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Abbreviations

1st = First Person
2nd = Second Person
3rd = Third Person
Abl = Ablative
Acc = Accusative
Act = Active
AdjP = Adjectival Phrase
Adm = Admirative
AdvP = Adverbal Phrase
Cond = Conditional
ConjP = Conjunctional Phrase
Dat = Dative
Def = Definite
Fem = Feminine
Fut = Future
Gen = Genitive
Ger = Gerundive
IJP = Interjectional Phrase
Imp = Imperative
Imperf = Imperfect
Inch = Inchoative

Ind = Indicative
Indef = Indefinite
Inf = Infinitive
Jus = Jussive
Masc = Masculine
Mid = Middle
NP = Nominal Phrase
Nom = Nominative
Non-act = Non-active
Opt = Optative
Part = Participle
Pass = Passive
Pl = Plural
Pres = Present
Recip = Reciprocal
Refl = Reflexive
Sg = Singular
Sub = Subjunctive
Sub-Adm = Subjunctive-Admirative
VP = Verbal Phrase
CHAPTER 1

Introduction

1.1 A Sketch of the Country and the People

Albania has a reputation as a land of great natural beauty and romantic remoteness. These two characteristics have made it all the more attractive, mysterious, forbidding, challenging, or exasperating to outsiders, be they travelers, scholars, diplomats, or merchants. For example, in a work he published in 1913, the Croatian scholar Milan von Sufflay called Albania *regio mirabilissima*, "a most singular country" or "a most marvelous country." Others have referred to it as the "Switzerland of the Balkans" or as the "rock garden of southeastern Europe." On the other hand, the country's uncommon isolation from the world, arising generally from its rugged, mountainous terrain, has led foreigners to speak of it as "the Tibet of Europe" or as a country more mysterious than central Africa. It is an attitude that has had currency for centuries. We find it, for instance, in the writings of Edward Gibbon, the great eighteenth-century British historian. Speaking of Albania, Gibbon said that it is "a country within sight of Italy, which is less known than the interior of America."

The remoteness and isolation of the country became practically legendary and all too frequently gave rise to reports and descriptions of the land and the people—even in books and encyclopedias—that were closer to legends than to reality. Perhaps because of its romantic remoteness and other reasons, Albania has exerted a continuous fascination on artists, including poets, playwrights, composers, and more recently film makers and producers of television programs. Shakespeare set his comedy *Twelfth Night* in Illyria—a common name for Albania in former times. Lord Byron, who visited southern Albania in 1810, wrote some stirring lines about her landscape in his poem *Childe Harold*:

Morn dawns and with it stern Albania's hills...
Robed half in mist, bedewed with snowy rills.

In Mozart's comic opera *Cosi fan tutte* the principal male characters, Ferrando and Guglielmo, appear for the most part in disguise as two "Albanian noblemen" in a clever scheme to test the love of their fiancées. (The women fail the test when they succumb to the charms of the Albanians but succeed nevertheless in winning back the love of their men.) In our own time, we find that Peter Ustinov—taking a cue from Shakespeare—set one of his comedies, *Romanoff and Juliet*, in post-World War II Albania. Ustinov's Albania is a somewhat fanciful land but serves him well as a neat laboratory to grapple with and overcome the Cold War enmities between American and Soviet diplomats stationed in that country. Three films dealing with Albania and Albanians are *Five Fingers; Action of the Tiger*, and *The President's Analyst*. All three are action films involving intelligence operations, but the last two lack artistic merit and—as is so often the case where Albania is concerned—tend to give a misleading picture of the country.

What then, are the "basic facts" about Albania, as far as we have knowledge of them? The smallest country in the Balkan Peninsula, Albania is bordered on the north and northeast by Yugoslavia, on the southeast by Greece, and on the west and southwest by the Adriatic and Ionian seas. It lies less than 100 km (60 mi) from Italy at the nearest point of the Strait of Otranto. In area, the country encompasses 28,000 sq km (11,000 sq mi), yet it is bigger than Massachusetts (8,200 sq mi) or any other state in New England except for Maine. Its population in 1976 was about 2,500,000; again, not large at all, yet larger than the combined populations of the three New England states of Vermont, New Hampshire, and Rhode Island, which totaled 2,130,000. The capital of Albania, Tirana, had a population of 190,000 in 1973; all the rest of the nation's cities had populations under 60,000.
For a small country, Albania has a remarkably diverse climate: a semi-tropical zone along the seacoast, warm enough to grow oranges and other citrus fruit, eucalyptus and palm trees; and a hinterland region that is subject to cold, Continental weather patterns, including heavy snowfalls and blizzards in the winter. Most of the country is mountainous, with some of the mountains reaching altitudes of 2,700 m (over 8,000 ft.). The mountain ranges that cover the land have served as a protective shield for the preservation of the nation’s ethnic integrity for centuries.

Albania is an unusually homogeneous nation, from the viewpoint of the ethnic composition of her population. According to the 1961 census, slightly over 95 percent of the population consists of ethnic Albanians. The remainder included 40,000 Greeks (2.4 percent), 15,000 Macedonians and Montenegrins (0.9 percent), 10,000 Vlachs (0.6 percent), and about 10,000 Gypsies. In terms of their physical characteristics, most Albanians are said to belong to the Dinaric group, which is found on the western part of the Balkan Peninsula. As such, they are generally tall, have dark eyes and dark hair and straight or curved noses. These traits are found especially among northern Albanians, generally referred to as Ghegs; they are less common among southern Albanians, generally referred to as Tosks. Before the Second World War, the northern part of the country was very backward compared with the southern part, which, owing in some measure to wider contacts with the outside world, stood at a higher social and economic level. Since the war, however, Albania has made progress in eradicating the imbalance in the development of the two regions.

The Albanians are believed to be the descendants of the Illyrians, who inhabited the Balkans as far back as the second millennium B.C. Many scholars affirm that the Albanians are the oldest of the Balkan peoples and that their ancestors, the Illyrians, were in the Balkans centuries before the Slavs began to migrate into the area. The consensus of scholars at present is that the Illyrians were indigenous in the Balkans and not—as some writers have argued in the past—a people who migrated there from another part of the world. Ethnically, the Albanians are neither Slavs nor Greeks but a distinct ethnic group, although like their neighbors they are a part of the larger family of European peoples.

