

Three Hungarian researchers and three periods of the history and culture of the Albanian people

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Abstract

The object of this study is the contribution of three Hungarian researchers: the publicist, the editor and the historian Windisch (Karl Gottlieb von Windisch, 1725 -1793); the outstanding historian, medievalist, latinist and germanist Thalloczy (Ludwig von Thallóczy, 1857-1916); and the geographer and ethnographer of international dimensions Nopcsa (Baron Nopcsa 1877-1933). Their selection is not random; it reflects the up to now development in the science of Albanology and our goal as researchers and evaluators to place them on the Pantheon of the Albanian studies. These three names represent, at the same time, three particular dimensions of our national history: the fate of an ethnicity detached from its national territory in certain historical and cultural circumstances (Windisch); documentation of the Albanian space in a particularly controversial period of the Middle Ages in Albania and the Balkans (Thalloczy); and the wealthiest historical, ethnographic, material, spiritual and linguistic landscape of the Albanian people in the beginning of the twentieth century (Nopcsa). Therefore, let us state in the very beginning that recognition of their contribution also implies the recognition of some of the most important achievements of the Albanian studies.

Keywords: Windisch, Thalloczy, Nopcsa, Albania, Albanology, the Middle Ages, language, history, ethnography, culture.

Introduction

It is in the tradition of the researchers of the period of antiquity and the Middle Ages to deal with the relations between peoples relying mainly on their neighbourship, which, if not relations of peoples of a family or a religion, are usually the fates of small peoples and the interests of large peoples. Perhaps this is the reason why these kinds of research are usually distinguished for scientific partiality and emphatic authorial subjectivity.

In the Balkans, these principles have been very present, hence, they have produced that many historical partialities and tragedies among the peoples, sometimes in the conjectures of the racial and linguistic families (Serbs and Albanians, Serbs and Bosnians, Greeks and Albanians, etc.); sometimes within the ethnic conjectures (Serbs and Croats, Serbs and Bosnians) and sometimes even religious (Serbs and Bulgarians). Due to this historical experience and due to these, sometimes, ideological, folkloric and even racial trends, it has been impossible to avoid the historical and cultural discourse of the Albanian researchers.

This conceptual flow, of not only Albanian researchers, but also researchers from the Balkans, has been overthrown at the end of the 19th century, initially by the Austro-German and Austro-Hungarian studies, and subsequently by the Croatian studies

about the Albanians and their history. This is the reason why the foundations of the scientific albanology contain the much treasured names of German, Austrian and Hungarian linguistics, history and culture such as Leibnitz, Hahn, Mayer, Thalloczy, Jokl, Shufly, Nopcsa, etc.

The contribution of Hungarian scientists, who generally belong to the Austro-German school, is immensely important for the Albanian studies. Their historical, archival, ethnographic and linguistic research in the last three centuries has changed the historical course of the Albanian studies, therefore, it is not a coincidence that we have selected three of them in this synthesis : the publicist, editor and writer Carl Gottlieb von Windisch (1725 -1793);); the outstanding historian, medievalist, latinist and germanist Thallóczy Ludwig von (1857-1916); and the geographer and ethnographer of international dimensions Nopcsa Baron (1877-1933). Their selection is not random, neither due to the up to now achievements in the Albanian studies, nor due to our goal of presenting them, but because they represent at the same time, three particular dimensions of our national history: the fate of an ethnicity detached from its national territory in certain historical and cultural circumstances; documentation of the Albanian space in a particularly contraversial period of the Middle Ages in Albania and the Balkans; and the wealthiest historical, ethnographic, material, spiritual and linguistic landscape of the Albanian people in the beginning of 20th century.

Without Windisch's commitment for documentation of the tragic fate of the displaced Kelmendas, today, our knowledge about them and especially their dialect would be void even for the current dialect in historical dialectology and diacronic linguistics; without Thallóczy's research and major synthesis of a very dark period of Albanian history such as the Middle Ages, the albanological knowledge would be too poor, whereas the influence of the Serbian school on the European circles for the limited ethnic and geographic spread of Albanians, especially emphatic; and without Nopscha's ethno-historical and linguistic research in Northern Albania, the history of Albanian geography and geology would be delayed for more than half a century. Therefore, let us state in the very beginning that recognition of their contribution also implies the recognition of some of the most important achievements of the Albanian studies.

