

Views of HenrikBariqi and EqremÇabej on the origin of the Albanian language

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From ancient times, different researchers, as well as scientists of the last centuries, tackled the issue of the origin of ancient nations, their language, their spiritual and material life, geographical location, but also the relations of these nations with other nations.

Since the XIX Century, different researchers that tackled the issue of the origin of the Albanian nation and its language saw Albanians as the successors of the ancient Illyrians and the language the direct successor of Illyrian language. Thus, the Illyrian theory was born. Supporters of the Illyrian theory were renowned researchers of the XIX century and the beginning of XX century. For illustration purposes I will mention only a few, such as: J Tunmann, G. Meyer, P. Kretschmer, F. Mikloshic, C. Paul, H. Hirt, N. Jokli, J. Xylander, H. Pedersen, etc. Albanian and foreign historians, linguists, archeologists, etc., that provided numerous historical, lingual arguments.

Despite the Illyrian theory, another theory arose, which is the Thracian theory. The main supporters of this theory are scientists like: H. Hirt, C. Paul, G. Wigand, H. Bariq, etc. These researches are of the opinion that the Albanian language is the successor of Thracian language, supporting their opinion on the large division of languages, on centum and satem, and if we rely on this division, said these researchers, then, Albanian language is closer to Thracian than Illyrian language.

The Albanian language history, during the first half of our century, began get tackled by southern Slav researchers, but the first serious efforts were made by researchers such as: Karl Oshtir, PetarSkok, HenrikBariq, etc. the scientific circle interest of these researchers include, amongst other, issues of heritage of Indo-European character of the Albanian language vocabulary.

Since HenrikBariq has a merited place amongst the Slav researchers, therefore, in our study we will discuss this researcher and see how this researcher, from the Thracian theory, launched a new theory known as the Thracian-Dacian-Phrygian theory. Analyzing his research, we will see that it developed into two directions. He conducted comparative study of different Indo-European dialects, analyzing the specific items that departed these dialects from one another, as well as the common items that bring them together, in order reach, in this manner, to the mother language Indo-European.

In his studies, Bariq tackled different issues with Indo-European character, like the problems of gutturals of Indo-European languages, as well as the reflexes they provided in today's stage of Indo-European languages, including the Albanian language. He also dealt with Indo-European palatals and the representation they give to the Indo-European languages of our days. He intensively looked into the problems of mutual language correlations in Balkans, digging deeper especially in studying the Albanian language and the Romanian language, thus, he had to study the Illyrian and Thracian languages.

In Bariq's studies it is evident that throughout his studies he dealt with the problems of Albanology. His scientist's curiosity was continuously instigated by the problems of Albanology that have not found a definitive solution yet, such as: *Origin of Albanian language and its relation to other Balkans languages*, like: *Is the Albanian language the daughter of Illyrian or*

Thracian language; which of these two ancient languages did the Albanian language had affiliation relations; Place where Albanian language was created; in which part of Balkans did the predecessors of Albanians used to live, in its depth or in their historical regions.

Bariq tackled also internal issues of Albanian language, like analysis of borrowings from ancient Greek and Latin, dealt also with etymology studies in the scope of Albanian language.¹

Concerning **the origin of Albanian language**, this author concluded that the Albanian language is the direct continuation of Thracian language. He reached such a conclusion after supporting it on the principle of the vast division of languages, in centum and satem. According to this division it was said that Albanian language belongs to satem group, while the Illyrian belongs to centum, therefore, he thought that since these two languages belong to two different groups, then it is not possible for them to have any kind of genetic connections. But, since Thracian and Albanian language belong to the same group, satem group, then these two, unavoidably, have parent connections between them.

After studying the relations of Albanian language with some other languages of the Indo-European branch, Bariq concludes that Albanian language is much more related to Thracian, continuation of which it is, as well as Phrygian and Armenian languages, more than it has aligning points with the languages of the other centum group.

While H. Pedersen says that Albanian and Armenian languages are the closest languages between them, H. Bariq goes further by saying that two other languages must be aligned besides the Armenian and Albanian languages and those are Thracian and the language of Phrygians because, according to Herodotus the Phrygians were the predecessors of Armenians.

