greek studies and in Turkish studies, precisely by giving additional contributions to the study of Albanian language etymology. He is also regarded as one of the most prominent Indo-European scholars of the 19th century.

Justin Rrota notes that: "Meyer is the greatest representative of Albanology of the last century, and together with Pedersen and Jokl form the Albanological tradition". The interest of Meyer in the Albanian language arose when he was on a trip to Sicily in 1880, when he also visited the Arbëresh settlements there. This first visit marked the beginning of intense activity in the Albanian field, which enabled him to advance the work started by many prominent linguists and scholars such as Franz Bopp, Miklosich, Hahn, Schuhardt, etc., and worked to prove the affiliation of Albanian as an Indo-European language. However, due to the lack of systematic studies, and the difficulties of full dedication to the field of Albanology, many problems remained unresolved or were not properly resolved.

Gustav Meyer was now at the forefront of this work, first by collecting material from the Albanian lexicon and its dialects as well as from written sources and published dictionaries at the time. He deepened his preparatory studies through his

correspondence with Albanian and Arbëresh scholars as Th. Mitko, Jeronim de Rada, K. Kristoforidhi, Ndre Mjeda etc., but was also developed through field research in the Albanian diaspora, especially in southern Italy [5].

Among the most fruitful achievements of Meyer's Albanological research is undoubtedly the work "*Studime shqiptare-Albanian Studies*" in six volumes, as well "*Fjalori etimologjik i shqipes – Etymological Dictionary of Albanian*" [5] Meyer's most important work remains the "Etymological Dictionary of Albanian", published in Strasburg in 1891, for which he was awarded the Werner Prize by the French Academy. Eqrem Çabej managed to break down the etymology of many words that G. Meyer left without etymological explanation, making real the wishes of Meyer who, in the preface to the Dictionary, wished that a sharper and better-prepared successor would resolve the etymology of those words for which Meyer could not give an etymological explanation [7].

An objective shortcoming in the historical studies of Albanian is its late documentation, which is well known, given the fact that the present state of our knowledge begins with the 15th century. The thought that "the main reason for our flawed knowledge of Albanian history is the lack of resources" [3] implies that in the absence of ancient sources, Albanian, though an ancient language itself, lags behind not only classical languages, but also other Indo-European languages, such as German, Celtic and Armenian. In this aspect Albanian would stand at a level with the Baltic languages, Lithuanian and Latvian, and in the Balkan region with Romanian [1].

In Meyer's time the Albanian language had neither a single alphabet nor the "Meshari" of Buzuku; the two works of Budi were not known, etc. However, the clear systematic intellect of this prominent Albanologist undertook work that has rightly been defined by Eqrem Çabej as a "First-Hand Memorial in the Field of Albanian Studies", which to this day constitutes a basis not only for Albanian studies but also generally for Balkan studies [10]. The etymological vocabulary of the Albanian language constitutes the basis for safely deciding the place that Albanian occupies in the large family of Indo-European languages, as well as determining ethno-genesis, thereby proving the indigenosity of the Albanian people.

Gustav Meyer further deepens Franz Bopp's assertion of the Indo-European character of the Albanian language. In the article "The place of Albanian in the Indo-European Languages Circle" (1884), he saw Albanian as a separate branch of the Indo-European language trunk, completely separating it from Greek and opening up new paths in historical linguistic studies for Albanian.

Latif Mulaku thinks that Meyer, in his studies "Latin Elements in Albanian and the Influence of Latin on Albanian Morphology", found many Latin influences or borrowings in Albanian, especially lexical. His explanations are generally fair and scientific, but with respect to some grammatical forms his opinion has been rejected by some linguists. Linguists of this century and of our time, authors of historical phonetics, morphology, or historical grammar of the Albanian language (such as E. Çabej, M. Domi, I. Ajeti, Sh. Demiraj) have in a way made extensive use of Albanian Grammar, the Etymological Dictionary of Albanian (this is especially true of E. Çabej in Etymological Studies) and some other studies by Meyer [7].

The path paved by scholars like Franz Bopp, etc., was followed by Gustav Meyer. Thus, in 1883, this researcher, in the article entitled "The Place of Albanian in the Indo-Germanic Language Circle" opened a new era in the work of Albanian affinities with sister languages. This researcher assigned Albanian a place which in general remains valid to this day. This place was designated as follows: "Albanian is an Eastern Indo-European language and Northern Indo-European language at the same time" [3] Meyer was a supporter of the Illyrian thesis and of Albanian origin from Illyrian or, more accurately, according to its wording, "The Albanian language represents the newest phase of one of the ancient Illyrian dialects". But he also published in the press a number of articles on events related to Albania. The culmination of his protests was the letter he addressed to the Turkish Foreign Ministry with a request to lift the ban on the Albanian language [3].

Prof. Shaban Demiraj rightly finds that: "Gustav Meyer defended the thesis of Albanian descent from Illyrian and scientifically defined its position as a language occupying a separate place in the Indo-European language circle. Among other things he highlighted the presence of a small number of Albanian words in the Greek language. Due to the work of Gustav Meyer the facts of the Albanian language took place in Indo-European linguistics and in the general works of this language" [6]. Meyer was among the first scholars to point out the role of the Albanian language among other Balkan languages, especially in Modern Greek, where he distinguishes 64 Albanian words, thereby contributing to the unstudied path of Albanian influences on other languages.

Albanian folklore materials, especially Arbëresh, collected from the Hydra and Poros islands of Greece, published or republished by Gustav Meyer, besides the Albanian folklore significance, also contain great, perhaps irreplaceable, linguistic value, especially for the history of dialectology and for the history of the Albanian language.

Gustav Meyer is rightly regarded as one of the greatest researchers and scholars of the last century in the field of Albanological studies. Acting on a "strict scientific method ... he gave Albanology a large portion of its outstanding zeal of his visionary capacity" [8]. Therefore professor Jup Kastrati has rightly noted that "Meyer's systematic works constitute the foundation for all subsequent research in the field of Albanian language history studies. With his profound works he opened new research paths in the Albanian language problems..." [10].

Prof. Eqrem Çabej, the scholar most familiar with Meyer's works, states: "The central figure of the etymological study of the Albanian language became and remains in some respects, to this day Gustav Meyer, with the Etymological Dictionary, with the Albanian Studies, of to which he made occasional additions to Neo-Greek Studies and Turkish Studies. With the collection and treatment of linguistic material known until its time, with the development and application of some phonetic laws of the ancient Albanian language..., Gustav Meyer looked at the lexical treasury of Albanian as a whole both in the Indo-European fund and in the borrowings it has received over time. Thus, his dictionary is still a basis for any study undertaken in the field of Albanian, especially in the field of etymology and historical lexicology, except in Albanian in the field of Balkan Studies.... This scholar in Albanian language studies marks real results that will remain well beyond many of his successors in this field of study" [1].

So Meyer has made a great and important contribution to Albanology, to Balkanology, and to Indo-European studies. This valuable contribution should be inherited, used and developed further.

Конфликт интересов

Не указан.

Conflict of Interest

None declared.

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