Carl Gottlieb von Windisch and the fate of an ethnicity detached from its national territory

In local Albanological studies as well as the international ones, the name of the Hungarian publicist, editor and writer Carl Gottlieb von Windisch, and his work is generally, quite unknown. Today, based on the data offered by Free Wikipedia, we can see that he was a tradesman, scholar and a dedicated historian. He had kept high social and civic positions , including here the position of the mayor of Bratislava (1789). Von Windisch spoke several European languages (German, Slovak, Italian and Latin) and with his education and culture, he had become an influential personality in the cultural life of the Kingdom of Hungary.

Due to his activities in the field of journalism and editing, Windisch was highly

esteemed for the newspapers and particularly the journals, whereas his article about the tragic fate of the Kelmendas (the allied tribe of Austrians against the Ottoman Empire, 1735-1739) who had settled in the western Belgrade between the years 1749-1755, was published in the journal *Ungarisches Magazin, oder B(Hungarian magazine, or contributions to national history, geography, and natural science)*, in 1782 (Windisch, 1761, Pressburg; 1770, Pressburg; 1772, Pressburg; 1778, Pressburg; 1780, , Pressburg etj). His complete name and work is absent in all academic publications of *The History of the Albanian People*, *The Albanian Encyclopedic Dictionary*, not only in the first, one volume publication, or the second three volumes publication, but also in other publications of this nature, despite the fact that the Albanian topic he had dealt with was not unimportant in the Albanian studies and our researcher, Von Windisch, was not a little-known personality in Hungarian historiography and the European scientific circles.

In this regard, we should appreciate his knowledge of the Albanian culture in general and the knowledge of several outstanding personalities of the Albanian culture, such as Frang Bardhi and his *Dictionary*, Theodor Kavaljoti and also his *Dictionary*, Pjeter Budi and his alleged *Grammar*, his introduction to the concepts of Leibnitz about the Albanian language, etc.

A single overview of his interests for albanology was brought by the prominent Albanian scholar Jup Kastrati (2000, 404-407), but in this case, the research is also based mainly on the peripheral data. The data of the article of this scholar *Die Klementinern in Syrmien*, published in "Hungarian Magazine" Pressburg 1782, p. 77-89, were taken from a unit of the best volume of the best bibliography *Albanian Bibliographie* (Manek&Pekemezi&Stotz, 1909, 16), while historical-linguistic data were taken from Dhimitër S. Shuteriqi's *Albanian writings* (Shuteriqi, 1955, 181-190; 1965, 95-96; 1976, 134-135, 137-138). From the references brought up in the very introduction as well as the conclusion of this scientific apparatus, it results that the appreciation for the contribution of the scholar von Windisch was shared in modest dimensions by Albanian as well as foreign scholars such as Stjepan Marjanovic (1839), Perrot (1870), Langer (1880), F. Kuhaç (1890), Omar Effendi (1154 VH), Pashk Bardhi-Faik Konica (1902-1903), Thalloszy (1916), Balogh (1928) Kostić (1923, 1930), Leon Ashiku (1930) and Dhimitër S. Shuteriqi (Kastrati, 2000, 404).

From the first assertion, his absence today in the Albanian contemporary studies and the second assertion, namely, the fact that his work is appreciated by an obviously limited number of both, local and foreign scholars, we should consider two components: the multidimensional character of von Windisch's presentation on the Albanians' material and spiritual wealth and some inaccuracies in the description of their language, which Professor Kastrati calls "too fluctuant orthography" (Kastrati, 2000, 407). His absence, in fact, has to do with the new discoveries in contemporary studies about this Albanian tribe detached from their homes in specific historical circumstances and who even called their language, not Albanian or Arbërore, but 'Kelmendan language'.