Bariq says that “the difference between my view and Pedersen’s view is that he denies the Albanian-Thracian-Phrygian-Armenian group, while I think that I proved with new arguments that the intermediate place between Albanian and Armenian languages belongs to Thracian language, because Albanian language meets the Thracian in all attributes, which separate it from the Phrygian-Armenian language.”²

In order to make his view more sustainable, Bariq tries to illustrate it with different examples, e.g.: in order to show **Albanian-Armenian connections** he takes some isoglosses from these two languages; Albanian-Armenian isogloss is in fact the replacement of Indo-European group **rn**, which in Albanian language complies to **rr**group; compare gr. **Pherno**, Albanian: **burden**, intermediate stage between **rn** and **rr**, says Bariq was preserved in Armenian language, where the **n** after **r** falls off and only the **r** remains; e.g.: **darnam** (return) aoristi becomes **darjay**. Bariq brings other examples to show that the **rrin** the Albanian language is the final stage deriving from an **rn**; it is worth mentioning that the **rrin** Albanian included also later borrowed words, compare for example **kërrutë** not from the **kornuta** in Latin. But maybe from Romanian, word **govern** that derived from the Greek word **kuverno**.³

In order to show the **Albanian – Thracian connections**, Bariq brings some examples, saying that the replacement of Indo-European sonant liquids complies between *Albanian* and

¹Albanorumanische Studien, 1919 Sarajevo, Guturalniproblemi, teZbornik Belic-1921, poilirskimtragovima I-II J.F.II-1912, Izbalkanskog recnika-J.F.II-1921, Izhronologijearbanskogvokalizma (Lozanicevaspomenica)- 1922, Ima li cakavskipozajmica u arbanaskomjeziku, arhiv I- 1923, “Ilirskejezicnestudije” Zagreb, 1948, “Lingvistickestudije”, Sarajevo- 1954, “Hymjenëhistorinë e gjuhëshhqipe”, Prishtinë, 1955 etj.

²Henrik Baric, “Hymjenëhistorinë e gjuhëshhqipe”, Prishtinë, 1955, f.45.

³Henrik Baric, “Hymjenëhistorinë e gjuhëshhqipe”, Prishtinë, 1955, f. 34.

Thracian, a replacement that presents a bridge also between Albanian and Armenian languages. The Albanian-Thracian replacement of the Indo-European **r**, is **ri**, e.g.: the old Indian has **krmi**-**h**, while in Albanian it is **krimb**. Bariq brings another fact to show the intermediate connection of Thracian between Albanian and Phrygian-Armenian and that is the palatalizing of Indo-European **a**, while in Phrygian and Armenian there are no traces of this change; **e** for Indo-European **a** is a characteristic of Albanian and Thracian, thus, e.g.: the old German language has **scalm** (infection), while in Albanian it is: **helm** and Thracian **deva-dava**; **Nestos-Nastos**.⁴

Bariq also thinks that partition of three Indo-European gutturals is a common conservative characteristic of **Albanian, Thracian and Armenian languages** which shows, he says, for the previous central position of this group, while palatalizing of labiovelars is one of the common Albanian-Thracian innovations. One common Albanian-Thracian element, says Bariq, is facing **t** in-between **s** and **r**, e.g.: **str**, Albanian **shterpinj**, ind.**srpin**: lat. **serpens**, thracian name of river **Srymon**.⁵

There are matches between **Albanian and Armenian** also concerning the Indo-European reflexes of the consonantal group **sk-shk**, e.g.: alb. **bashke**: irland. old **bask**: alb. **mushk**: ind. old **muskah**; **shkas**: at. **scateo**: alb. **shkop**, lat. **Scapus**.⁶

Also in the field of morphology Bariq thinks that there are common points between **Albanian – Thracian – Armenian**, therefore he presents some examples to document it.

Once more we'll come back to the classification of languages in satem and centum, willing to add that, as the recent records show, this group started to fluctuate, especially after the discovery of Tocharian and Hethytian, therefore we cannot be categorical on the view that Albanian belongs to satem group and Illyrian belongs to centum group, and use this to separate these two languages in two opposing camps.

