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SHQIPTAR – THE GENERALIZATION OF THIS ETHNIC NAME IN THE XVIII CENTURY

The study of the ethnic name *Shqiptar*, as well as that of the other ethnic names by which the Albanians have been called for centuries, comprises several aspects, which may be investigated altogether or separately. Every scholar, following the albanological tradition, as well as his own intentions, wishes and possibilities, may undertake to do: a) a synthesis of the studies that appeared so far upon this ethnic name, including in it also the range of debatable issues to be further investigated and more convincingly argued in the future; b) a synthesis of the genuine documentary researches or of the archival investigations regarding the *ante quem non* and the diffusion of using this name as a simple common noun and/or as an ethnic name among its native speakers and/or among their neighbouring peoples; c) a linguistic investigation aimed at treating and solving purely diachronical and etymological issues (*étymologie d'origine*), as for example the position of this ethnic name within its corresponding lexical scope, its appearance, its primary meaning and/or the root, from which it has evolved; d) a study about the external and internal history of this word as much as possible that it can be investigated in time and space, i.e. an ethno-linguistic study viewed within the spectrum of the socio-cultural evolution of the Albanian ethnos over centuries.

Any scholar who undertakes an overall investigation of this ethnic name, has surely begun a study that will evolve at some time into a complete monograph. Such undertakings have not been lacking so far and some conclusions have also been attained¹. Of course, in the present essay we do not aim at undertaking a study of such dimensions in order to deal in detail with everything which is directly connected with the ethnic name *shqiptar*. However, we shall try: a) to concisely expose the main conclusions achieved so far in all of the four possible aspects of this study: b) to present further data regarding the historical documentation

¹ Such is, for example, the monograph of Engjëll Sedaj "The ethnic name *Arbëresh – Shqiptar*", Prishtinë 1996.

of this ethnonym as a result of our researches through some manuscripts of the XVIII century, which have been partly published in the meantime; and at last c) to take part in the albanological discussion about some debatable issues regarding the *ante quem non*, the diffusion and generalization of this ethnic name among the Albanian native speakers.

1. Some common and distinguishing traits in the up-to-date studies

This issue is directly connected with the first (view)point of the already quoted study and precisely with the effort to represent synthetically the situation about the studies that appeared so far on the theme in question. As such, it presupposes, first of all, a critical and exhaustive reading of all the scientific (and divulgative) literature that has been published so far and continues to appear about this ethnic name, viewed in itself or side by side with the corresponding ethnic names used formerly with the same denominative value. However, we have not been able to realize completely this premise of method for a genuine scientific study, and we openly express our doubt that anyone may ever realize it exhaustively within a finite period. The unique reason is the enormous number of contributions on this matter, particularly of those which have appeared in the periodical press during the Albanian Renaissance Period and between the two World Wars. The number of such articles would be so enormous as to render problematic the organization of necessary work and time to seek and critically investigate all of them.

In evaluating this circumstance, we would point out the large number of publications that should be considered as an index of the great interest shown by Albanian scholars in general for their ethnic names. At any rate, to characterize some common traits of the materials consulted, we may affirm that:

- a) The ethnic name *shqiptar* has always been discussed together with the ethnic complex: (tosk) *arbëresh*, *arbëror*, *arbër* ~ (gheg) *arbënes*, *arbënu(e)r*, *arbën*; i.e. [*arbën/r(-)*].

To illustrate this common trait we will limit ourselves to mentioning of two of the earliest investigations with sure scientific value about this ethnic name, from the second half of the XVIII century. The first one is well known in the history of albanology, with the signature of the German historian Johann Thunmann. In his monograph *Über die Geschichte und Sprache der Albaner und der Wlachen* (Leipzig 1774) he makes known to us the two ethnic names of the Albanians which were known and still in use at that time, precisely <*Albaner*> and <*Skipatar*>. In this regard he writes as follows:

“Aber das Volk selbst verschmährt diesen Namen [= Albaner – B.D.], und will nicht damit belegt werden.” (p. 241) “Selbst nennen sich die Albaner *Skipatar* [= *Shqipëtar* – B.D.], aber sie wissen den Ursprung dieser Benennung nicht” (p. 242)²

He further continues with an etymological glance at the noun *shqiptar*:

“Höchstwahrscheinlich ist sie im Anfang eben so wenig allgemein gewesen, als es der Albanische Name war. Ich dürfte mich vielleicht nicht irren, wenn ich vermuthe, dass die Anwohner der Keraunischen Gebirge sie zuerst von dem dabei liegenden Orte Sipjatos angenommen, dessen schon um das J[ahr] 870 gedacht wird. Vielleicht ist sie auch aus dem Namen des berühmten Spata entstanden, der gegen das Ende des 14. Jahrhunderts den größten Theil von Albanien besaß. So viel ist gewiß, dass sie deswegen bei Chalkondilas Σπατάι heißen. Doch lasse ich dieses alles dahin gestellt sein, und unterstehe mich nicht, etwas gewisses bei so dunklen Sachen, als die Herleitung der Namen sind, zu bestimmen.” (f. 243-4)

A similar situation, in which both of these names have been dealt with in parallel fashion with the same engagement, characterizes also those few studies made before the first half of the XIX century³, whereas later on, particularly during and after the period of the Albanian Renaissance, one can observe – as a second characteristic of these studies – a certain difference concerning the direction of interest.

- b) Within the same connection the ethnic name *shqiptar*, whenever it is analysed, is mainly considered only in relation with the ethnic complex *arbën/r(-)* and rarely the same attention has been shown for both of these denominations; moreover in some cases the denomination *shqiptar* has been viewed as by a step-mother.

We do not like to present this last option as typical, but we can affirm that such a connection, that has characterized and still characterizes the investigation of the denomination *shqiptar*, has enabled to find out the proper way of investigations regarding the time, place, and

²Thunmann observes in a special footnote that the information about the ethnic name *shqiptar* has been given to him personally by Hadgi Tzechani from Voskopolje: „der die Albaner aus Umgang kennt.” (p. 242 – note p). He gives further details about that person on page 179.

³Xylander 1835 III; Hahn 1854 (I) 229.

way of using the ethnic name *shqiptar* among the Albanians and generalizing it. We present summarily the main results – which are not unknown to many people – as follows:

The noun *shqiptar* as an ethno-linguistic denomination is used among the members of the linguistic community whose native idiom is Albanian and who live (at present mainly) in their compact ethnic regions extending in the central and western parts of the Balkan Peninsula. This ethnic name is used only by them⁴ to identify their belonging to one and the same people and to distinguish them from the members of the other neighbouring peoples⁵. On the basis of the written evidence at our disposal, the noun *shqiptar* is attested with such a function, i.e. as an ethnic name, since the beginning of the XVIII century, when it accompanies the ethnonymic complex *arbën/r(-)*. It comes to gain such a concurrence, at least partially, during the second half of that century, and completely in the XIX century through the period of the Albanian National Renaissance.⁶

2. The documentation of the ethnic name *shqiptar* in the XVIII century

By analysing the documentary material and the possibilities of its further enrichment with new data, we are passing *volens nolens* to the second aspect of our study, which deals chiefly with the exploration of the period when the noun *shqiptar* was used for the first time as an ethnic name, as well as with its further diffusion and generalization in the course of time throughout the Albanian speaking areas.

4 In this case, we have not taken into account the politicized or the official denomination *šiptari*, or stigmatized *šiftari*, in the ex-Yougoslavia at the time of Ranković, used to identify the Albanians of Kosovo, in order to distinguish them from the Albanians of Albania, called *albanac*.

5 Among the neighbouring peoples and elsewhere the denomination of the Albanians is based upon the root *arb/alb*, cp. Greek *Ἀλβανός*, *Ἀρβανός* "Albanian", *Ἀρβανίτης* "Arbëresh of Greece", Serbian *Albanac*, *Arbanas*, Bulg., Mac. албанец, Rom. *arbinés* (Papahagi 1963 135), Turk. *arnaut*, Ital. *albanese*, German *Albaner* etc. This basis is in use among the Arbëreshs of Italy and Greece as well; cp. *arvanit*, more rarely *arbëror* by the arbëreshs of Greece, as against *arbëresh*, *arbëresh*, *bri(esh)* (beside *gjegj* – Altimari 1994 (1992) 53 s.). (Italy) (Kr. ?) *arbanas*, (Mandr.) *allbanc*, (Ukr.) *allbanc(er)* (Musliu – Dauti 1996) etj. For the various forms and uses of this or that variant see, *inter alia*, also Çabej SE II 61ss.; Demiraj 1999 175 ss. etj.