However, seen from the perspective of this text about the Kelmendas, it is precisely the professional and publicistic preparation, as well as the gift of the author von Windisch that made this research multifaceted and perceptible by a large circle of

readers. The text introduces in details the history of migration and the origin of this ethnic and religious group, their customs and their ancient tradition, their clothing and particularly their language.

Introduction of the Kelmendas in this text is distinguished by the content of the anthropological, cultural, material and spiritual data they were distinguished with, even in the period when he had been conducting his research. Consequently, this is the reason why in his research, he described passionately their Scanderbegian origin, their aesthetic appearance, their clothing, their dances, their lifestyle and marriage, including their internal relations within the ethnicity.

A special place in his text about the Kelmendas, von Windisch devotes to the language, one of the most important treasures which this ethnic group had inherited. But here lies his fundamental shortcoming and the fundamental shortcoming of its text, too, despite its value for the Albanian studies. The published text has not been researched by the author himself and has not been gathered by members of this ethnic group, but it has been taken from another scholar, his friend, who had also gathered all this linguistic treasure in the form of dictation from a priest who served among them, but who was not Albanian. Certainly, within this text, there is enough evidence and essential values about the phonetic, morphological, syntactic, lexical and especially dialectal structure, but the expectations for them to be first-hand evidence are disappointing due to the inaccuracy of their descriptions. From the listed data, there can be specified several phonetic features, such as those for the group of vowels: *uo, ua, ue*, a peculiarity of the Gheg dialect; the Albanian lexical property and the expulsion of oriental vocabulary; some Albanian grammatical structures such as the verbs and proper nouns of Albanian highlanders; some folk and phraseological Albanian structures identified in Frang Bardhi's texts, etc.

Documentation of Carl Gottlieb von Windisch's contribution through his work *Die Klementinern in Syrmien* in the field of Albanian history, language and culture conveys that the albanological knowledge in new circumstances should be considerate and offer

an evaluation of a different dimension about him and his work.

Ludwig von Thallóczy and the Albanian middle ages

Ludwig von Talloczy is one of the prominent scientific personalities whose work has been, nonetheless, appreciated in the Albanian studies, albeit not to the appropriate extent. His name and work in the Albanian studies take the uppermost position in linguistic and etymological studies of Professor Çabej, he is highly esteemed in the publications of the *History of the Albanian People*, and he is also modestly presented in the *Albanian Encyclopedic Dictionary*. Except the limited data about his life and his knowledge in the field of medieval studies, the content of his contribution in this field of knowledge is initially generalized as a contribution to the space of the Balkans, and then, there are data about his work dedicated to the Slavic-Hungarian relations and at the very end, there are data concerning his contribution to Albania and Albanians in two volumes of documents "Acta et diplomata res Albaniae mediae aetatis illustrantia" (Huta, 2009, 2655-2656; Tallocci, 1893; 1898; Tallocci&Šufflay&Jireček,

1913/1918, 1914; 1916).

Thalloczy belonged to the prominent pleiades of scholars who together with several of his contemporaries like Jirecek, Shufly, and others, marked the highest pinnacles of knowledge in the field of research, particularly the medieval one. The joint project, which was led by Shufly, but carried Thalloczy's name as head of the group, is one of the most important monuments of Albanian history, language, culture and civilization.

It is not by accident that this volume, respectively, these documents (approximately 1600 of them) were not only encountered in the foundations of the history of the Albanian people (as the main components of the medieval period), but also in the history of albanology (anthroponymy, patronymic, toponymy, respectively the linguistic structure of naming the ancient and medieval settlements), and the space of the surrounding peoples. It is not accidental that Professor Çabej considered these two volumes, not only as the only referential documents before Gjon Buzuku's *The Missal*, but he used them as such, also in *The Etymological Studies of Albanian*, excluding completely the oriental documents and partly the Slavic ones. Thereby, the role and place of the volumes *Acta et diplomata res Albaniae mediae aetatis illustrantia* in albanological studies has acquired multiple dimensions. In the field of history, this work restored the inverted relations of Arberer ethnicity with other neighbouring ethnicities, which, sometimes through extensive research, and sometimes through distortions of documents had been caused by the Serbs, Greeks and Bulgarians until the beginning of the 20th century. In the field of geography, these volumes introduced a new and complete landscape of the Albanian space during the medieval period, mainly the coastal one, but occasionally the continental one as well. In the field of linguistics, these volumes introduced a large number of references with Greek and Latin alphabet (mostly names of people and places and names of relatives), without which we would not have *The Albanian Onomastic Dictionary*, and without which, the unification of the ancient settlements in the Albanian space would be unimaginable. As we do not want to deal extensively with historical, linguistic, cultural and civic values of these volumes, we would like to emphasize a single fact: the two volumes were published in a critical period of the Albanian historical and regional developments. The first was published in the beginning of the 20th century, respectively on the eve of the Declaration of Independence of Albania, whereas the second one was published in the 1930s, a period of a very important cultural and educational development of the Albanian society.