A curious item about Albania is her very name, that is, the etymology of the word "Albania." The country was known as Illyria in ancient times and until the eleventh century A.D. Since the name "Albania" appears in thirteenth-century Latin dictionaries, the term probably was in use even earlier. During the Middle Ages the Albanians called their country Arbër or Arban and referred to themselves as Arbërësh or Arbanësh. To this day, there are communities of Albanians who migrated to Greece and Italy, in the wake of foreign invasions and pressures, who know themselves by those names. According to the Albanian scholar Koniza, the term "Albania" did not displace "Illyria" completely until the end of the fourteenth century. The term is believed to derive from "Albanoi," the name of an Illyrian tribe in what is now north-central Albania, which was first mentioned in the second century A.D. by Ptolemy, the Alexandrian astronomer. The term slowly spread to other Illyrian tribes until its usage became universal among all the Albanian people.

Still more curious is the fact that the Albanians today call themselves Shqiptarë rather than Albanians, and their country Shqipëri rather than Albania. The two terms came into use following Albania's occupation by the Turks in the fifteenth century, but why and in what manner this occurred is still a mystery.

The Albanian language is a part of the Indo-European family of languages. It is not a Slavic, Latin, or Germanic language, nor is it Hellenic. It forms instead a subgroup of its own, in the same manner as the Armenian and Iranian languages constitute subgroups of their own, within the larger, all-inclusive Indo-European group. Opinions vary concerning the exact origin of the Albanian language, but there is practically no dispute over the thesis that it is related to the Illyrian and Thracian languages.

Until late in the nineteenth century, the teaching and publication of the Albanian language were forbidden by the Turkish authorities and Greek ecclesiastics who collaborated
with them during the Turkish occupation of the country. As a consequence, most outsiders, including some respected authors in the West, had the mistaken notion that the Albanian people lacked a literary tradition; in other words, that they had no written language. But in fact the Albanian language has a literary history that goes back to the Middle Ages. A fourteenth-century Dominican friar, Father Brocardus, noted in a pamphlet he published in 1332 that "the Albanians have a language quite other than the Latins," but "they use the Latin letters in all their books." Apart from a fragmentary document in Albanian, published in 1462 by Pal Engjelli (Paulus Angelus), archbishop of Durazzo (Durres), the first book in the Albanian language—as far as we know—was published in 1555. Its author was Dom Gjon Buzuku, and it bears the title Meshari (Missal). The book is a compendium of church rituals. A copy of it is housed in the Vatican Library in Rome. In 1635, Frang Bardhi (Franciscus Blancus) published in Rome his Dictionarium latino-epiroticum, the first known Latin-Albanian dictionary (the term iepiroticum, from Greek Epirus "mainland", referred to the southern part of Illyria, an area including what is now southern Albania and northwestern Greece). The evidence shows, moreover, that the "study of Albanian grammar has a tradition of 350 years" and includes works by Bardhi (1606-1643), Andre Bogdani (1600-1685), Nilo Katalanos (1637-1694), and others.

Writings in Albanian were scanty in the eighteenth century but increased considerably in the last century with the advent of the national awakening among the Albanians in Italy, Egypt, Romania, Greece, and Bulgaria. Until the twentieth century, this literature was published in a variety of foreign scripts, most of it in Latin and Greek. In 1908, however, leaders of the Albanian national and cultural revival held a congress in Monastir—now Bitola in the Yugoslav part of Macedonia—that laid the basis for the adoption of the Roman alphabet currently in use in Albania.

Like her language and people, a number of Albania’s cities and towns bear witness to the antiquity of the country. For example, the nation’s leading seaport, Durrës, was founded in 627 B.C. Known in antiquity as Dyrrachium (Dyrrahion) or Epidamnos, the town was the site of the decisive battle in 48 B.C. between Julius Caesar and Pompey. It is alleged, moreover, that Saint Paul preached there in the course of his missionary work in the Balkans. Two other very old towns are Shkodër (Skodra in antiquity) in northern Albania, which dates from the fourth century B.C. and was at one time the capital of Illyria; and the seaport of Vlorë in the south, whose bitumen mines have been in operation since the days of the Roman Empire, when the town was known as Aulon. Pojan, a mere village today near Vlorë, was an important center of culture and education in pre-Christian Albania. A city-state, it had then a population of some 40,000. Apollonia, as Pojan was known in its days of power and renown, was founded in 588 B.C. in honor of Apollo, god of beauty, poetry, and music. Aristotle mentions it in his Politics (book 4, chapter 4), saying that in Apollonia "the freemen...rule over the many who are not free;" in other words, the city had an oligarchic form of government.

In their long history the Albanians and their Illyrian ancestors were victims of numerous invasions and occupations by foreign armies. The Romans conquered Illyria in 167 B.C. and ruled it for over five and a half centuries, until A.D. 395, when the Roman Empire was partitioned into East and West, and Illyria became a part of the Byzantine Empire. The consequences of Roman rule are evident in the Albanian language, which was strongly influenced by Latin, and in the traces of the celebrated Via Egnatia that extended from Durrës to Ohrid, then to Salonika, Byzantium (Istanbul), and finally to Jerusalem. A few miles of this road reportedly are still in use in modern Albania, a testimony to the engineering genius of Rome. On the other hand, the Illyrians, too, exerted their influence on the Roman Empire. For nearly one hundred years (A.D. 247-361), emperors of Illyrian origin, among them Claudius II, Aurelian, Diocletian, and Probus, ruled the empire.

For an interval between the fall of the Roman Empire in A.D. 476 and the fall of the Byzantine Empire in 1453, Albania gained recognition for the first time in her history as a distinct political entity under her own name. This happened in the thirteenth century, when Charles I of Anjou (1227-1285), king of Naples, took an army across the Adriatic and occupied Durrës in 1272. He then formed the "Regnum Albaniae" (kingdom of Albania) and assumed

1.1 A Sketch of the Country and the People
for himself the title of "Rex Albaniae" (king of Albania). His kingdom lasted for nearly a century.

The most brilliant chapter in the history of Albania was written in the middle of the fifteenth century, when Gjergj Kastrioti Skënderbeu (George Castrioti Scanderbeg, 1405-1468), Albania’s national hero, waged a successful 25-year-long struggle against the Ottoman Turks. Rebellling against the Turkish occupation of Albania, Skënderbeu seized power in 1443 and with the combined support of the nobility and the peasants, plus foreign aid, kept Albania largely free of Turkish control until his death in 1468. The foreign aid came from "the Papacy, the Kingdom of Naples, the Venetian Republic and the City of Ragusa—in short, the entire Catholic world whose cause he championed." During this period, he repulsed two major expeditions that were led in person by two great sultans: the first, by Murad II in 1449-1450; and the second by Mehmed II—the Conqueror of Constantinople (1453)—in 1466-1467. The heroic resistance of the Albanians attracted widespread attention in Europe and led Pope Nicholas V (1447-1453) to call Skënderbeu "Champion of Christendom." The admiration of the Vatican for Albania’s brilliant soldier-statesman is reflected also in the remark by Pope Calixtus III (1453-1458) that "...he stopped the fury of the Turkish tide and prevented it from overrunning Christian Europe."