6 See particularly Ismajli 1985 229 s.; 1987 103 s.

In the history of albanology we have for the moment only two primary documentary instances dating back to the XVIII century. They indicate without exception that:

- a) At the beginning of that century the ethnic name *shqiptar* was used, alongside the other ethnic name *arbën/r(-)* at least in the northern zone of the Albanian speaking areas. This datum is to be found in the Albanian text of the documents of the Albanian Council (1706), cf.:

“The missionaries before entering to hear the confession should be examined by the Father Prefect or by any other ordered by the Prefect, whether they know well the language of the Shqiptars, as well as whether they are able to walk through the fields and property of Our Lord, while hearing confession and while preaching.”⁷ (p. 105)

- b) In the second half of the XVIII century – as was already mentioned above – Thunmann has indirectly indicated that the Albanian speaking community, at least that part of the population which inhabited the southern areas, distinguished their ethnicity by the ethnic name *shqiptar*, and did not admit to be called by the other ethnic name *arbën/r(-)*.

These two sole but sure and significant sources regarding the diffusion and generalization of the ethnic name *shqiptar* in that period can now be further increased by some other documentary data, that we have obtained mainly by our researches in some manuscripts of the XVIII century, that have (only partly) been published recently.

- c) Thus for example this ethnic name has been used also by the Italo-Arbëresh priest and scholar Nicolò Chetta, Thunmann's contemporary, whom we already know through his work *Tesoro di*

⁷ Cf. the original version: <Para fe te hiignene Miffionaret me refyem, te jene faminuem prej P. Prefettit, ndo prej fsi, chi urçeneon Prefetti, à diine mir giuhen e Schippetarevet : Kinefe te jene te eot me fceitune ndeper are, e bafctine te Tineeot tue refyem, e tue predicuem.> (KA¹; Kap. IV: *Te Patrevet Miffionarevet*, f. 105), as a translation from the latin original text: <Priusquam verò exponantur officio audiendi confessiones à Patre Præfecto, vel ab alio, ad hoc specialiter Deputato, examinentur circa peritiam Albanæ linguæ, ut latissimæ messis, meritique campum tutissimo cursu, & velue inoffenso percurrant pede.> (lat.-KA¹: *De patribus Missionariis*, f. 88-9).

notizie su de' Macedoni (Palermo 1777 – ms.⁸), that had remained a manuscript until recently, cf.:

“Sicome poi gl'altri regni della terra, così pur i nostri oltre de' generici vocaboli, e de' più noti agl'esteri, han i più specifici, ed arcani in loro arcana vernacola lingua, cioè Makedonia makedoniasi, Pyri Pyrdri, Arbri o Arbëni, e arbëresci, o Arbënòri con pronuncia scodrana; e Skipi skiptàri col primo chiamiam i discendenti di Mad, Cet, Dodan, col secondo quei di Pyrra, o di Pyrro, col terzo gl'abitanti delle marine; e col quarto i paesani dell' Illyrico verso il territorio di Scuttari.” (p. 172)⁹

- d) Chetta in his manuscript vocabulary (1763) furnishes further details about this ethnic name and its lexical nest as well as about its diffusion and its parallel use with the other corresponding ethnic names. He writes, *inter alia*:

“Albanese: *Arbresh, arbëresh, arbnōr, arbëruar, arbnuer, fem. arbreshë, arbëneshtë* ecc. Albanese da Scutari fin a Scopia: *shqip-tār,-i, -e,-ia*; dell' Epiro: *pirot,-i, -e,-ia*, di Macedonia: *maqedonas,-i, -ë, -a*, del Peloponeso, o Morea: *arabesh, morait*. Dell' antichità, e del significato di tali nostrali termini vedi il mio Tesoro l.3.c.9. a p. 294, dove ne troverai altri nostri individui nomi, tra i quali quei de' nostri Scitici [...], che fin al Danubio, e dall' Anatolia [...], tra i quali quello di segar le oiade, onde noi li

⁸ Edited some years ago by M. Mandalà & Gi. Fucarino. (See Bibliography)

⁹ Chetta expresses additionally an etymological explanation, which, like that of Thunmann, may rightly be considered today as overtaken: <Di più, i nostri popoli Σκεπτοί scepōi, il cui tratto dal Cantacuzeno vien detto Σικρεπάριον Sreparium, lo stesso che Skythari, o Scuttari, o Scodra, han l'etimologia dal greco Σικήπτω, e dal nostro *scrept*, che significan egualmente *sfolgorar, albicare*; ed indi *Skipi*, e *skiptari* equivalgon ad Albania, ed albano, sicome i sudetti popoli aver possono l'etimologia del nostrale bianchissimo velo *skēpi σκέπι*, usato specialmente nel territorio scuttarresse, e tra i popoli chetæ, nel castello Chescia di Macedonia, con i quali han per peculiare distintivo esso velo, la chæsa corona nostrale, sfolgorante per l'argento, ed oro, come avevanli i chrysopeleki, o peleki, gomeri di Cadmo; e quando fra noi la prima volta le spose pongon essi vestimenti nozziali si dice perciò, che *lleucòsene*, cioè si albificano. Dunque nissun altra nazione del mondo ha tanti, e sì antichi monumenti, come la nostra, intorno ai suoi nomi, che dalla greca, o dalla macedonia lingua poi i romani a tempo del suo impero mutandoli in latino, li resero Albania, Albanum, Albanus, e simili, come infatti già prima i romani mutaron il greco Λευκή Μακρόα in Alba Longa.> (Lessico 1763 – ms.)

chiamiam corronzei. Coloro poi de' Nostrali, che fan da capitani d'armi, da' greci dinominati Armatoli, noi li chiamiam *shqiptār gjentaler*, cioè, Albanese distruggitor de' gentili. I turchi ci chiamano *arbanosi* Arnautlarì gaùri, cioè Arbanesi epiroti cristiani. Albania: *Arbr, Arbër, Arbn,-i, Shqip,-i, Për,-i, Makedonī,-a*. All'Albanesa: *arbreshazë, shqiptazë, pirotazë*. Albanesame: *arbnisht, shqip, pirotisht*. Albanizzare: *arbronj, arbëros, shqiptaris*. Albanizzante: *përrarbrs-i, shqiptārs-i, pirots-i*. Epi[r]oti: *arbresh kordhaveshuri, e nderngjeshuri* = Albanese scacheroforo Spadaccino, e freggiato d'onore; *arbr farëmiri gjakikuluami* = Albania di nobile schiatta chiarissima di sangue; *arbresh me njëzet e katr vesh* = Albanese intendensissimo; *falem arbit ndërsë farëmirësë* = saluto l'Albano onorato, e nobile." (Chetta: Lessico – ms.)

- e) A previous source for the area in question (at any rate before 1734?) is to be found in "The song with stories of Saint Mary of Buonconsiglio, included in the codex of Chieuti and having as probable author the Italo-arbëresh priest and scholar Nicolò Brancati¹⁰ from Hora of the Arbëresh in Sicily. In that song, we encounter alongside the ethnic name *shqiptar* (fourth stanza) also the variant *shqipt* (second stanza) in an adjectival use. It is also used to distinguish the Albanian population of Scutari and of its surroundings prior to their tragical exodus to Italy in the XV century. Cp.:

[Arbëresh]	[Italian]
1. Po rroft' e Shën Mria e t'mirit Kshill bashk me t' zgledhurin Bër ç'ish leu për ne	1. E viva Santa Maria del Buon Consiglio insieme all'eletto Figlio che è nato per noi
2. Te Skutari shqipt e bukura ikonë atje shtur' n'angonë sa t'shqitej' llojasi	2. A Scutari albanese la bella immagine lì gettata in un angolo di fuggire pensò
3. E t'rruzamit shpejt kā Poł'i Arbëresh kush mo e dir' kish neve n'e tha.	3. E si mosse presto dalla città arbëreshe chi poteva intendere a noi lo rivelò.

10 See (Brancati): Këngë fetare XXII, in: Nicolò Figlia, Il codice chieutino (Ed. Mandalà 1995) p. 126-132 (diplomatic reproduction – p. 34, original text – p. 84v, Nr. 13; – italian traduction – p. 213 – 218).