In addition to research of the documentary sources in the Albanian and Balkans space summarized in *Acta et diplomata res Albaniae mediae aetatis illustrantia dhe Ragusa es magyarrorszag*, Thalloczy was also distinguished for his studies and special monographic synthesis which demonstrated commitment and concrete engagement to the Albanian people and albanology.

In 1916 Thalloczy published an emblematic collection *Illyrian-Albanian Observations*(1916). The dedicated researcher of the European historical heritage, respectively, the founder of the Hungarian research institute on Southeastern Europe, one of the best connoisseurs of not only the Hungarian archives, but also of the Austrian ones, a university professor and one of the founders of the Hungarian

Academy of Sciences, after two volumes of documents, takes the initiative of preparing the volumes *Illyrian-Albanian Observations*. Understandable. A researcher who had collected valuable documents from the archives of Venice, Ragusa, Rome, Vienna, Budapest, etc., on the Albanian millennial history and their ancient and medieval ancestors, on the economic and social relations of Albanians, on their cities and the distinguished families, on ethnic borders and cultural development, on urban life and rural customs, could not do otherwise but bring a syntheses of the most important periods of this history and the material and spiritual conditions of this people in its most important era. In this volume, more than in any other work he does the evaluation of the documentary volumes *Acta et diplomata res Albaniae mediae aetatis illustrantia*, within which, in one of the previous studies Shuflay warns: "This work, especially the indisputable and current findings of which I would like to present here again, will serve to dissipate some quite widespread presentations, and especially to placate those beautified floods inflated by lies of a pair of Serbian statesmen and men of letters who think that the western Europe will learn from them the historical development of the Balkans!" (Shuflay, 2004, 146).

At first sight, this is just a scientific anthology of studies, but it is essentially one of the best summaries of the history of the Albanian people, which despite its deficiencies (lack of the ethnic space treatment beyond the borders determined by the London Conference) represents at the same time the best model of a scientific work of both scientific and political dimensions, not only for the period given, but also for a much longer period of the 20th century. Indeed, as it can be seen from the map located at the end of the volume, Thalloczy's goal together with his contemporaries was to prepare a volume of studies, which would in historical context defend the decisions of the London Conference. Even though it did not meet the just requirements for the entirety of the ethnic Albanian space in the Balkans, for the first time, it diplomatically internationalized the Albanian matter in Europe.

Franc Baron Nopcsa the ethno-historical landscape of the albanian people in the beginning of 20th century

In Albanian studies, the name of the baron Franz Nopcsa represents the most typical personality of the first half of the 20th century. He was well-known and esteemed by prominent scholars of albanology, referred to unprecedented levels in the Albanian studies, translated for internal necessities of the scientific institutions of Tirana, but his work was not published in the Albanian territory until the beginning of 21st century. Referred meticulously in the official publication of the *History of the Albanian people*, widely included in *Etymological studies in the field of Albanian* of Professor Çabej, set in the foundations of the Albanian science of the early 20th century, modestly presented in *Albanian Encyclopedic Dictionary*, Nopcsa has been seen in three dimensions: political, scientific and individual. Let us refer to only the *Albanian Encyclopedic Dictionary* and three aspects of his personality: "geologist, paleontologist and Hungarian ethnographer and baron." From 1903 to 1922 he had come several times to the Highlands of Northern Albania. He was one of the candidates for the throne of Albania in 1913. Nopcsa dealt with geological construction of Northern