The high estimation of Skënderbeu by Catholic Rome was not without foundation. For after crushing organized Albanian resistance in 1479, "about 10 thousand Turkish soldiers started from Vlorë and landed in Italy, where they captured the citadel of Otranto" in the kingdom of Naples. The Turks were driven out of Otranto in 1481.

During the nearly five centuries of life under the Turks, the Albanian people continued to take up arms from time to time against the occupiers. At the same time, many Albanians took advantage of opportunities available to them to rise to positions of great power and influence in the administration of the Ottoman Empire. At least twenty-seven grand viziers or "prime ministers" of the empire were of Albanian origin—a remarkably large number in proportion to the size of the Albanian population when measured against the total population of the empire.

The modern Albanian state dates from 1912, when the venerable aristocrat Ismail Qemal Bey proclaimed Albania independent from the Turks in the city of Vlorë on November 28 of that year. A stirring cry went up from the delegates who had assembled there from all parts of the country as Qemal raised Albania’s flag, the same flag under which Skënderbeu had fought the Turks nearly five centuries earlier. Following recognition of the new state by the Great Powers of Europe in 1913, Wilhelm Wied, a German prince and Prussian army captain, was installed as Albania’s ruler, a move intended to orient Albania toward western Europe and western civilization, in an attempt to overcome Albania’s image abroad as an oriental country. The prince arrived in Albania in March 1914 but left six months later in the wake of the turmoil created in the Balkans and Europe by the outbreak of the First World War. The new nation experienced the trauma of the invading armies of Serbia, Greece, Italy, and Austria during the war and threats of dismemberment after the war.

In June 1924, roughly ten years after Prince Wied quit his throne, Bishop Fan S. Noli, an American-educated clergyman from Boston and founder of the Albanian Orthodox Church in America, was proclaimed prime minister of Albania. But like Wied’s, Noli’s reign came to an end six months later (December 1924) when Ahmed Zog, a tribal leader from the Mat region in north-central Albania, drove the bishop out of the country. In 1928 Zog proclaimed himself king of Albania and ruled the country until 1939. On April 7, 1939, Benito Mussolini, to whom he had become increasingly indebted economically and militarily, ordered Italian troops into Albania and forced King Zog into exile. He died in Paris in 1961, leaving behind Queen Geraldine and their only heir, Leka, who is currently the pretender to the Albanian throne.

We will conclude this sketch of Albania and her people with a note on the religion and character of Albanians. Christianity appeared on Albanian soil about the second century, when mention is made of the existence of underground Christian groups in Dyrarahion (Durrës) and Aulon (Vlorë). It was therefore "during the Roman rule that Christianity was introduced into Albania." For a while, the new religion had to compete with the cult of Mithra, the Persian god
of light, which had spread into Albania. By the fourth century, however, Christianity emerged victorious and became the official religion of the land. The event reflected the triumph of the Christian faith over all the Roman Empire, in consequence of Emperor Constantine's proclamation of Christianity in 313 as the official religion of the empire.

Although Albania became a part of the Eastern (Byzantine) Roman Empire in 395, it belonged to the Roman see until 734 when Leo I, emperor of Byzantium, detached it from Rome and gave it to the patriarchate of Constantinople. In the course of the centuries that followed, Constantinople's hold on Albania weakened progressively, with the result that by the fifteenth century "Albania was preponderantly Roman Catholic." In other words, when Skënderbeu rebelled against the Turks, Albania was a Catholic country. During the Ottoman occupation of their country, Albanians turned increasingly to the Islamic faith. By the twentieth century, the majority of the Albanian population had become Moslem, a condition that is unique among the nations of Europe. According to the 1945 census in Albania, 72.8 percent of the country's population was Moslem, 17.1 percent Orthodox Christian, and 10.1 percent Catholic.

The character of the Albanian people is the product, of course, of many forces: historical, political, geographic, social, and economic. The mountain fastness of their land tended to isolate them from social and commercial intercourse with the outside world. This, plus the fact that they lived largely free of control by a central government through most of their history, helped to breed in them a strong spirit of independence and individualism. According to Konitza, individualism is "the most conspicuous characteristic of the Albanians, and one without the knowledge of which their history remains a mystery." The fact, too, that Albania has experienced waves of conquests and domination by foreign powers through many centuries has made Albanians highly suspicious of neighboring states and sensitive to the slightest threats to their independence and ethnic identity.

Yet, on a person-to-person level, Albanians are known for their hospitality to strangers, as well as to one another. Edith Durham, an English author, illustrates this character trait of the Albanians with a story from personal experience. While traveling in northern Albania in the early part of our century, she visited the mud hut of a poor mountainee. She was greeted with courtly grace by her ragged host, who said to her: "We are poor. Bread, salt, and our hearts is all we can offer, but you are welcome to stay as long as you wish."

A century earlier, another English author, the poet Lord Byron, wrote from southern Albania to friends back home that he found Albanians to be "brave, unquestionably honest and loyal," and that the Albanian women were "very beautiful." Indeed, Albanians have a reputation for their sense of loyalty, as well as of pride and honor. It was not by chance that Albanians were chosen to serve as the bodyguards of the sultans of Turkey. This refined sense of honor of the Albanian people, which they call besa, is rooted in the customs and traditions of their society. It is based on the Code of Lek Dukagjin, a fifteenth-century Albanian feudal lord and contemporary of Skënderbeu, who formulated the body of unwritten, customary laws that governed the lives of Albanian highlanders until recent times.

To be sure, Albanians are afflicted with vices as well, as their detractors have been quick to point out. The late Soviet leader Khrushchev, for example, complained of the stubborness of the Albanians, using as evidence his dealings with Albania's communist leaders. Others have accused them of being a mercenary people, quick-tempered, violent, ruthless, boorish, and unforgiving toward those who offend or injure them.