Professor Çabej said that “the way of handling Indo-European palatals doesn't consist of a reason to link the Albanian language with the Thracian, in order to detach it from the Illyrian, just like no one can detach Spanish from Latin, only because, for example the Latin word centum in the first language gave ciento (thiento) and on the second it gave cent, because the Latin guttural in this language ended in spirant”.⁷

Our researcher Çabej, accepting the theory for the link with the northern languages, added some elements, not without weight for the proximity of Albanian and Celt and Armenian or some with other languages. Çabej presented a general modification: Albanian is a satem language with specific links to the northern and southern languages (having in mind Greek and Armenian languages).⁸

From what was said above, we can draw a conclusion that dividing the languages in centum and satem today, is not a sustainable argument, which would divide Albanian from Illyrian and bring it closer, as Bariq did, to Thracian or any other language.

Despite H. Bariq and his views on the origin of Albanian language and its link with Thracian, the most renowned linguists like G. Meyer, stated that “it is not those that approve the Illyrian source of Albanians that have to confirm this, but it is those that deny it. Compiling these

⁴Po aty, f. 37.

⁵Po aty.

⁶Po aty, f. 34

⁷BahriBeci, Diskutimenë: Studimeilire, II, Prishtinë, 1974, f. 324.

⁸RexhepIsmajli, Artikujmbigjuhëshqipe, Prishtinë, 1978. f.11

historical arguments it is visible that in one side Albanians didn't settle late in their present habitats, on the other side it results that in this area in the ancient times, Illyrians were living here.⁹

Similarly, P. Kretschmer expresses by saying: "the thought that Albanian language presents the newest stage of the ancient Illyrian language or as G. Meyer expresses more maturely, of an Illyrian dialect, is according to the entire situation closest to the mind, so that man would have to present very hard evidence to overthrow this."¹⁰

While, Prof. Çabej, in regards to the origin of Albanian language, on another occasion expressed that "all the arguments presented against the succession of Albanian, through which was thought to prove the impossibility of these lingual connections, don't stand to face a deep critical review of development, in the light of the known facts. There are no convincing lingual reasons that would force us to exclude the Illyrian origin of the Albanian language".¹¹

Since the Albanian people live in the region where Illyrians used to live and keep the same name which is mentioned ever since Ptolemy, in the II century a.c., this match of territories and this continuation of its name pushed the researches since early times to see if there are meeting points between the today's Albanians and ancient Illyrians.

For one group of scientists the expansion of Albanians in the regions where once Illyrians used to live, as well as preservation of their name throughout centuries, was very important arguments for their establishment in these areas. For the other group of scientists displace the area of establishment in other places, such as: Pannonia, Mezi, Dacia, Thracian, Dardania, etc. thus, raising disagreements in regards to exact **determination** of this area. The disagreements were in regards to the **time when Albanian language was established**, therefore, the Albanian language time is sometimes around some centuries before Christ, sometimes centuries after, sometimes even after the Slavs arrived in Balkans.

The renowned researcher Weigand presented numerous arguments according to which Albanians cannot be autochthonous in these regions. Against the Albanian native was also Parvani, whose views were supported with lingual arguments of the other researcher S. Puscariu. V. Parvani thinks that Albanians are not native in these regions, but they came there around III and IV century a.c. just before the Slavs, they came down from the Carpathian foothills through Transylvania step – by – step, as nomad shepherds to the southern and then western part of the Balkan peninsula.¹²

Opposing the autochthony of Albanians were also researchers like: A.M.Selishqev, P.Skok, I. Popoviç, etc. A.M.Selishqev, Russian author, tried to prove through lingual arguments that Slavs came earlier in Albania and when they came in this region, on the VII and VII century and settled in the Greek-Roman Albania, meaning the Albanian coast, didn't meet the Albanians there but met a Roman population.¹³ But, if there really was a Roman nation living in the Albanian coast, until the VII-VII century, this would be proven by the Roman topology, but since it is missing then this view is overruled.

⁹EqremÇabej: Studimegjuhësore, III, Prishtinë, 1978, f. 29-30

¹⁰Po aty, f.29

¹¹RadosavKaticic: Antroponimia ilire dhe etnogeneza e shqiptarëve, në Jehona, nr. 2, Shkup, f. 68.