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|---|--|
| 4. Më pruri me 'të
trī shpi-vo shqiptare
të ndërme e dilira
nji ditë çë desh | 4. Mi portò con sé
tre casate albanesi
onorate e pure
un giorno che volle |
|---|--|

f) The last testimony we are showing to illustrate our opinion, may be justly considered the eldest one so far attested, as it dates back to four years before the publication of the text of the Kuvendi i Arbënit (Council of Arbën) (1706) and one year prior to its meeting (1702). It is encountered in the manuscript of the Franciscan missionary Francesco Maria Da Lecce, entitled *Ditionario Italiano-Albanese* (1702). In a special rubric "Shqipëtārit", serving as an introduction to his work, Da Lecce addresses the Albanian reader with the following words:

"My dear Shqipëtār, I did not write down this dictionary for your lordship, as you know much more than I do, as I am a foreigner and the language of the *Shqiptars* I have as a foreign idiom to me. And as going away from you, this language will slip away from me: I desired therefore to write down the words I learned from you. If I have not been able to do it well, I beg you, for your grace, not to blame me, because I, too, have not ever ridiculed this language, but as much as I was able, I desired to learn it like you."¹¹

This testimony by Da Lecce – who was then prefect of the missionaries of the province of Macedonia, which included, *inter alia*, the dioceses of Lissus and Dyrrachium, furthermore completes the map of diffusion of the ethnic name *shqiptar* at the beginning of the XVIII century. Moreover, all these testimonies, taken altogether, reinforce to a greater extent the opinion that the ethnic name *shqiptar* in that period should not have been unknown to all the Albanian-speaking community living on a compact ethnical territory in the central and western parts of the Balkan Peninsula.

11 Transliterated original text: <Ketë Dictionaàr, oh Schqipetaàr i ddasciun, e sckrova iò per eotinii tanðe, chi di màa fort se unaj vete per vetehe, chi iam per se largu e giuhene e schqippetarevet e kam pòsi gni cãfscse se huòie. E persè deescia se tue u larguem prei iusc, largohet prei meie kiò giuha: pr'atà leftòva me riescitune nde lettre fialete, chi euna ndër iu. Nde mos e paccia uùm mire, pò te lutem, per te mire tat, mos me sciàà: se as une chiescia cùur ketè giuhe: pò per sàa pacc fucchijn e dije desceròva me marre essapin e giuhese sicundrese iù.> (Mandalà 1997 266: appendice)

g. More ancient testimonies: <Schipudar> (?) “Albanian speaker” (1368 – 1402)

The opinion about a more ancient use of the noun *shqiptar* as a genuine ethnic name¹² – in default of documentation – does not go beyond at present the limits of a simple supposition. However, Nicolò Chetta’s opinion already quoted above (§ 2/c,d) as well as the conclusions, that may be drawn regarding the use of the ethnic name *shqipt(ar)* in Nicolò Brancati’s song (§ 2/d) incite us to reanalyse a well-known but less studied thesis, formerly suggested for discussion by the Croatian historian Milan Šufflay, who thinks of a possible connection between this ethnic name and a family name, which is attested in numerous graphical variants in the region of Drishti (Drivastum) during the second half of the XIV century (1368 – 1402); cp. : <Schipudar ~ Schepuder ~ Schapadur ~ Scapuder>¹³. According to Šufflay:

“At present, to indicate their nationality, the Albanians use the name *shqiptar*, and they denominate their country *Shqypnia* in their northern dialect and *Shqipëria* in their southern dialect, whereas for their idiom they use the word *shqip*. But this is a relatively recent denomination, which is unknown by the Albanians, who emigrated to Greece and Italy during the XIV – XV centuries. The first trace of this name appears at the end of the XIV century in the town of Drisht (Drivastum) of Northern Albania as a family name (1368 – 1402: *Schibudar*, *Schepuder*, *Schapudar*, *Scapuder*). As this name appears in the Montenegrine angle (crnogorskom kutu), where Albanian, Serbian and Rumanian tribes lived side by side. G. Meyer’s opinion that the word *shqiptar* denotes the person, who understands the language is well grounded.”¹⁴

12 See Sh. Demiraj 1999 192.

13 In this multitude of variants the form *Schipudar* is more frequent (= 4 cases).

14 Cf. the original text: „Danas upotrebljavaju Arbanasi za oznaku svoje narodnosti ime Škipetar, za Albaniju ime Škipeni, -nija u narječju Gega, Škipëri, -rija u narječju Toska, za svoj jezik ime Škip. Nu to je razmjerno mlado ime, nepoznato Arbanasima, koji su se iselili u 14. i 15. vijeku u Grčku i Italiju. Prvi trag tom imenu ukazuje se potkraj 14. vijeka. Izbija na sjeveru, u gradu Drivastu kao obiteljsko ime (1368-1402, Schibudar, Schepuder, Schapudar, Scapuder). Jer se javlja baš u tako zvanom »crnogorskom kutu«, gdje se kroz vjekove tare arbanaski, srpski i rumunjski živalj, to je tumačenje G. Meyerovo, po kojem Šćiptar znači čovjeka »koji (jezik) razumije« (arb. škipon > excipere), posve vjerojatno.” (Šufflay 1991² 23)

The documentary data on this family name have been included in the second volume of the collection "Acta et diplomata"¹⁵, published by the three well-known historians of Albania and of the Balkans: Thallóczy, Jireček and Šufflay. The lecture and coordination of the material about

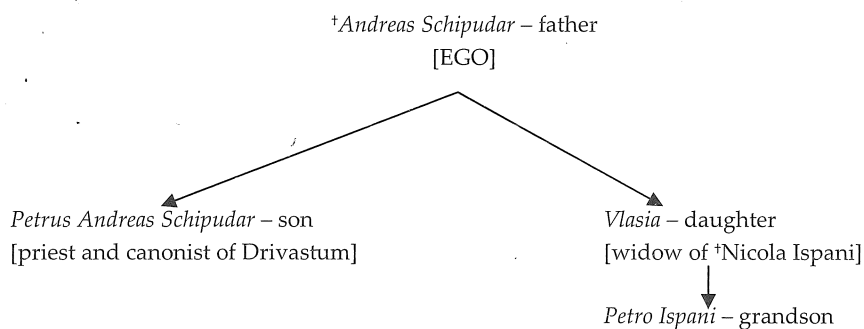
15 This denomination seems to have been rather used as a family name alongside of the patronymic Andreas. The Albanian origin of that family is reinforced particularly by the document number 269 (II volume, p. 62) together with its adjunct notes. Cf.: "1370, 11. augusti. Ragusi: *Scutarensis pignus habet apud Drivastensem*. | Vita filius Duche de Scutaro facit manifestum, quod ipse uult et est contentus, quod Dompnus Marinus Busatus et Domnus Pasqua, pitropi dompni Domince Serpentini (?) de Drivasto possint vendere illa pignora, que ipsi habent dicti Vite (!), videlicet .III. naffos et .I. ladiçam argenti, si non exigerit ipsa usque ad sanctum Sergium, sine protestatione aliqua; que res sunt impignorate pro ducatis X et grossis XVI, et si plus venderentur, quod illud plus dari debeat don Petro Scapuder de Driuasto¹ nomine ipsus. (Div. Canc 1369 – 1370)

[Note 1:] Anno 1371 (*Div. Canc. 1371 inserta libro Distrib. testament. 1371-1372*) "presbyter Petrus Andreas de Drivasto Arban(ensis)" memoratur. 1372, 19. iunii "Bratovin, frater quondam Vtiesseni, scribe sclavici" accipita presbytero Petro Schipudar de Drivasto et Sergolo de Boguno epitropis dicti Vtisseni pro legato facto matri suae cohoptorium unum, lintheum unum etc. (*Div. Canc. 1371; Jireček, asl.Phil. 26, 203*). 1372, 3. novembris Pasqua Bubulica, pitropus presbyteri Marte sui filii, accipit a presbytero Petro Schipudar de Drivasto et domnus Petro Suma "pro laboreio, quod fecit dictus domnus Marte eius filius in domo ecclesie S.Barbare ducatos auri viginti." (ib.)

[Engl. Transl.:] "1370, on the eleventh of august at Ragusa a citizen of Scutari (Shkodra) holds as a hostage a citizen of Drishti (Drivastum). Vita, the Duke of Scutari's son, proclaims that he admits and is satisfied that Don Marin Bushati and Don Pashko, Epitrop (?) of Don Domince Serpentini from Drishti (Drivastum) can sell those hostages to the abovementioned Vita, that is three noffo (?) and one argent larice (?), if he does not ask for them until [the day of] Saint Sergio without any complaint. He begs for these hostages ten ducats and 16 groschen, but if they are sold for more, the remainder should be delivered personally to Don Petro Scapuder from Drishti (Drivastum).