Whatever the accuracy or validity of this tableau of Albanian character traits, the significant fact is that, despite their small numbers, they have managed to preserve their language, culture, and ethnic identity; in short, to survive as a distinct ethnic group in the face of overwhelming odds. If survival is a virtue, that is no small achievement. In any case, it is probably just this particular mixture of attractive and unattractive qualities, of virtues and vices, in the makeup of their character that makes the Albanians a people of more than usual interest and fascination to the outside world.

1.1 A Sketch of the Country and the People
1.2 The Albanian Language

Albanian is the language spoken by approximately five million people, the majority of whom identify themselves as shqiptarë who speak a language they call shqip, a word which is also an adverb meaning "to speak" clearly; the Albanian-speakers of Italy and Sicily refer to themselves as arbëreshë, and they call their language by the same name. There are some two and a half million Albanian speakers in the present country of Albania proper and almost two million more in adjacent areas of Yugoslavia: a million and a half forming the majority population of the Socialist Autonomous Province of Kosovo, which forms part of the Socialist Republic of Serbia, and half a million more in Macedonia and Montenegro. There are estimated to be an additional third of a million identifiable Albanian speakers in southern Italy (80,000) and in southern Greek villages (50,000), as well as small enclaves in Bulgaria (1000), the Ukraine (perhaps 5000), Romania, and Turkey; in the United States there are some tens of thousands of Albanian speakers, mostly centered in and around the cities of Boston, New York, Philadelphia, Detroit, and Chicago.

Like Greek and Armenian, Albanian forms an independent branch of the Indo-European language family, coordinate with the Germanic, Italic, Balto-Slavic (with which it has some special genetic affinities), Celtic, and Indo-Iranian sub-families. Scholars have argued at various times for its Thracian, Phrygian or Illyrian ancestry, but only the last of these is still advanced by serious scholars. Because the language shares so many structural and lexical features with other Balkan languages, and because its lexicon has so many elements borrowed from Turkish (during the 454-year domination of the area by the Turks), Latin, and Romance languages, its identity as an independent branch of Indo-European is not immediately apparent to an observer, and its identification as Indo-European was not established until relatively late (1854) in the nineteenth century search for European language affinities. For more information about the genetic and areal relationships of Albanian, and for an extensive bibliography pertaining to the language, see the article by Eric Hamp, "Albanian," in Volume 9, Linguistics in Western Europe, of the series Current Trends in Linguistics under the editorship of Thomas A. Sebeok, published by Mouton in the Hague, 1972.

1.2.1 Dialects and Standard Literary Albanian

Albanian is spoken in a large number of varieties, conventionally and roughly divided into two chief dialect groups: a group north of the river Shkumbini called Gheg and a group south of the Shkumbini called Tosk. In general the two groups can be distinguished by pervasive differences in phonology (e.g., Ghegs speakers employ phonological distinctions of vowel length and nasality while Tosk speakers do not; Ghegs preserve h in many words in which Tosks have introduced r; Ghegs have monophthongs in many cases where Tosks have diphthongs), morphology (e.g., Ghegs use imperfect tense forms ending in -sha and -she where Tosks have -nja and -nje), syntax (e.g., Ghegs form infinitives with the preposition me while Tosks use the preposition për), and lexicon (Gheg dialects have relatively more Turkish and Slavic and fewer modern Greek borrowed words than Tosk dialects do). The dialects of Albanian spoken in Italy, Sicily, and Greece reflect the Tosk origin of their speakers centuries ago, whereas the dialect of Borgo Erizzo on the Dalmatian coast of Yugoslavia reflects the Gheg origin of that Albanian enclave. In other parts of the world where Albanian is still spoken it is still possible to discern whether the speakers are of Gheg or Tosk origin.

Since the second World War, numerous attempts have been made in Albania--and supported by Albanian speakers in other countries--to agree on a single variety of the language to serve as a standard language for the country, and those attempts have had a considerable amount of success, judging from the attempts made by speakers in and out of Albania proper to follow the norms prescribed for this standard. Of course, no language ever achieves perfect standardization, and speakers and writers of Standard Albanian (called by the Albanians themselves "Literary Albanian") display considerable variety in their interpretation of what the standard is. The movement towards greater standardization, however, continues on a massive
scale. In the early 1970's the publication in Tiranë, the capital of Albania, followed by republication in Prishtinë, the capital of Kosovo (in Yugoslavia), of a book of orthographical rules, Dërcjshkrimi i gjuhës shqipe, followed by a widely distributed, authoritative orthographic dictionary in 1976, Fjalari drejtsëshkrimor i gjuhës shqipe, created (and reflected) a considerable degree of phonological normalization as well as spelling reform. The possibility of attaining a standard language with a degree of dialectal uniformity at least as great as for the other European languages now seems well within sight.

1.2.2 Phonology and Orthography

As for all other languages with a written literary tradition, the relationship between the way Albanian is written and the way it is spoken is quite complex. It is quite old-fashioned in language teaching to present the sounds of a language as if they were oral representatives of the "true" language, which is itself something written down and hence visual. Linguists have stressed for almost a century now that language is something spoken, that what is written down is only a partial representation of the "true" spoken language. Thus it smacks of archaic and ignorant confusion to say that a letter or group of letters "has" a particular sound in a language, rather than saying that a given sound or phoneme (a sound unit distinct from other sound units in the language) has a particular traditional visual representation among certain users of the language over a particular expanse of time and space.

Nevertheless, because of special conditions applying to the Albanian language at this moment in its history and to the needs of the student of the language now, it will be convenient in this book to suspend our sophistication about language a bit and to pretend that Standard ("Literary") Albanian is primarily a written language and only secondarily a spoken one. The special conditions calling for this special treatment are these:

Albanian has been spoken for many hundreds of years over an area and under political conditions that precluded easy and frequent communication among large numbers of its speakers. As a result, as local differences arose in one area in pronunciation, grammar, and vocabulary use, those differences were not shared by speakers in other areas. Normalization of these differences and development of a naturally dominant single variety of the language that might have taken place in a dominant cultural center was not possible because no such center could form, given the unfavorable political conditions in Albanian-speaking areas through the centuries. The present system for writing Albanian, an orthography using a homogeneous, phonetically based, Latin alphabet, dates only from 1908 when a group of influential Albanians meeting in the so-called Congress of Manastir (now Bitola in the Yugoslav part of Macedonia) adopted it as one of two acceptable ways of writing the language (the other was a Turkish-based alphabet). In 1916-1917 the Literary Commission of Shkodër (Komisia Letrare e Shkodrës) codified the main conclusions of language scholars formulated during the period of national awakening. The Commission reiterated the cardinal principle of the Congress of Manastir, that the orthography of the language be as phonetic as possible, and thus in effect sanctioned different orthographies for the two sets of dialects spoken by the Ghegs and Tosks—roughly speaking, Albanians living north and south of the Shkumbini River, respectively. On the other hand, the Literary Commission proposed that a national literary language be adopted preserving as much as possible of what was common to the various literary variants of Albanian, while discarding as much as possible features that stigmatized the more aberrant variants. Their proposal was that the dialect of Elbasan be adopted, with some refinements, as the basis of the new standard language. That proposal, approved by the Kongresi Arsimor i Lushnjës (Educational Congress of Lushnjë) in 1920, became the basis of Albanian orthography until the early years of postwar Albania. The Commission did not, however, succeed in creating the uniform orthography, inasmuch as the mechanisms available were insufficient to put the decisions into effect. While the southern Gheg of Elbasan was officially taught as the standard in the only teacher's training school in Elbasan, the school did not have sufficient influence to induce Albanians in general to give up their own varieties of the language in their public use of Albanian; as a result, before the 1950's the prevailing practice was for each writer to spell
Albanian words as he pronounced them, partially modified by his memory of spellings by writers he respected and by what he may have been taught in school.

When the present government of Albania came into power in the 1940's, no one natural variety of the language could be found to be the obvious choice as the standard which every educated user of the language should strive to master. There had been no clear domination of the literary, commercial, or political life of Albanians by speakers of any distinct variety or varieties which would form a natural base for standardization. It was realized early in the regime that no single variety of Albanian then spoken naturally by some group of Albanians could simply be adopted as the standard variety without antagonizing speakers of other varieties. As time passed, Tosk (southern Albanian) varieties predominated in official and semi-official publications; by the time formal decisions were made governing official standardization, the de facto general public usage had already established that the new standard language would contain individual elements from several dialectal varieties, with some features shared among both Tosk and Gheg (northern Albanian) dialects, many features common to most Tosk varieties, and a few features (mostly individual words and morphemes [=word constituents]) from Gheg. In 1952 the Albanian Writers' Union resolved henceforth to use Tosk in publications rather than to maintain two standard literary dialects as before. While this had an important effect on publications in Albania itself, it was not accepted by the almost equal number of Albanians outside the country; furthermore, the decision was sometimes honored merely by using Tosk spellings to write blatantly Gheg sentences. In 1956 an orthography (Ortografia e gjuhës shqipe), treated in some detail the problems of unification or standardization of the literary variants in existence at the time.

Since the late 1960's efforts have increased to establish formally and in detail what the standard language should be. The most effective step toward standardization was taken in 1967, with the publication of a set of orthographic rules: Rregullat e drejthshkrimit të shqipës. The completion of this project served as the foundation for drafting in the definitive form the orthography of a uniform national standard language. In 1968 the Linguistic Conference of Prishtinë (Konsulta gjuhësore e Prishtinës) in Kosovo, Yugoslavia, officially adopted the "literary language" in use in Albania at the expense of their own regional standard Gheg.

From November 20 to 25, 1972, the Congress of Albanian Orthography (Kongresi i Drejthshkrimit të Gjuhës Shqipe) convened in Tiranë under the auspices of the Institute of Linguistics and Literature and the State University of Tiranë. The Congress formulated the principles and rules of standard Albanian orthography as developed up to that time. The conclusions and guidelines of the Congress were subsequently published and widely distributed in a volume under the title Drejthshkrimi i gjuhës shqipe (The Orthography of the Albanian Language). The year 1976 marks the publication of Fjalori drejthshkrimit e gjuhës shqipe (Dictionary of Albanian Orthography), under the auspices of the Albanian Academy of Sciences and the Institute of Language and Literature. The dictionary contains some 32,000 entries, not only establishing standard forms for those entries, but deciding their grammatical inflections and, to a certain extent, their syntactic uses as well.

The effects of all the moves towards standardization are now evident throughout the Albanian-speaking world. However, as with standard languages established for a far longer time than Albanian, it is still often the case (almost always in speech) that an Albanian's local provenience is evident when he writes or speaks at some length. The language editorship (even to the extent of censorship) of public language in all the media in both Albania and the adjacent Albanian-speaking areas seems to be more effective than many students of human culture imagined was possible in such a previously linguistically tolerant society. People who use Albanian self-consciously—teachers, radio announcers, actors, editors, etc.—use the standard variety now in official activities to the utmost of their abilities. Local and regional varieties survive, of course, in intimate conversation and unpublished writing, but that is not so different from the situation in other, well-established standard languages in the world.

For Albanian the pattern of creating a standard language is being shortened in comparison with the pattern that has obtained in other European languages, in which a dominant spoken
variety determined a written variety which in turn influenced new spoken standards. In Albanian we are seeing the promulgation of a somewhat artificial (in the sense that it represents the speech of no particular group of speakers) written standard in the process of influencing speakers of the language both in their written and oral uses of the language. For that reason we cannot say, for instance, that the sound [θ] (represented by th in the English word *ether*) is represented by *dh* in the Albanian word *madh*, because there is no general agreement among Albanian speakers about the pronunciation of that word. For the practical purposes of this reference book, we shall therefore use the old-fashioned device of saying that *dh* at the end of syllables "is pronounced" by southern Albanians as [θ] or by northern Albanians as [ð] (the sound of *th* in the English word *ether*). Such a description will be an oversimplification of the actual complex facts of the matter, but will allow the student to assign some phonetic value to the written symbols. As in other old-fashioned accounts, the student is advised here that the best way of learning to pronounce the language is to listen to the way educated speakers of the language pronounce it. While that advice may lead to confusion in many details—since at present, "educated" speakers of Albanian will display sharp differences in their pronunciations—as time passes and broad expansion of communication among people from different areas increases (it has already increased enormously through radio, television, and the simple movement of large numbers of people created by industrialization and urbanization), we can expect that eventually standard spoken Albanian will be as clearly defined as standard written Albanian is now. That is not to say that differences in speaking and writing the language will eventually disappear in Albanian—we have no evidence in *any* language that such ever happens with real languages—but only that it will be easier to distinguish standard pronunciations from non-standard. To a small extent that can be done already in Albanian (e.g., speakers who use strongly nasalized vowels can be identified by other speakers as using non-standard pronunciations), but without a solid empirical basis for determining how Albanian speakers actually judge phonetic realizations different from their own.