¹²EqremÇabej, Problemi i vendit të formimit të gjuhës shqipe, Jehona, nr, VII, Shkup, 1972, f. 58

¹³Osman Myderrizi, Toponomastikajonë dhe disa çështjetë historisë së popullit tonë, në: Konferenca e II e studimeve albanologjike, Tiranë, 1968, f. 163

When speaking about the establishing place of Albanians, researchers like Decev, Georgiev, etc. place this nation, Albanians, in Dacia, Mezia, etc. and call them as successors of Dacomans, who after coming down from the above mentioned regions, very lately settled on the today's regions and for this matter, these researches say, that they are convinced by many lingual facts, which are preserved even today in Albanian language.

When HenrikBariq speaks about the **place of establishment of the Albanian nation**, he expresses that it is of no importance the fact that the Albanian nation lives in the territory previously inhabited by Illyrians, because, this author says, that this identification has no argument power, because the Albanians could flood and assimilate the natives, so they expanded in the Illyrian territory and the history never wrote anything about it.

Professor Çabej is against the view of researchers which we mentioned above, who accept that migration of Albanian nation from different regions in their today's territory, here is how he expresses on this matter, that it would be an excluding phenomenon that the emigration and settling of a whole population inside the sphere of Roman world, as well as in the broad light of history, could occur without being noticed by history,¹⁴ without anything being written by the Greek, Roman or Slav chronicler.

Concerning the centuries of silence of ancient authors in regards to Illyrians, H. Bariq says that he thinks that "the reason why historical sources don't mention anything in this regard, is easily explainable by the political and military unimportance of the coming of new shepherd mass in their new country, for a long time they don't come in intimate contact with the agricultural and civic population, since during the summer they lived in the mountains and during the winter coming down to valleys, far from the communication net, just like the Romanian shepherds of the historical era."¹⁵

But Professor Çabej doesn't agree with this view, therefore, he expressed that "concerning the ex silentio argument, according to which Albanians were not mentioned in today's residencies before the XI century we will say that not mentioning doesn't necessarily mean that they were not present there, this circumstance has the historical reason that the Albanian tribes didn't achieve to create a single state, nor did they achieve a general level of politics of that importance that they would be mentioned by others".¹⁶

Also the other argument, **the connection of the ancient name Illyria – Albanoi** and the name of today's Arber's has no meaning, says Bariq, because Albanians as newcomers they could inherit this name from the ancient nation, from Illyrians, just like Italians borrowed their name from Toscana. By this, Bariq tried to tell how unsustainable the argumentation of the Illyrian – Albanian link is by the name of the nation, therefore, he adds, that just like the late coming Albanians borrowed the name from Illyrians, also Illyrians borrowed the name Albanian from the ancient non Indo-European nations, thus, from Mediterranean nations.¹⁷

Bariq says that the other argument by which it is said that the Albanian language preserved many Illyrian words, does not stand because these words, he thinks, are relicts preserved in the Albanian language just like Celt words preserved in French.

¹⁴EqremÇabej: Problemi I venditëformimittëgjuhësshqipe, në: Jehona, VII, Prishtinë, fq. 61

¹⁵HenrikBariq: Hymjenëhistorinë e gjuhësshqipe, Prishtinë, 1955, fq. 71

¹⁶EqremÇabej: Disamendimembimarrëdhënietgjuhësorerumuno-shqiptare, në: Studimefilologjike, 1, Prishtinë, 1975, fq. 52

¹⁷HenrikBariq: Lingvistickestudije, Sarajevo, 1954, f. 7

Regarding the place of establishment, Bariq says, that since Albanian language preserved elements from borrowings of the ancient Greek, then this language must have been close to Greek, this is also presented by the important news provided by the topology and according to these facts he draws the conclusion that the place of establishment of the Albanian nation is the ancient Dardania. In order to further strengthen this view he brings many other facts, like explanation of many ancient names of Dardania, through Albanian language, such as: the name of Nish city - ancient Naissus, could be explained only through the phonetic laws of Albanian language, despite the view that many Slav researchers think that this name can only be explained through Slav rules. Based on the above details presented, Bariq draws a conclusion that the Balkan country of Albanian nation was Dardania – Peonia, Illyrian provinces where the Thracian – Albanians settled, where the first Albanian – Thracian – Illyrian symbiosis took place. Bariq says that the Albanian – Romanian links show it as well, relations created since both nations were so close and this could only happen in Dardania.¹⁸