[Note 1] Year 1371 (*Div. Canc. 1371 inserta libro Ditrib. testament. 1371 – 1372*) "the priest Pjetër Andrea from the Albanian (Arbëresh) Drisht (Drivastum)" is mentioned". 1372. June 19 "Bratovin, the brother of a certain Utiesseni, writes in Slavic" [that he] got from Sergolo de Boguno, epitrop of the abovementioned Utiesseni on the basis of the authorization made by his mother. He got / accepted [from them] one cohoptorium and one lintheum (*Div. Canc 1371; Jireček, AslPhil. 26, 203*). 1372, 3. november Pasqua Bubulica, [e]pitrop of the priest Marte, his son, got from the priest Petro Schibudar from Drishti (Drivastum) and from the priest Petro Suma "20 golden ducats for the work done by the abovementioned Don Marte, his son, in the house of the church of Saint Barbara." (Cf. the original Text at the albanian section).

the members belonging originally to the same family enables us to reconstruct an, although incomplete, family genealogic corpus:



The probable Albanian ethno-linguistic affiliation of that family and the graphic(-phonetic) similarity between the family name <Schipudar> and the ethnic name *shqiptar* (<*shqipëtar*>) have probably been the two basic factors, that have incited Šufflay to think about their connection in one and the same word, which should have had various uses in different times and places.

This thesis, however, that Šufflay did not manage to argue sufficiently, has always been viewed with reserves and has even been rejected by a certain number of albanologist scholars¹⁶. Among the arguments forwarded against it we are going to summarily mention the following ones:

- The ethnic name *shqiptar* is a derived word formed out of the adverb *shqip*.¹⁷
- The ethnic names *shqiptar* and *Shqipëri* – which are unknown to the Arbëresh diaspora – have appeared at a more recent period as a result of the socio-ethnic and confessional changes undergone by the Albanian people during their evolution from the status of

16 Myderrizi 1943, 3 ss.; 1965, 164 ss.; Riza: 1996 [1952] 234; Ismajli 1985 228, particularly Sejdaj 1996 90ss.; Sh. Demiraj (1999) does not analyse at all this thesis, whereas Çabej (1976 [1972] 70) only points out: "The opinion that the name *shqiptar* may have existed in Northern Albania since the XIV century and may be identical with the family name *Schipudar*, *Schepuder*, *Schapudar*, *Scapuder* of an inhabitant in the town of Drishti near Scodra, that is mentioned during the years 1368 – 1402 in the archives of Ragusa, remains a hypothesis, that deserves to be further investigated".

17 According to Riza (1996 [1952] 234: „It is not necessary to be an albanologist, in order to understand that the simple word *shqip* has yielded to the derived *shqiptar* and not vice versa.”

“nationality” to that of “nation”, that is at the end of the XVIII century and definitely in the XIX century during the National Renaissance Movement¹⁸.

- It is inconceivable to think that the ethnic name of a people might have its origin from the name of a common family¹⁹, and one that has left no trace in the history of the Albanian people, and moreover
- How may one think that an Albanian family should have borne such a name among the Albanian population?²⁰

We do not intend to deal with the abovementioned arguments, but we think that all of them – including the last ungrounded one²¹ – cannot neutralize Šufflay’s thesis sustaining that the family name <Schipudar> in this case simply represents the essential semantic component “Albanian speaker”, *id est* it has been used to denominate that (family), whose native idiom was Albanian. The appearance of such a family name as a derived word having such a primary meaning was quite possible for the time and place in discussion, if one takes into account that in that case the question is of the cohabitation of some ethno-linguistic groups, or more precisely, as Šufflay himself writes down, “where Albanian, Serbian and Rumanian tribes lived side by side”. Moreover, Šufflay does not allude that it is precisely that family, which is the source of the actual ethnic name *shqiptar*.²²

18 See Ismajli 1985 228.

19 See Sejdaj 1966 90ss.

20 Ismajli *ibid.*

21 Jireček (1916/b 111 ss.) presents also a detailed description of the Drishti (Drivastum) town with its surroundings. Concerning the ethno-cultural life of that town, he writes, *inter alia*: As Barletius writes, its citizens also in the XV century considered themselves with pride as successors to the Romans (Romanorum se appellants). In fact, among the family names of the XIV and XV centuries one can find numerous purely Roman: Palombo or Columba, de Leporibus, Barbabiancha, Summa, Bello; there are also Albanian names as Bariloth, Precalo, Scapuder (1368 s, the first trace of the ethnic name of Škiptars), Serbian names as Berivoj, or Greek as Calageorgii and Spano (gr. Σπανός „beardless,“) – 1456 († before 1458). The most distinguished noble family was that of Span or Spano, Serbian Spanovic. A branch of that [family] in the XV century was in service of the Venetians. Another branch supported the Serbs. In the archives of Ragusa are often mentioned from that [branch] Pjetër Shpani, an Albanian catholic: 1430-1456 (+ before 1458). He had three sons [...]” (p. 113).

22 Although there is no reason to consider this phenomenon as an impossible one. For the regional names *gegë*, *toskë* see Cabej SE, SGI *passim*.

A more detailed linguistic investigation regarding the appearance of this ethnic name, respectively its etymology, represents the third aspect of the present study, that is:

3. The diachronic-linguistic investigation of the ethnic name *shqiptar* (étymologie d'origine)

- The diachronic-linguistic investigation of this ethnic name, which in this case coincides with its etymological investigation, has been considered so far less problematic, as it has been reduced to the explication of its word-formation structure, to the definition of its word-forming elements and to the motivation of such a derived word. Being without any doubt a derived word, numerous scholars have tried to define its position in the lexical group, which includes, *inter alia*, the adverb *shqip*, that in the present linguistic sense is considered as a simple word, used also as a substantive *shqipe-ja* and as an adjective *shqip-e* denoting the Albanian language, and/or its characteristic connected with it; the place-name *Shqipëri* ~ (gheg.) *Shqipni*, which denotes not only (a part of) the ethno-linguistic territory of the Albanian people, but also Albania as a particular political state formation, and results to be formally a derived word formed out of *shqip* with the suffix {-ëri}²³; there are further various verbal formations, as for ex.: *shqiptoj* "I pronounce, I proclaim a decision etc.", *shqipëroj* "I translate and adapt into Albanian", *shqiptarizoj* together with their respective deverbatives: *shqiptim*, *shqipërim*, *shqiptarizim* etc. (Fjalor 2002² 1288).

Regarding the ethnic name *shqiptar*, at present it is considered as a derived word with the suffix {-tar}, which in the meantime has become very productive in the derivational system of Albanian in building nomina agentis out of nominal themes, as for ex.: *luftë* → *luftë-tar*, *lajm* → *lajm-ë-tar* etc.²⁴

Taking into account this word-building scheme, Ismajli (1985 227s.) presents the way of formation of the ethnic name *shqiptar* almost as follows:

23 In this case we completely share Ismajli's critical remarks (1987 101) against the opinions expressed by Shuteriqi (1956 215) and by Lloshi (1976 15 ss).

24 This suffix is highly productive in the word-building system of the Albanian language and serves to form nomina agentis from nominal (more rarely out of verbal) themes; see Cabej(-Xhuvani) 1976 (1962) 276s.

1. Basic word <i>shqip</i> (adv.)	2. conversion/derivation *{shqip-} (+ {-V-}: noun)	3. derivation *{shqipë-}+{-tar}
[Buzuku:1555]	[?]	[Da Lecce 1702]

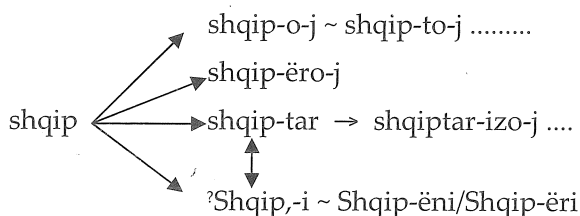
Although this reconstruction seems at present correct, two remarks have in the meantime appeared, which throw the shadow of a certain unsureness, respectively give rise to a scientific debate. So for example the second phase of the word-formation process (similar if not identical with the present forms *shqip,-e* (adjective, *shqipe-ja* substantive) is presented as a real reconstruction, although in the chronology of the linguistic facts it is not evidenced earlier than the ethnic name *shqiptar* itself. The second remark concerns the word-building scheme as well as its respective motivation and in final analysis the very function of the suffix {-tar}, which is not encountered in any other parallel case in the Albanian anthroponymy; cp. for ex. the denominations of the inhabitants of various regions: *tiran-as, durrs-ak, vlonj-at, shkodr-an, mati-an, korç-ar, mirdit-or, gjirokastr-it*, beside the simple denominations: *gheg, tosk, lab etj.*; or the member of any other pople: cp. *itali-an, austri-ak, franc-ez* etc., beside the simple ethnonyms: *grek, serb, bullgar, rus* etc.²⁵

The first of these two remarks is not unsurmountable, and we might even avoid it as such, if we "simplify" a little the way of formation of the word in question. In such a case we find ourselves in front of three alternative solutions:

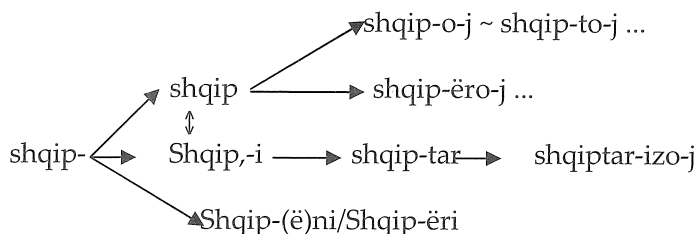
- a) The elimination of the supposed intermediate phase **shqip(V)*, which at any rate is not evidenced earlier than the ethnic name *shqiptar*. This intermediate form has probably been reconstructed on the basis of the present word-building models of Albanian, in which the suffix {-tar} is generally added to the nominal themes and rarely to the verbal ones (see Note 23). However, in old Albanian (XVI-XVIII centuries) even the adverbial themes should not have been alien to this word-building type, cf.: *kundrë* (preposition/adverb) and *kundërtër* (noun) by Frang Bardhi²⁶. In this case we permit ourselves to reconstruct a scheme with some initial independent processes, which have given rise to the main axis of the lexical group in question; cp.:

25 Riza 1996 (1952) 234; Sh. Demiraj 1999 192.

26 Cp.: Bardhi (1635): *kundrë* prep./adv. "contra" (15 25); "obviam, all'incontro (75 1) beside *kundërtër* noun. "intercessor" (38 27); "obvious, who comes towards/against" (75 3).



- b) Alternation in or with the adverbial basis *shqip*, i.e. its consideration as a secondary development, resulting for ex. from the use of a certain fixed case-form of a reconstructed nominal base **{shqip-}*, which should be investigated further etymologically. A certain – of course not sure – impetus in this investigation is offered by the evidence of the place-name *Shqip-i*, which is encountered by Nicolo Chetta (1777 172): “*Skipi, e skiptari* equivalgon ad Albania, ed albano”. In this case we permit ourselves to reconstruct another scheme, which presupposes two initial independent processes, that may have given birth to the whole lexical group in question:



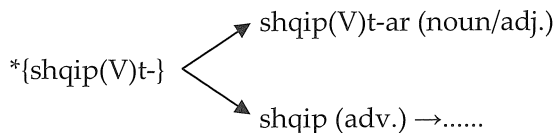
This scheme would be even more interesting, if the persuasive place name *Shqip,-i*, that is adduced only by Chetta, had been evidenced more convincingly, but it is not encountered by us elsewhere as a place-name.²⁷

- c) The uncertainty concerning the nature and use of the suffix {-tar} makes possible as a third alternative solution another morphemic division of the ethnic name *shqiptar*, and precisely its segmenting as *shqipt-ar*, which presupposes another word-building scheme by means of the suffix {-ar}. Such a suffix in this case is sustained by the

²⁷ In this case we can observe a deformation of the place name – surely unmotivated – an original intervention of Chetta himself, in order to realize the etymological relation of the root of this word with the place-name *Shkupi*. However, such an etymological connection is unmotivated.

fact that it grammatically exists everywhere in the Albanian regional anthroponymy, cp. *korç-ar*, *përmet-ar*, *gjakov-ar*, *tetov-ar* etc., or in the common nouns of the type *fshat-ar*, *katund-ar* etc. Such an interpretation is not at all new in the historic-linguistic study of our ethnic name. On the contrary, it is part of one of the oldest linguistic analyses of this ethnic name dating back to the year 1854 and bearing the signature of the German scholar Johann Georg von Hahn ("Albanesische Studien" I, p. 229). According to Hahn, *shqiptar* should be considered as a complex word formed by means of the suffix {-ar} from the participle of the verb *shqipoj* (~ participle *shqipëtuarëj*) and from this {shqipët}+{-ar} with the primary meaning "understander, who understands (in our language)".

It seems that a similar way was followed by Gustav Meyer, too, (1891 411), who in his etymological explanation of the related lexical group selects the (unextended) variant of the verb *shqipoj* < dialectal ^(*)*shqiponj* "I understand", which he thinks to be a loanword from colloquial Lat. *excipio* "I perceive, I hear". At any rate, for our ethnonym a similar favourable situation is presented by the extended variant *shqip(ë)toj*, which has a larger dialectal diffusion. This explanation is supported at present by the enlarged variant with a greater dialectal diffusion *shqip(ë)toj* "I pronounce; I speak clearly; I read a decision with a loud voice"; such a form is today still in use with the ancient meaning "I understand" among the Albanian emigrants in Ukraine; cf.: *nuk të shqiptojta* "I did not understand you" (Musliu – Dauti 1996 33, 35). This third alternative solution presupposes that both the ethnic name *shqiptar* and the adverb *shqip* should be considered as secondary (independent) formations from a common participial/adjectival base {shqipVt-}²⁸, according to the following scheme:



Which of these three alternative solutions regarding the formation of the ethnic name *shqiptar* should be admitted as the surest one? The third solution seems to be more convincing, but the lack of ancient evidence of this word and of its group of words does not permit us to give a definitive answer to this question. Here it must suffice us to observe that

28 Such a form is also encountered in Brancati's song, cf.: *te Skutari shqipt* (see § 2.d).

– as it emerges from this discussion – this question seems to be much more difficult than it was thought to be till now, i.e. during a fairly long period, when the main energies of study have been and still are concentrated only upon finding a convincing etymon explaining the base and origin of the word-stem {*shqip*}.

In the meantime the etymological explanations regarding this base have been numerous²⁹. Since we do not wish to go into details concerning each of them, we limit ourselves to mention two authors for each of the last three centuries:

XVIII century

- Thunmann (1774): *shqiptar* (= ? **shpatë-tar*) ← (fam.) *Shpata* <*Spata*>.
- Chetta (1777) *shqiptar*, *shqipi* (<*skipi*> “Albania”): a) *shqipe* (<<*skipèa*> “serpente alato, aquila”; b) *skepi* σκέπι “white veil, kezë = diadema nuziale muliebre”; c) *Scopia*, the name of the town *Shkupi*.

XIX century

- Hahn (1854 229v.): *shqip* is formally to be compared with a) gr. σκαπός σκίπων σκίπων, lat. *scapus*, *scipio*, germ. *Schaft*, *Stab*, and within Albanian with *shkop*, *stap*; b) with lat. *sceptrum*, gr. σκηπτρον and within Albanian with tosk. *shkreptin*, geg. *shkeptin* and further with *skifter* “a bird of prey; (dial.) *shqiponjë*”; and finally with various ancient tribal names (p. 230); c) Regarding the primary meaning some possibilities are presented: 1. *shkopi* “stick, sceptre” as a sign of decision of tribal chieftains; 2. “irradiator”; c) “(i shpejtë si) rrufe, *shqiponjë*” “swift like a thunderbolt, an eagle”

²⁹ In some cases numerous etymological difficulties and solutions are accompanied with humor of various levels; cf.: a) Hahn (1854 229v.): “... so stehen uns nach dem Obigen drei Wege offen: Zwar ist's mit der Gedanken-Fabrik / Wie mit einem Webermeisterstück, / Wo ein Tritt tausend Faden regt, / Die Schiffelein herüber, hinüber schießen, / Die Fäden ungesehen fließen, / Ein Schlag tausend Verbindungen schlägt. / Wer will was Lebendigs erkennen und beschreiben, / Sucht erst den Geist heraus zu treiben; / Dann hat er die Theile in seiner Hand. (f. 229); whereas according to Riza (1996² [1952] 234), „...the efforts made so far to find out the origin of our new ethnic name have in general been either ridiculous or without any result. [...] *shqip*, *shqiptar* or *Shqipni* represent a quite separate case ; therefore as a paradox the word *shqip* gives the impression of a monster and as a result of a strange body. In this regard the future investigations should be continued” (p. 234).

- Meyer (1891 411) *shqip, shqiptar* etc. make part of the lexical group of the verb *shqiponj* "I understand", which derives directly from Latin *excipiō* "I feel, I hear".