The Albanian alphabet uses Latin letters singly and in combination to represent the 36 Albanian phonemes, i.e., the 36 distinctive sound units that compose all the words of the language. The alphabetic order of the letters of the 36 alphabetic units is as follows:

A B C Ć D Dh E Ė F G Gj H I J K L Li M N Nj O P Q R Rr S Sh T Th U V X Xh Y Z Zh

Each letter may appear in upper or lower case (capital or small letter) form; digraphs (Dh, Gj, Li, Nj, Rr, Sh, Th, Xh, Zh) may be capitalized by making both components capitals or only the first ones.

The sound units represented by the letters can be roughly characterized as follows. In pronouncing the name of the letter, as in spelling a word out loud, vowel letters are pronounced with the value of the vowel they denote, while consonant letters are pronounced as a syllable beginning with the consonant phoneme followed by the sound represented by the letter. Table 1.1 provides a rough characterization of the phonetic values of the Albanian letters, in terms of some of their correspondences with English spellings and with IPA (International Phonetic Alphabet) symbols.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 1.1 Some Albanian-English Spelling Correspondences</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Albanian letter</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B b</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C c</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C Ć</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D d</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dh dh</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1.2.2 Phonology and Orthography
### Table 1.1 (cont.)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Albanian letter</th>
<th>English spelling</th>
<th>English examples</th>
<th>IPA symbol and brief phonetic description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>E e</td>
<td>e</td>
<td>pet</td>
<td>[e] mid front unrounded vowel</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Œ Œ</td>
<td>u, a</td>
<td>must, sofa</td>
<td>[œ] or [œ] mid central vowel</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F f</td>
<td>f</td>
<td>fife</td>
<td>[f] voiceless labiodental slit fricative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G g</td>
<td>g</td>
<td>gag</td>
<td>[g] voiced dorsovelar stop</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gj gj</td>
<td>gue y</td>
<td>league year</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H h</td>
<td>h</td>
<td>figure</td>
<td>[ɻ] voiceless dorsoalveolar stop</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I i</td>
<td>e</td>
<td>react</td>
<td>[i] high front unrounded vowel</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>J j</td>
<td>y</td>
<td>yell</td>
<td>[j] voiced high front glide</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>K k</td>
<td>k</td>
<td>kick</td>
<td>[k] voiceless dorsovelar stop</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>L l</td>
<td>l</td>
<td>belief</td>
<td>[l] voiced lowered-dorsal lateral liquid</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LL ll</td>
<td>ll</td>
<td>hill</td>
<td>[l] voiced raised-dorsal lateral liquid</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M m</td>
<td>m</td>
<td>map</td>
<td>[m] voiced bilabial nasal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N n</td>
<td>n</td>
<td>nap</td>
<td>[n] voiced apicoalveolar nasal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nj nj</td>
<td>ny</td>
<td>canyon</td>
<td>[ɲ] voiced laminopalatal nasal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>O o</td>
<td>o</td>
<td>more</td>
<td>[o] mid back rounded vowel</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P p</td>
<td>p</td>
<td>pipe</td>
<td>[p] voiceless bilabial stop</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q q</td>
<td>cu</td>
<td>cuie</td>
<td>[ɕ] voiceless dorsoalveolar stop</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>ky</td>
<td>bikini</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R r</td>
<td>t</td>
<td>city</td>
<td>[ɾ] voiced apical flap liquid</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rr rr</td>
<td>rr</td>
<td>varroom!</td>
<td>[r] voiced apical trill liquid</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S s</td>
<td>s, ss</td>
<td>sissy</td>
<td>[s] voiceless apicoalveolar groove fricative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sh sh</td>
<td>sh</td>
<td>shush</td>
<td>[ʃ] voiceless laminopalatal groove fricative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>T t</td>
<td>t</td>
<td>toot</td>
<td>[t] voiceless apicoalveolar stop</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Th th</td>
<td>th</td>
<td>ether, thigh</td>
<td>[θ] voiceless apicoalveolar slit fricative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>U u</td>
<td>oo</td>
<td>poor</td>
<td>[u] high back rounded vowel</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>V v</td>
<td>v</td>
<td>revive</td>
<td>[v] voiced labiodental slit fricative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>X x</td>
<td>dz</td>
<td>adze</td>
<td>[dz] voiced laminopalatal groove affricate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Xh xh</td>
<td>j, dge</td>
<td>judge</td>
<td>[dʒ] voiced laminopalatal groove affricate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Y y</td>
<td>u</td>
<td>future</td>
<td>[y] high front unrounded vowel</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Z z</td>
<td>z</td>
<td>maze</td>
<td>[z] voiceless apicoalveolar</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zh zh</td>
<td>z</td>
<td>azure</td>
<td>[ʒ] voiced laminopalatal groove affricate</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### A. Vowels

Present-day Standard Albanian has six simple vowels, arranged in Chart 1.1 according to the position of the highest point of the tongue during articulation. Each of the simple vowels is pronounced as a monophthong—unlike English—with the same phonetic value from beginning
Chart 1.1 The Albanian Simple Vowels

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Front Unrounded</th>
<th>Front Rounded</th>
<th>Central Unrounded</th>
<th>Back Rounded</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>High</td>
<td>i</td>
<td>y</td>
<td></td>
<td>u</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mid</td>
<td>e</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>o</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Low</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>a</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

to end. Each vowel is of somewhat longer duration:

1) when stressed (marked in this book, for clarity of discussion only, by an accent mark `) over the vowel letter: á, é, è, ó, ú, ý;
2) when stressed and followed in the same word by another vowel preceded by a single consonant: the u is thus somewhat longer in drúri than in dru, plúmby, thuá, byrëku, pus;
3) when it bears the phrase accent (marked in this book, for clarity of discussion only, by a double accent mark "") which marks the focus of attention in a spoken phrase: the l, ó and ú are thus longer than any of the other vowels, in the phrases I tháshë se kishë mysafirë atë mbërme. 'I told him that I had guests that evening.' Po të dönë, ju ha jáp umë. 'If you like, I'll give it to you.'

The Albanian vowel i is higher and more tense than the corresponding English vowel in pit, but lower than the vowel in peat.

The vowel e is higher and more tense than the corresponding English vowel in pet, but lower than the vowel of pate.

The vowel u is higher and more tense than the corresponding English vowel in put, but lower than the vowel in boot.

The vowel a is higher and more tense than the corresponding English vowel in bought, but lower than the vowel in boat.

The vowel a is more fronted and more tense than the corresponding English vowel in pot (unrounded variety), but far less fronted than the vowel in pat.