Albania. He laid the foundations of its stratigraphy and tectonic division as well as that of Dinarides, being the supporter of the hypothesis of horizontal tectonic shift (Shkurti, 2009, 1852). Providing new international knowledge, relying on already proven studies in the Albanian space, Nopcsa did what other previous researchers of the German school such as Bopp, Jokli, Pedersen and their predecessors had done. Furthermore, excluding Franc Bopp, he had even surpassed them, because as noted in *The Albanian Encyclopedic Dictionary*, Nopcsa was one of the first scholars who in terms of Albanian ethnographic studies introduced for comparison the Albanian archeology as well. For objects of material culture he used the comparative method with other countries of the Mediterranean Basin and the nearest parts of Asia. In ethnographic studies, he was the first to rigorously implement the principles of the diffusionist school or the cultural circles (Shkurti, 2009, 1852). In the beginning of our century, Nopcsa provided a scientific description after many years of geological studies of the Shkodra area (Çabej, 2009, 130). With his studies, even those beyond the language character, Nopcsa proved a very important fact about the origin of Albanians and their age-long autochthony in the Illyrian, respectively the Balkan space, namely, their sedentary life, while Slavic researchers, in the beginning of the 20th tried to present the Albanians as a population of the nomadic groups. Nopcsa, on the other hand, conducted research even in the most rugged space of the Albanian geography providing the data which documented life, namely inculcation of residents and their livestock, and agricultural organization of their life. Nopcsa linked these facts with his findings of many water supply constructions in the mountain areas of Northern Albania. He carefully sketched and described these constructions in his works, especially in *Albanien – Bauten, Trachen und Gerate Nordalbanien*, Leipzig, 1925. Beyond a purely descriptive and figurative character of their appearance, Nopcsa saw the ancient tradition of these Works (Çabej, 1980, 84). The most systematic author of presentation of the history of the Albanian science, Nelson Çabej in his work *The History of Science Development of Albania* (Tirana, 1980), addressing the development of the science of agriculture and the internal structure of the historical development, emphasized “the agriculture character could also be judged by the labour tools used by the Albanian farmer of that period” (Çabej, 1980, 85) and for this, he took the example of different types of ploughs and their usage, referring precisely to Nopcsa’s work. Furthermore, Nelson claimed that in his work about Albania, Nopcsa provides the schemes of nine types of ploughs used in Albania. From the maps he presents concerning the spread of different types of ploughs in the Balkan Peninsula, it appears that in the largest part of our country, in all southern Albania up to the river Mat, plows of the Roman type were used (Çabej, 1980, 85). After revealing these data about the agricultural tools for planting and procesing the crops, the researcher, Nelson Çabej, came to several interesting conclusions concerning the history of development of the Albanian agricultural tradition: “There was a large number of mechanisms and tools used to prepare the bread grains starting with the millstone which was put to function with the arm strength, and other different mills of which the most widespread was the one with water, which, according to Nopcsa, existed in every big village and are Albanian autochthonous inventions which later spread to other countries. According to the same author, in Albania there were also windmills