XX century³⁰

- Haxhis (1929³¹) a derived word in {-ar} from Gr./Ital. *schiopetto*, whence *shqiptar* *"gun-bearer, warrior".
- Treimer (1915 135ss); *sh-qip* < **sem-kūpo* approaching within Albanian *qipi* "group, crowd"

Without entering into further details concerning the scale of sureness of any one of the etymologies suggested so far about the word *shqip* – an issue which has no direct connection with the aim of this study – we would like to share Hahn's opinion, supported later on by the founder of modern albanology, Gustav Meyer: Both of them admit a straight connection between *shqiptar* *"Albanian speaker, whose native idiom is Albanian" and *shqipoj/shqip(ë)toj* (verb) "I pronounce, I communicate" (.....*"I understand, I speak clearly, understandably"), on the one hand, and with *shqip* (adverb) "in Albanian language" (..... *"clearly, understandably"). Such a meaning evolution from a simple appellative to an ethnic name may have taken place approximately according to the following way:

"who understands / makes himself
understandable (in a language)"



"who understands / speaks (in that language),
a speaker of that language"



"a member of the ethno-linguistic community, who communicates in
that language"

is more than possible and is also supported by parallels among other languages and peoples of Europe³². Among the Arbëresh of Italy we encounter a similar name (but with an opposite sense). It is the case of the ethnic denominator *gjegju* with a negative connotation, by which the Arbëreshs of Italy are called by the surrounding Italian population.

30 For various etymological solutions see Cabej 1976 70, Sejdaj, *op. cit.*: Demiraj, *op. cit.*, Orel, 1998 434.

31 For this see Panajoti-Meksi 1935 483 ss.; in a similar way recently Kacorri 1995 335 ss.: from Italian *schioppo* "gun".

32 See Ismajli 1985 230; Sh. Demiraj 1999 194

According to the well-known Arbëresh scholar F. Altimari³³, this ethnic denominator, which has nothing to do with the regional denominator *gegë*, is due to the frequent use of the verb *gjegj ~ gjegjënj* “I hear, I understand” by the Arbëreshs of Italy.

4. Ethno-linguistic investigation of the ethnic name *shqiptar* (étymologie-histoire-des-mots)

The analysis of the word-building structure and the definition of the word-building type with its respective motivation constitute one aspect of the diachronical investigation about the ethnic name *shqiptar*, and precisely the explication of its etymon. Another aspect is represented by the investigation and the exact information about the internal and external history of the ethnic name *shqiptar*, *id est* the description of the various phases of its evolution from a common appellative – or perhaps from a family name – to its general use as a unique ethnic name by the members of the ethno-cultural community having Albanian at present as their native idiom in their compact country in the central and western Balkan peninsula.

Of course, in this case it is rather difficult to avoid the confrontation with the other ethnic name formed out of the basis **arb-* (**alb-*), used not only by the neighbouring peoples but also officially and internationally to denominate the Albanians. Moreover – as was already pointed out – that ethnic name has been acknowledged in Albanology to have formerly been in general use among the Albanians themselves, at least, until the second half of the XVIII century. Considered from this point of view, a central problem to be explained would be the reason for such a conscious change of their ethnic name by the Albanians, *id est* the transition from the ethnic name *arbën/r(-)* to that of *shqiptar*.

According to the evidence at our disposal so far, the ethnic denomination formed out of the basis **arb-* (**alb-*) gains priority both in time and space, as it is evidenced since the II century of the New Era, although as the name of the tribe of the Albans in the north-east (?) of Durrachium. On the contrary, the first Albanian testimony indicating that this name was generalized among the Albanians has been evidenced in the first half of the XVII century and has as its author the spiritual master of albanology, Franciscus Blancus (1635). This author in his vocabulary translates the Mediaeval names “Epirus” and “Epirote” by their corresponding Albanian names *Arbëni* <Arbeni> and *i arbëneshë* <i arbenesce> (p. 22), whereas, according to him, “Dheu i Arbënit” (= the

33 See Altimari 1994 51.



country of Arbën) (p. 196 s.) extends in the western and central parts of the Balkan Peninsula including also such urban centers as: Ulqin (Ulcinium), Tivari (Antibarensis), Shkodra, Lezha, (Lissus), Durrësi (Durrachium), Vlora (Aulona) in the western part; Sanxhaku (= <Dukagini, Buloli>), Shkupi (Scupi), Selaniku (Thessalonika) in the east; and Prizrendi, Kruja, Guri i Bardhë (Petralba), Vora (Uorea), Petrela, Elbasani and Ohri (Ochrid) further in the center (196 ss.). Relying on this fact as well as on the data of the early attested Albanian works (Budi 1618/1621), Bogdani 1685), one should admit that the ethnic name out of the basis **arb/(*alb-* – at least among the Albanian intellectual circles of the Catholic confession – has preceded in time the appearance, use and generalization of the ethnic name *shqiptar*. However, at present it is rather difficult to give an exact answer, based upon historical and linguistic facts, to the question: How and how much was this situation reflected in the daily social life as well as in other intellectual religious circles of that time? In this case every scholar, *volens nolens*, is obliged to enter into the labyrinths of a causal interpretation and reconstruction having the force of an argument. That is why we are dealing here only with two questions:

a) When has the change of these ethnic names taken place?

That is a rather difficult question, to which various answers have been given so far according to the existing documentation: α) during a period of 200 years, and precisely in the concluding period, during which the formation of the Albanian nation took place (Ismajli 1985 227 s.); β) since more than 150 years (Hahn 1854 229-30); γ) since more than 70 years, that is approximately between the meeting of Kuvendi i Arbënit (the Council of Arbën) (1703) and the publication of Thunmann's work (1774 242), respectively Chetta's manuscripts (1763, 1777). The third solution is geographically partial and can be exploited in favor of contradictory attitudes, if one bases himself upon this or that author. At any rate, regarding the northern part of the compact Albanian ethno-linguistic area we are going to take into account the translation of the documents of Kuvendi i Arbënit (1703) by two different authors: Vinçenc Zmajević (?) (1706: *Concili Provintiaali o Cuvendi j Arbenit*)³⁴ and Engjëll Radoja (1872: *Concilli i Xëut Scqipniis*). In this case we have to do with a distance of nearly 170 years, during which this process results totally concluded in the north of the country.

34 See B. Demiraj 2004, 83vv.

According to the new documentary data at our disposal, we may declare with greater certainty that, whereas in the second half of the XVIII century (at least) in the south the population were aware of their former ethnic name but did not like to identify themselves further by that and preferred to call themselves *shqiptarë*³⁵, in the Northern Albanian area at the beginning of the XVIII century (but perhaps even earlier) both of their ethnic names seem to have enjoyed, at least, an equal use³⁶. Such a situation is attested in two works of the same author, and precisely in those of the Italian missionary Francesco Maria da Lecce³⁷, who has given a considerable contribution both to the study of the Albanian language and to the elaboration of Albanian writing during that period.

As we already mentioned above, the ethnic name *shqiptar*, as far as we are informed until now, is for the first time attested in the introduction of the manuscript dictionary of this author (1702) – in the rubric “Shqipëtārit”, in which he points out to the Albanian reader:

“My dear Shqipëtār, I did not write down this dictionary for you, as you know much more than I do.”

In the introduction to his Albanian grammar published 14 years later (1716) we notice that Da Lecce addressing the Albanian reader uses approximately the same words, but the rubric in this published work is entitled <Arbenorit> and in the text we read also:

“My dear Arbenuer, I did not write down this grammar for you ...”³⁸.

The confrontation of these two sources of the same author presents a most unusual situation: he has used the ethnic name *shqiptar* in a work which remained as a manuscript, which precedes in time the publication of his second major work, in which he uses only the ethnic name *arbënor*. Is it due – in this case – to a “conscious” redactional intervention during the process of edition or of the licence for the publication of an Albanian old text? It is rather difficult that such a question may have an answer at any time. However, let us satisfy ourselves with the – even temporary – conclusion that during that period both of these ethnic denominations

35 Here we rely upon the information by (the orthodox) Kostandin Haxhi Xhehan (for more details see Thunmann 1774 179).

36 See also Chetta’s affirmation: „Albanese da Scutari fin a Scopia: *shqiptār,-i-e. -ia*”.

However, his effort to reconstruct a certain territorial hierarchy for the use of the various ethnic names (see Note 9), is quite unsure.

37 For Da Lecce’s person see for more details Mandalà 1997 243ss.

38 Cf.: <Arbenùer i Dasciuni – Ket’ Gramatiken’ e skrova iò per eottinii tande, ki di màa fort, e màa nkξξelt, se une ...” (Fr. M. Da Lecce: Osservationi; Arbenorit).

were equally in use, when they were employed with their genuine function as ethnic names, that is without any other semantic nuances, as for example to denote the religious affiliation or something else.

b. Why did the ethnic complex **arbën/arbër* (-) go out of use among the Albanians?

This question has been discussed so far from various points of view without any convincing answer. It should be considered, as it has been so far, in its semantic-functional connections with the developments undergone by the Albanian community during the XVII-XIX centuries, which comprise also the probable period of the substitution of one ethnic name by the other one. However, it remains problematic to determine the social phenomenon that has been the main factor, which has given rise to the process of such a replacement. In order to solve this problem, various scholars have followed different ways, which do not always contradict each other.

