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Reviewed Work(s):
   *Kendime Englisht-Sqip or Albanian-English Reader.* by Margaret M. Hasluck

M. E. Durham


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The reading matter provided is highly original and amusing, almost all the tales being written by schoolchildren, some of them very young. They are delightfully naive and recall in some cases other folk-tales, but are full of Albanian local colour.

The English and Albanian versions are on opposite pages, and the translation is literal save where the idiom makes this impossible.

The reading matter is prefaced with a short and clear grammar. Mrs. Hasluck has wisely simplified the sometimes appallingly complicated grammars of her predecessors.

With the exception of the ‘Methodo per te meesuar Engelsche,’ by an Albanian, published in Boston, U.S.A., in 1906, to teach Albanian emigrants to America to speak English, which also contains a simple grammar, a considerable vocabulary and a number of conversations, English-Albanian, Mrs. Hasluck’s, I believe, is the first English-Albanian textbook. It is certainly the only one up to date. Its small handy size should make it an indispensable companion for the traveller in Albania, and the stories should give him an insight into the mind of the people. I give it the North Albanian greeting Tungjhe jete (long life to thee).

M. E. DURHAM.

India.


Among the medley of tribes inhabiting the mountainous regions on the frontiers of Bengal, Assam and Burma are the Lakhers, as they are called by their neighbours the Lushës, or Shendus, as they were known to the Arrakans and to most of our officers in the past, but more correctly, as Mr. Parry tells us, described as Mārska. These people, numbering in all perhaps 50,000, occupy roughly the area within the great bend of the Kaladan river and some adjoining tracts, between the Chittagong Hill Tracts in Bengal and the Chin Hills district in Burma. Until less than a century ago little definite was known of these regions. Their history is a story of constant raids by the hill tribes and of the operations undertaken from time to time to repress them. No permanent security being attained by periodical punitive expeditions, it was eventually decided, with reluctance, to include them within British territory, the Lushai Hills being annexed to Bengal in 1891, and the Chin Hills to Burma in 1896. Subsequently the intermediate area, including the Laker region still left ‘unadministered,’ was brought under control, the last of their villages being attached in 1924 to the Lushai Hills district, of which Mr. Parry held charge from 1924 to 1928. The outstanding value of this monograph, accordingly, lies in the fact that it constitutes a first-hand record by a most competent authority of the life and customs of the tribe outside influences had time to change or modify them.

As in the case of other primitive tribes, such as the Gāgos, Nāgas and Lushës, the Lakhers have been brought under British rule not at their own desire, but in the interest of the adjoining settled areas. A special responsibility for their welfare, therefore, rests upon our Government, and Mr. Parry, in his introductory chapter, gives some sound hints as to the danger of uncalled-for interference with the rights and customs of such peoples, drawing an object-lesson from the ill-effects of such action among the Lushës.

Ethnologically the Lakhers are a branch of the Lai tribe of Chins, and speak a language of the so-called


This little book can be cordially recommended to those wishing to begin the study of the Albanian language.

The dialect is that of Central Albania, which differs somewhat from that of the South and considerably from that of the North, the only one with which I am acquainted. For example, the words used in it for ‘girl’ (golet) and ‘boy’ (qam) I never heard. The words used were chupa or vazl for girl and diale for boy.

But the Central dialect is now in use in the schools and will doubtless become the standard speech in time.

The alphabet used by Mrs. Hasluck was adopted at the Albanian Conference at Monastir in 1908, when, as a result of the Young Turk revolution, the printing of the Albanian language was no longer prohibited by law. Printed it had been, nevertheless, but always under foreign protection. Thus there was no unity. The British and Foreign Bible Society printed certain books of the Bible in a weird alphabet of Greek, Cyrillic and fancy letters, and circulated them. But they were liable to capture by the Turkish authorities, not on religious, but on linguistic grounds. Persons wishing to learn to read Albanian in the South could do so most safely by buying these books. I once helped to sell thirty copies of the book of Genesis in one morning to Moslems, who were all eager to read Potiphar’s wife.

The North had two alphabets—both using Latin characters in various ways. One was protected by Austria, the other by Italy. A third—the oldest—the Jesuits’ alphabet, used Latin and fancy characters. The best was by the Abbot of the Mirdites, Mgr. Premi Dochi, who called on me in state in 1908 to beg me to support his indebtedness in the Preface. A. W.

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which I believe Professor Danil Jones was the first to notice and has investigated very fully, in Scehonua.

Specially welcome features in this book are the section devoted to ‘Salutations’ (pp. 106–110), the Exercises (pp. 120–187), the two vocabularies and the ‘General Suggestions’ at the end. The references (pp. 36, 78) to Fleischer’s Grammar, which is not mentioned elsewhere, should surely have been accompanied by some indication as to date and place of publication. We must suppose it to be included among ‘previous Gă publications,’ to which the author acknowledges his indebtedness in the Preface. A. W.

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