The vowel y is lower and less tense than the corresponding French vowel in du, but higher than the vowel of deux. For English speakers who have no experience in producing rounded front vowels, the sound may be made by starting to say future, but prolonging the vowel sound that is heard just before the first u is actually made.

The letter ë represents a wide range of sounds. First, for many speakers in ordinary speech it will not be pronounced at all when it comes after a single consonant at the end of a word and is not stressed. For other speakers, in the same position it will be a signal that the vowel in the preceding syllable is pronounced long—something like the "silent" e of English ride. In the same position, it will be pronounced by some speakers (particularly older ones from southern Tosk areas) like the i in English capital. In other unstressed positions, speakers often pronounce it (like the i in capital), but the further north the speaker, the more likely the letter will be silent. Even in positions where the ë is normally not pronounced, a speaker may pronounce it when trying to speak particularly distinctly, for example, in reciting poetry or when speaking to a foreigner.

The pronunciation of stressed ë often reflects the area of provenience of the speaker. It ranges from a nasalized, rounded, mid back vowel (like the vowel in French bon) in Gheg regions to an oral unrounded, low front vowel (like the vowel in English pad) in some southeast Tosk regions. The pronunciation that is least distinct in identifying dialectal provenience—and therefore the one most eligible to be called "standard"—is an oral unrounded (or very slightly rounded) mid central vowel, so that a southern British or southeastern United States pronunciation of the English word burn sounds very much like a standard pronunciation of the Albanian word bën.
In reading pre-standard Albanian texts, the variation in the way words are spelled is greater in respect to ẹ than for any other single letter.

NOTE

Gheg speakers of Albanian continue to make a distinction between long and short simple vowels in stressed syllables, although the standard orthography has not adopted the distinction directly. In most cases, however, where the standard orthography spells a word with a final -ę, a Gheg speaker will not pronounce that ę, but will make the preceding stressed vowel long: thus plak ‘old man’ is pronounced with a short vowel by both Gheg and Tosk speakers, while plakę ‘old woman’ will be pronounced without the final ę by all Gheg and most Tosk speakers, but most Gheg and some Tosk speakers will say the word with a distinctively longer a vowel than that in plak.

When they are speaking their own dialects Gheg speakers also use a whole set of simple nasalized vowels, both long and short, but these have not been adopted in the standard orthography and are avoided when speaking Standard (‘Literary’) Albanian.

In addition to simple vowels Albanian has many words with vowel clusters: sequences of two vowels not separated by consonants. To understand the problem of pronunciation of such sequences, it is necessary first to keep in mind the distinction between high vowels (i, u, y) and non-high vowels (all the others) and second to be aware that the letter i and the letter j represent the same sound, except that i, a vowel, is somewhat longer and more prominent than j, a consonant. Now in vowel clusters containing no high vowels, the number of syllables in the cluster is the same as the number of vowels, and the degree of prominence of each vowel is determined by its stress: teorf has three syllables, of which the first two, both unstressed, are equal in prominence and the third, being stressed, is more prominent; poēt has two syllables, with the second, stressed syllable more prominent than the first.

The clusters ie, ua, ye, and ue are diphthongs in Albanian; each cluster counts as a single vowel (in determining stress placement, for example) and bears a single peak of prominence. While speakers from different dialect areas vary and individual speakers may vacillate in locating a peak of prominence within the diphthong, the following general tendencies can be observed among speakers of Standard Albanian:

1) When the diphthong is the last syllable of a word, its first element is likely to be more prominent than its second: shple, përziën, grúia, dúar, arsyé, përktýës.

2) When the diphthong is not the last syllable of the word, speakers are likely to give the first element less or equal prominence in respect to the second; the diphthong ue, however, always gives its first element more prominence than its second: diellór, zléja, kryenéc, ryrésêm, buallícé, druáním, pas trúése, i vashdúleshêm.

It should be noted that in certain words and classes of words the standard orthography now represents what were formerly sometimes written as diphthongs with i as one element, as sequences of j plus vowel or of vowel plus j, deciding the question of location of the center of prominence by making the vowel i into the consonant j: bjer, përzyéva. In other words and classes of words, in order to preserve certain morphological identities, the standard orthography represents the glide j as if it were the vowel i: la dha, dhënie, kuptoi. However, the i in the standard orthography of the word ai ‘he, that’ indicates that the word is pronounced with two syllables, with the normal stress on the final vowel.

B. Consonants

In Chart 1.2 the consonants of Albanian are arranged according to the distinctive manner in which they are produced by the vocal apparatus (‘manner of articulation’) and the moveable part of the articulatory mechanism that is most characteristically involved in producing them.
### Chart 1.2 The Albanian Consonants

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Labial</th>
<th>Apical</th>
<th>Laminal</th>
<th>Dorsal</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>STOPS</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Voiceless</td>
<td>p</td>
<td>t</td>
<td>q</td>
<td>k</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Voiced</td>
<td>b</td>
<td>d</td>
<td>g(i)</td>
<td>g</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>FRICATIVES</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Slit Voiceless</td>
<td>f</td>
<td>th</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Slit Voiced</td>
<td>v</td>
<td>dh</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Groove Voiceless</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>s</td>
<td>sh</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Groove Voiced</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>z</td>
<td>zh</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>AFFRICATES</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Voiceless</td>
<td>c</td>
<td>ç()</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Voiced</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>xh</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>NASALS</strong></td>
<td>m</td>
<td>n</td>
<td>nj</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

STOPS are sounds made by interfering with the airstream passing through the mouth by closing the oral passage. LABIAL stops close the passage by moving the lower lip in a position to block the air passage at the lips, as in the English sounds \(p\) and \(b\). APICAL stops use the tongue tip (apex) and sides to close off the passage beginning just in back of the teeth; the corresponding stops \(t\) and \(d\) in English are typically pronounced with the tongue tip closing the passage further back, on the alveolar ridge (the bumpy ridge felt as one moves one's tongue along the roof of the mouth from front to back). LAMINAL stops use the middle section of the tongue and sides to close off the passage beginning at the hard palate (the smooth, hard part of the roof of the mouth); a similar tongue position is used in English just at the beginning of words like *cue* or *cute*, except that in Albanian the tongue tip is not lowered in the mouth as it is in the English words. DORSAL stops use the rear section of the tongue against the soft palate (velum) to close off the passage beginning there. VOICED stops are produced while the air is being forced through loose flaps (the vocal cords) in the larynx to produce regular vibrations in the air stream, while VOICELESS ones are produced with those flaps open so that the air stream is not affected in the larynx. In Albanian, voicing for a stressed vowel after a voiceless stop begins more quickly than in English, so that the characteristic "aspiration" of English voiceless stops is absent in Albanian. On the other hand, many Albanian speakers, especially those from Tsk areas, end the voicing of voiced stops (also fricatives and affricates) at the end of words much earlier than English speakers do, so that word-final voiced stops, fricatives, and affricates may sound partially or totally voiceless to an English listener.