So for ex. Buda (1982 27 ss.) defines the alternation of such ethnic names as a constituent part of an "apparently wonderful ethno-genetic" phenomenon in the Middle Ages, which, according to him, has appeared during the process of development of the unitary Albanian nationality, viewed as a result of the massive confrontation of the Albanian people with the Ottoman invaders. According to him:

"This frontal and massive popular confrontation with "the foreigners" explains an apparently wonderful ethno-genetic phenomenon: it is precisely after that period of war that we notice that the ancient ethnic name *arbën* passes to the secondary place being temporarily replaced by the other ethnic name *shqiptar*, which is also of an ancient root, and by which the members of this nationality distinguish themselves from the foreign invaders, as a particular unitary nationality, quite different first of all by means of their own common and understandable language *shqipe*. (p. 29)³⁹.

"The ethnic differentiations, that took place at the time of the Ottoman invasion", are, according to Çabej (1976 65), the main factors, which brought about the replacing of the ethnic names. However, he is sceptic regarding an exhaustive solution of this problem, respectively

39 According to Sh. Demiraj (1999 196s.) this explanation is without any linguistic argumentation, as the denomination distinction by the foreign conquerer was quite clear even in that period: cp. Bardhi (1635 22): Epirote (Lat.) <I Arbenesce, turcice *arnautlar*>.

concerning an infallible identification of the concrete factors, that made possible the replacing of the ethnic names. Thus:

“Concerning the name *shqiptar*, *Shqipëri*, *Shqipni*, this as an ethnic name of the people and of the country [...] took place during the Turkish domination, after the Albanian emigrations to Greece and Italy. Its diffusion as a national denomination and the disappearance of the ancient ethnic name, are probably to be connected with the ethnical and social movements of the people during the Middle Age and the earliest Turkish period, as well as with internal wanderings, with the formation of new tribes in those historical periods, but the concrete factors of such a substitution cannot be made precise. (1976 [1972] 69 s.).

In a broader way this problem is viewed by the well-known albanologist Rexhep Ismajli (1985 229), who investigates it mainly within the combination of a range of social, political, economic and cultural – surely internal – transformations undergone by the Albanian people during the process of formation of their nation, that, according to him, was concluded together with their National Renaissance Movement. Therefore, he writes:

“The XVIII century brings about a number of socio-political transformations. Numerous processes from the West penetrate among the Albanians, particularly in the coastal towns. The trade gets a new impetus throughout the Ottoman Empire. The towns enjoy a new regeneration, so that the trade and other interactions become more intensive than in their surroundings. More intensive contacts are established among Scodra–Durrachium–Aulona–Giannina–Scodra–Scupi–Manastir–Coritza (Korça), all of them well linked with the great commercial and administrative centers like Dubrovnik, Salonika, Istanbul. These more frequent contacts stimulated furthermore the consciousness that the members of this people, belonging to three confessions and having also other differences, have something more important in common: they speak the same language and have numerous common customs. These, and all the circumstances which aroused the national consciousness, made still more evident the double denominations *shqipe/arbën*, quite differently from one unique denomination among all their neighbours for their language

and their peoples. This was greatly favoured by the consciousness imposed by the Turks that *arbën* is connected with something which belonged to the past and that in the present situation was naturally connected only with the Christian population, and in this way this denomination became somewhat strange to the Muslim population. These circumstances imposed most naturally the denomination found there, *id est* the ethnic name *shqiptar*, which was very rapidly diffused among all the population. Whereas the ethnic name *arbën*, *arbër* characterizes the period of the people's formation in ancient times, the denomination *shqiptar* was naturally imposed in the period when the nation was shaped up" (p. 229 s.).

This argumentation fits well to the "universal" and logical way of formation of the nation, which represents a particular terminus of the (European/American – sic!) civilization, that we have become accustomed to consider conceptually almost as the totality of a people (regardless of the social, confessional and regional distinctions) representing the majority of inhabitants, who live within a compact vital space and communicate among them in their native language and take care of their cultural-historical traditions, by developing at the same time their collective historical and political responsibility towards themselves. In this concrete case, however, we are obliged to anticipate our research up to the beginning of the XVIII century (and perhaps still earlier), when we observe – at least in the literature of the cultural-religious area of the North – a parallel use of both ethnic names, whereas in the second half of the XVIII century the process of replacing one ethnic name by the other is evidenced as completely concluded – at least in the compact ethnic-linguistic regions of Southern Albania. However, in that period one can in no way think of a genuine national awakening within the Albanian reality, which has been considered by many scholars as the latest one in the whole Balkan socio-cultural area (Hetzler 2002 86 ss.). Moreover, there are no historical evidences about a considerable economic development in Albania, Kossovo and Macedonia during the XVII-XIX centuries.

O. Myderrizi, who has dealt with this issue during the most fruitful period of his scientific activity, concentrated his intensive researches from the beginning on the process of the confessional change by the Albanians, steadily sustaining his opinion that:

"The ancient name did not indicate only the nationality, but also the respective religion. By changing their religion, they felt the need to change also their ethnic name. The new ethnic

name *shqiptar*, adopted as their national name, was based upon the language as one of the main elements of their nationality. This name may have been used by the first Albanian muslims since the XVI century, but those being a minority could not impose it upon the majority (1965 164).

This opinion of Myderrizi's, which in the meantime has been supported by someone⁴⁰, is according to Sh. Demiraj, not only in contrast with historical facts, but also with linguistic arguments. According to him:

“It should, however, be noted that according to such an opinion it might be expected that all the Albanian Muslims (and not only a limited number of them deeply influenced by the Turkish culture) should have called themselves *Turks*. Or, at least, it might be expected that the ethnic name *shqiptar* should have been used only by the Albanian Muslims, or should have been employed by the Turks to denominate this part of the Albanians. But that is historically inexact. In other words, the sustainers of such an opinion should, at least, have proved by historical documents that the Turks called the Albanian Christians *Arnautë* (< *arbëneshtë/arbëreshë*), and the Albanian Muslims *shqiptarë*. Otherwise, it should be admitted that such a differentiation might have been practised by the Albanians of the two different confessions themselves, but that is also historically inexact. On the other hand, if we take into account the Turkish sources, we observe that the Turks have always called the Albanians by the name *Arnaut*. [< *arbëneshtë / arbëreshë*]. In the Turkish ancient and recent evidences one cannot find any distinction between the Albanian Muslims and Christians by denominating the first as *Shqiptarë* and the second as *Arbëneshtë* or *Arbëreshë*. (Demiraj 1999 197).

Following the way traced by Myderrizi, whose thesis – particularly in its second part- is without fail more than doubtful, we think that the principal attention in this research should be rather concentrated upon the dislocations that might and should have taken place among the basic constituents in the cultural matrix of the Albanian ethnos during that period. One of them – as Myderrizi rightfully thinks of and as Ismajli

40 See Sejdaj 1996 107. We find this opinion as part of an argument by Ismajli as well (1985 230).

analyzes more profoundly – is without doubt the religious confession, which represents by the Balkan peoples, even at present in many of them, one of the basic indicators of their ethno-cultural identity: Greek, Macedonian / Bulgarian, Serbian / Montenegrin, Croatian, Bosnian. Such a function is also evidenced by the ethnic name based upon **arbën* in the Catholic religious literature of the North Albanian area. (cp. Myderrizi 1965: 164). With such an additional meaning is also evidenced this basis among the neighbouring peoples during that period⁴¹. This has been pointed out by Šufflay, too, who writes that in the zone of Ragusa *arbanas* denotes the Albanian catholic⁴². And the Orthodox Slavs charged this name with a semantic connotation, as Peter Bogdani affirms in the introduction of his master piece: “The slavs, by antonymy, call the Catholic religion *Arbanaska vera*” (Bogdani 1685 Introduction: Të primitë përpara letërarit [p. IV]).