which are considered as one of the most important technological developments of the Middle Ages" (Çabej, 1980, 87). By addressing his contribution further, we want to emphasize another dimension of his value and impact on albanological studies in general. Having no wish to focus on the dimensions of his impact, thus being the axial paradigm of another work, we would like to bring a fact which has not been dealt with until now by the Albanian knowledge: the impact of Nopcsa's work, the published work and the manuscripts, on Norbert Jokl's work. Connoisseurs of Nopcsa's life and work have already written extensively about his request for the published work (Nopça 1907; 1910; 1912; 1912; 1925; 1932) and especially his work in manuscript to be delivered to Norbert Jokl, but none of them recognized its impact on the compilation of the *Etymological Dictionary of the Albanian Language* and particularly Norbert Jokl's scientific masterpiece *Linguistisch - kulturhistorische Untersuchungen aus dem Bereiche des Albanischen* (Cultural and Linguistic Research in the Field of Albanian Language) Berlin and Leipzig, 1923. There is another work of the same multiple nature of research and evaluation, respectively, this work which remained a manuscript *Albanien: die Bergstämme Nordalbaniens und ihr Gewohnheitsrecht* (Albania, the mountainous tribes of the North and their customary law), recently published in Tirana, 2013. For many decades, albanological knowledge has presented Nopcsa as a dedicated researcher and descriptivist of Albanian patriarchal life in Northern Albania, but it is enough to stop at the above-mentioned, last edition of his work to understand the wide and profound scientific dimensions of not only his research, but also the synthetic and comparative approach of the subject. Our finding is supported by a wealthy literature, not only in the published works but also in his work remained in the manuscript, the disclosed synthesis in the very content of his work, analytic and synthetic methods used, his reliance on oral documentation, the analysis based on local and especially international literature, as well as the concluding assessment based on multifaceted and complementary discussions. Having no wish to deal with extensive presentations of the content and structure of the subject, we want to emphasize the first reserach dimension, respectively, the historical level which includes, one by one, the opinions of about 250 prominent and unknown researchers of international science, who have written about the anthropological peculiarities of Albanians.

Today, we can say that we do not have, yet, an encyclopedic work of world knowledge of this kind about the Albanians even 100 years later. Likewise can be said about the central chapters which summarize the description of the tribes, families and bellies, and especially about the chapters related to Kanun and the origin of the mountain Kanun which reveal not only the descriptive data but also anological facts, comparison of documents and extensive discussion of arguments. Today, it is difficult to find such a profound and comparative study of the Kanun traditions in Albanian and international studies. Even the biggest opponents of some of the ideas presented in his works need many facts and many local and international arguments to demonstrate their convictions.

In conclusion of this generalized presentation about Nopcsa, we would also like to emphasize several important features of his contribution to albanological studies. The study of his work will further bring new recognitions and discussions in our studies

for many reasons: first, its role, whether of the manuscript or the published work, on several essential achievements in the Albanian studies, especially Norbert Jokl's work, Eqrem Çabej's work, as well as the work of many other researchers cannot still be precisely explained; second, it will take even more time to bring new arguments which Nopcsa has already analyzed in his ethnic-historical and geographical studies; and third, but not last, it will take much more time to publish the Nopcsa's complete work, therefore, the evaluation of his contribution to the albanological studies will also take some time and efforts in the scientific flows.

Seeing his political biography and personal claims to be the future king of Independent Albania, and especially his tragic end, the Albanian knowledge kept his popularity in the albanological science aside; recognizing the fundamental values in ethnic-historical, linguistic, and cultural studies of his work, it was referred to by everyone, but only for the historical values it represented in the context of an epich and customary tradition; and accepting undoubtedly his knowledge and founding results of the Albanian geology and geography. Albanian studies of the second half of the 20th century, finally had a fundamental contextual problem, as unfortunate as his own tragic life. In that period when his work was supposed to see the light and become available to the Albanian readers, the state and the Albanian society led a special battle against the essential components of the epich and customary traditon of the Highlands in Northern Albania. In these circumstances, his work could not have met a better fate, except the closure and usage for special needs.

Conclusions

The contribution of the Hungarian researchers in the Albanian studies is multifaceted. Being educated within the German school, they have known and have contributed systematically to the Albanian language, culture, history and civilization. In this flow, the contribution of the publicist, historian and editor Carl Gottlieb von Windisch (1725 -1793); the aid of the outstanding historian, medievalist, latinist and germanist Thallóczy Ludwig von (1857-1916); and the role of the geographer and ethnographer of international dimensions Nopcsa Baron (1877-1933), have left profound marks in albanological studies, and also enough documented materials and manuscripts whose publication and study can deepen further the albanological knowledge. By highlighting these aids complementarily, we wanted to emphasize once more, not only their separate or joint contribution that can be further tracked and researched, but also determine their place on the Pantheon of albanological studies in general and the relevant studies in particular.

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