Concerning the *time when Albanians settled in their historic country*, Bariq says that they must have settled inside the Balkan Peninsula wave after wave, but not later than the VI century. By this attitude, Bariq overruled the opinion of Selisheviq and other Slav authors, who said that Albanians came to these regions later, even after Slavs. So, this deeply erroneous opinion, is opposed by Bariq through lingual tools and he said that this is proven by topography presented by rules of Albanian language, rules that occurred before Slavs of south came to the historical territory of Albanians. In favor of this opinion, he presents many facts, like the name of river Buna, which anciently was Barbanna, says Bariq, who through rules of Albanian language got its present form, so in the beginning we had Barbanna-Buna, while in Slav it evolved like this: Barbanna, is supposed that the intermediate form of this name was bauana, from which by the passing of Slav **a** to **o**, like in some other occasions, e.g.: Salona-solin; as well as passing of **v** into **j**, like in the case of Motavica – Motajica, so this is how the Serbian form of Bojana was established. Losing the **r** in Barbanna name might be explained by the dissimilation of the nasal **r**.¹⁹

Bariq says that P. Skoku's opinion is not right, found on his book titled *“SlovenstvoiromanstvonaJadranskimotocima”*, Zagreb, 1950, saying that **r** in word Barbanna was a grapheme erroneously written by the first writers, who present us this name and the first name was (Barbanna). Bariq thinks that this opinion of Skok doesn't stand, because the name of river Buna in ancient was Barbanna, an Indo-European name made of part “barb” meaning mud and if this is compared then it is close to the name of an island “Metu-barbis” meaning in the middle of mud, says Jokli and Bariq. These two researchers find another analogy between this name and the name of the river in France “Barbana”.²⁰

Through the examples we presented above, Bariq attempted to show that even though Albanians are not native and that they came late to these regions, they nevertheless came to these regions before Slavs did and when Slavs arrived here they met Albanians.

What can we say in the end for the Thracian theory in general, as well as for the Thracian-Dacian-Phrygian theory of Bariq in particular?

We think that the arguments presented by Professor Çabej and other supporters of the Illyrian thesis, foreign and Albanian, enormously peeled the thesis of Thracian origin of the Albanian nation, in that extent that only a few researchers remained backing up that theory.

¹⁸H. Bariq, Hymjenëhistorinë e gjuhëshqipe, Prishtinë, 1955, f. 49-50

¹⁹H. Bariq, Lingvistickestudije, Sarajevo, 1955, f. 28

²⁰Po aty, f. 45

Contradictory to the Thracian thesis, says this author, speak the *geographical, historical, lingual, etc. arguments*.

Geographically this thesis is unacceptable, because “the distance between Albania and the historical land of Thracian people, or its tribes, like Dacian or Mesian, is pretty vast and in order to fill it would require many historical reasons.”²¹

Historically the migration of Albanians is unacceptable, since we don’t have information regarding it. “it would be an excluding phenomenon that the emigration and settling of a whole population inside the sphere of Roman world, as well as in the broad light of history, could occur without being noticed by history”.²²

In regards to the place of establishment of the Albanian nation, Çabej expressed, many times, against all those that placed Albanians in a territory such as: Dacia, Thracian, Mesian or a more narrow territory such as: Dardania or Mat, because the ancient toponyms of Albanian, as well as a number of arguments non lingual, confirm that the Albanian nation was established in a much greater territory. While the historical territory of Albanians in Middle Ages, expresses this author, should be considered as a result of a historical shrink and not as a biological expansion.

Lingual, the ancient names of places in Albania may be explained only according to Albanian language, such as: Shkodra, Lezha, Mati, Buna, Vlora, Shkupi, Shtipi, Nishi and many others.

²¹Eqrem Çabej, Disaproblemet e historisë së vjetër të gjuhës shqipe, nr. Kuvendi I i studimeve Albanologjike, Tiranë, 1965, f. 94

²²Eqrem Çabej, Problemi i vendit të formimit të gjuhës shqipe, Jehona, nr. VII, Shkup, 1972, f. 74