However, did such an ethnic denomination also comprise in that period and/or earlier the Albanian Orthodox population in the south of their compact ethno-cultural territory? We think that it is not the case to deal with this question minutely in this essay⁴³. In conformity with the aim of our essay, let us limit ourselves to a rather sure affirmation that at the beginning of the XVIII century, as at present, among the Balkan peoples we distinguish only the Albanians, by whom the religious affiliation reduced since early its catalyzing factor in the matrix of their ethnic culture. This is an early process that entered a particular phase in

41 Cp. Chetta (1777: 171): “Abbiam veduto in fine l’Alba Macedonica, l’Albano, o Albania nostra verso il Drino Albo tralla Macedonia, ed Epiro, de’ quali nomi anticamente non solo, ma pur modernamente partecipa, e non varie volte fu nomata Arbano, ed Arbania, al parichè l’Albanitia del Peloponeso, detta Arbanitia dagli scrittori bizantini, e Leunclavio, presso cui, e presso il Coronelli gl’abitanti dell’Albania nostra da’ turchi vengono detti *arbanosj arnautlari gauri*, in singolare *arbanòs arnaut gaur*, quali in turchesco vagliano *epirota cristiano*.” (171)

42 “From the Latin or Romance form was created the Slavic name of the Middle Ages *arbanasi* (1230). This word at present, too, indicates the Catholic Albanian in the region of Ragusa and in Montenegro” (Šufflay 2000³: 105)

43 We have dedicated to this issue a special study (still under process), in which we present the thesis that the functional limited use of *arbën/r(-)* as a genuine ethnic name and, parallel to this, its specialized use to denote “a christian Albanian/Albanian speaker of the Roman-catholic rite has been a process that might and should have started long before the ottoman occupation of the Albanian territories. The use of the ethnic name *arbëror* (alongside of *Arbëri*) in the zone of Himara and its surroundings in that time is also due to the special status of the Albanian population of that zone as “Cattolici di rito Greco” (cp. Zmajević 1702/3 – by Bartl 1979: 5).

the second half of the XVI century⁴⁴, and developed precipitously during the second half of the XVII century and got its full shape at the beginning of the next century, precisely at the time, when Kuvendi i Arbënit (the Council of Arbën) took place (1703).

The appearance of this component in the matrix of the Albanian ethnical culture is perfectly represented in the Albanian literature of that period. However, the most significant in this case remains the text of the first edition of the acts of Kuvendi i Arbënit (1706), which enables us to achieve successful diachronic analyses both in the linguistic and socio-anthropological aspects. Concentrating ourselves upon the linguistic analysis of this issue, we observe since the first pages of the text the so-called “manipulation of the ethnicons” (Ismajli 1985 230 ss.), in the sense that at that time – as well as later on – in the mentality of the Albanian and foreign clergy (be they catholic, Greek / Slavic orthodox or muslim) the Albanian ethno-linguistic community results in being divided into social strata that confront each other purely on the basis of their religious affiliation. Thus, in the text of Kuvendi (= of the Council) as well as in the everyday speech of that time (and partly also of the present) we notice that the representative of any religion is often called not only by his authentic religious terminologic denomination – i.e. by a title with a (somewhat) neutral connotation – but also by a certain ethnic name, which denominates (mainly) the member of another cultural ethnos, of a neighbouring people, by whom the religious confession, respectively the religious affiliation was and remains a basic component of its ethnic culture, as for example: *grek, orum* “Greek ~ (Greek) orthodox”, *shqal/shk(i)a* “Slav ~ (Slavic) orthodox”, *Turk* “Turk ~ muslim”. In this second case the negative semantic connotation reaches a culminant point and *volens nolens* provokes an aggravation in the reciprocal relations among the social strata within the Albanian cultural ethnicity.

Such an aggravation in the socio-cultural plan provokes without doubt a complete convulsion in the linguistic plan, too. In the following table we have tried – not without any difficulty – to classify the multitude of the denominations of the same ethnical culture employed for members of different religions during that period, as they are evidenced in the ancient Albanian literature (mainly of the North) and/or in the popular religious terminology. By means of this systematization

44 Cp. By Buzuku (1555): “gjithë popullinë e kërshenë endë Arbanit ata en mortajet largo, tÿ të lufme zot.” (18v 85-7) as against: “E kÿ anshtë i pari kat: ai qi nukë jet fort enbë fët të Krishtit, por sã e vgjãn kun pak të keq ashtu thotë: vete banem turk.” (23r 17-20)

that has achieved from two prospectives, we have tried at the same time to separate the genuine popular terminology (1) from the ethno-linguistic one (2), that was/is used to denote – with an emphasized connotative charge – the religious affiliation.

religion ↓	believer →	‘SHQIPTAR’			
		Catholic	greek [orthodox]	slave	muslime
catholic	1	i krishterë / katolik	skizmatik / orum	skizmatik / shqa	muhamedan / mysliman/ i pafe
	2	arbën(-)	Grek	shqa	turk
ortho- dox	1	latin / katolik	i krishterë / orum	i krishterë / shqa	muhamedan / mysl. / i pafe
	2	arbën(-)	Grek	shqa	Turk
muslime	1	Kaurr	kaurr	gaurr	mysl./muham.
	2	arnaut kaurr / arbën(-)	arnaut kaurr / orum / grek	arnaut kaurr / shqa	arnaut / turk

From this table we gain at once as a first impression that the diffusion and generalization of the ethnic word *shqiptar* as a real ethnic name might and should have been conditioned by three socio-linguistic phenomena that have reciprocally cooperated with and against each other:

- a) the conscious refraining of the whole (or of the majority of the) Albanian ethnic community from those religious identifications, which distinguished at the same time the other surrounding ethno-religious communities.
- b) the gradual functional restriction up to the total elimination of the former ethnic nominal complex *arbën/r(-)*, which even linguistically is almost variable in most of its forms, cf. gheg (i) *arbënesh* (Kuvendi i Arfbënit), *arbënuer* (Da Lecce), *arbën*⁴⁵; and
- c) the activation of a new all-ethnic name, which would linguistically represent the deep transformations undergone over time and by the matrix of the Albanian ethnic culture, and precisely the weakening or reduction of the religious affiliation as the principal characteristic of the ethno-cultural identity.

Among these three phenomena the first one is certainly easier to be perceived, the second one is somewhat easier to be investigated and interpreted, whereas the third one is doubtless much easier to be

⁴⁵ It is probably a retrospective formation dating back to a recent period. For its particular problems see in greater detail Sh. Demiraj 1999 179 s.

misinterpreted. If no albanologist needs explanations about the first phenomenon, for the third one we deem it necessary to give some clarifications: Our opinion, which connects the diffusion and generalization of the "new" ethnic name *shqiptar* with the gradual reduction of the religious affiliation as a principal component of the ethno-cultural identity, neither approves, nor is approved by the thesis that the religious belief has always been superficial by the Albanians, and that such a situation has given rise to such socio-cultural phenomena as their massive transition from the Christian to the Muslim religion and/or their passage to crypto-christianity⁴⁶. In the last case a part of the family (chiefly the men of the age when they should be recruited for the military service), proclaimed themselves as Muslims, secretly practising however the Christian religious services and rituals within their families. Viewed in the socio-anthropological plan this multiform process should rather be regarded as a self-defending reaction of a small cultural ethnos to survive, as a pragmatic solution against their total extinction: What would have happened to the Albanian people, if they had abandoned in the same pragmatic way their other ethnical identifiers, as for example their own language?

We don't like to insist longer on this problem in the socio-anthropological plan, in order to concentrate ourselves upon the socio-cultural situation developed (particularly in Northern Albania) at the end of the XVII century and at the beginning of the XVIII century. In this case we think that the activation of the ethnic name *shqiptar* is precisely the linguistic coverall of the consequent reactions developed within the multicultural structure of the Albanian ethnos during that period. The complex of the ethnic name *arbën(-) volens nolens* deepens its function as indicating only the part of the Catholic believers within the Albanian ethnos, and is probably identified (not rarely also stigmatized) as such by the neighbouring peoples, too. As such it entered in direct confrontation with the ethnic names of the neighbouring peoples, who at the same time were identified also with other religious groups within the Albanian ethnos. Moreover, these confrontations did no longer appear only among certain social strata and groups and/or among various zones within the Albanian ethno-linguistic territory. (Catholic ~ Orthodox = "arbën/r-" ~ "Greek" / "shqa"). Such confrontations already risked to provoke the total disappearance of such principal structures of the Albanian cultural ethnos as the way and tradition of living in tribes and fraternities. They seriously risked to dissolve the nucleus of this ethnos, precisely the

46 Cf. Stadtmüller 1954 211 ss.

Albanian family, in which the men and the boys of military age were called "declared Turks" and/or "Arbër ~ Shqë" or "secret Orum", whereas the women and the children enjoyed from time to time and in certain cases the status of "Arbëreshe", "Greek/Orum", "Shkinë" or "Turkish" female.

As a conclusion we would like to point out again that the diffusion and generalization of the ethnic name *shqiptar* represent the linguistic concretization of the self-defending reaction of the Albanian ethnoses, by which the (various but not at all superficial) religious belief *volens nolens* ceded the place to the Albanian native language, which – alongside the compact vital territory with vital traditions – was transformed into the principal identifier within the matrix of the Albanian ethnic culture. Thus, in this case we have to do with a both unexpected and wonderful ethnogenetic process, because it concerns a people that is not only one of the most ancient in Europe, but is also in this respect unequaled so far in the community of the Balkan peoples.

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