Albanian FRICATIVES are quite similar to their English counterparts: as in English, they are made by moving the appropriate articulators into a position that leaves only enough space for the air to move with noisy friction through the oral passage. If the passage is relatively longer than it is wide, a GROOVE fricative is produced; if wider than it is long, a SLIT fricative. The labial fricatives are produced by creating air friction between the lower lip and upper teeth, apical fricatives by air friction between the apex of the tongue and the back of the upper teeth, and laminal fricatives by air friction between the middle of the tongue and the hard palate.

1.2.2 B. Consonants
AFFRICATES are formed by closing the air passage as for a stop and releasing it through a narrow space as for a fricative. In Albanian the apical affricates c and x (like English ts and dz, respectively) are not very frequent, but unlike their English counterparts, they may appear at the beginning of syllables as well as at the end.

NASAL consonants are produced by closing the oral passage as for a stop but opening the nasal passage (by lowering the velum) to allow the voiced air stream to resonate in the nasal passage as well as in the part of the mouth behind the closure. The single laminal nasal nj is distinguished in spelling from the sequence of apical nasal n plus j by writing the sequence as n plus l: compare shqronjë 'of writing' with dhënë 'giving.'

In LIQUID consonants the voiced air stream is partially blocked in the oral passage but not in such a way as to create the noise of a fricative. In the LATERALS l and ll, an apical closure is made (as for d) but with one or both sides of the tongue lowered to allow the air stream to flow freely around and out of the mouth. For l, the laminal (middle) section of the tongue is more or less raised toward the palate (depending on the dialectal provenience of the speaker) but the dorsal (rear) section of the tongue is lowered; for ll the dorsal section of the tongue is raised. The effect of the difference is to reduce the size of the resonating cavity behind the tongue for l and to increase it for ll, yielding the typically "light" or "palatal" sound of the first and the "dark" or "velar" sound of the second. English speakers, particularly those with British accents, use something like the Albanian l at the beginning of syllables, particularly before a high front vowel or glide, and something like the Albanian ll at the end of syllables. In the CENTRAL liquids r and rr, the voiced air stream is blocked momentarily by holding the apex of the tongue loosely near the alveolar ridge and allowing the voiced air stream to set it in motion, alternately sucking it toward the ridge and blowing it away from it. For r, a single or double flapping sound is thus heard, while for rr three or more flaps (trills) will be heard. While some British speakers use a r pronunciation much like the Albanian one, American speakers make their r in a very different way; for them an approximation of Albanian r may be heard in casual pronunciations of t or d between two vowels, the second of which is unstressed: pity, biddy, Betty, etc. The trilled rr is sometimes approximated by children imitating the sound of a motor: warroom or perr. Unlike English, the Albanian central liquids are not made with rounded lips at the beginning of words.

The Albanian glides j (like the English consonant y) and h, are produced like their English counterparts. For j the tongue moves quickly to or away from a high front unrounded vowel position in respect to the neighboring vowel, depending on whether that vowel precedes or follows it, respectively. It is the consonantal (short duration) counterpart of the vowel i, and in appropriate rhythmic environments (before or after a vowel) actually has been used interchangeably with that vowel. Variant spellings of many words reveal that the interchange has had a long history in Albanian, although the standard orthography now has consistent provisions for distinguishing the two. For h the neighboring vowel is simply continued or begun, but without the voicing in the larynx that all vowels otherwise have. As in English, there is variation in the degree to which the written letter h is pronounced. Some speakers pronounce it only before stressed vowels, while others pronounce it or feel they pronounce it as the standard orthography indicates it should be pronounced.

C. Intonation and Punctuation

In general, the basic intonation of Albanian phrases is similar to that of American English phrases. In both languages, the most neutral intonation for a sentence-final phrase is one in which the pitch of the voice is highest on the stressed syllable of the last word in the phrase or the word that the speaker presents as the most important, perhaps in order to contrast it with another or simply to identify it as containing new information for the listener. Immediately after this PHRASE STRESS, the pitch falls to a low level: if the phrase-stressed syllable is final in the sentence, the pitch fall will occur in that syllable, and that syllable will be lengthened so that the pitch change can be heard; if other syllables follow the phrase-stressed one, they are all
uttered on a low pitch until the end of the phrase. In non-final sentence positions, the most neutral intonation of a phrase also has the phrase-stressed syllable at the highest pitch up to that point in the phrase, but if there are other syllables following the phrase they will remain at that high pitch.

In both English and Albanian, questions which ask the listener for a "yes" (po in Albanian) or "no" (jo in Albanian) response use the same intonation as for a non-final phrase, except that in English the very last syllable of such a question has a short, quick rise in the pitch.

A most striking difference between Albanian and English intonation is in phrases in which the pitch falls from a high to a mid-level on the phrase-stressed syllable and remains at that level till the end of the phrase. Such an intonation is quite neutral in Albanian and may be used both for phrases in non-final positions in sentences and in final phrases in questions asking for information other than "yes" or "no". In corresponding English sentences the intonation would not be neutral, but would signal the speaker's feeling of frustration or boredom.

Punctuation marks are used in conventional Albanian orthography largely as they are in conventional English. Stress is normally not marked at all, and intonation is only hinted at by punctuation and underlining. Periods are used to mark sentence ends, abbreviations, and sentence interruptions. Question marks are used to mark the end of queries, whether the intonation actually rises or falls. Exclamation points usually mark emotional expressions, but unlike in English, in Albanian exclamatory points are conventionally also used to indicate unemotional imperative commands (Shko drejtor! "Go straight ahead."). Colons precede a set of examples. Semicolons separate coordinate sentences or word-groups which contain internal commas. Commas separate items in a series, non-essential sentence elements like phrasal parentheses, modifiers, and appositives from the rest of the sentence, and sentences introduced by a conjunction from the preceding sentence. Hyphens are used to separate elements in certain compounds and to indicate word continuation at the end of a line. Quotation marks are usually in the form of double angles << >> going in different directions at the beginning and end of the quoted material, but raised commas are also used for this purpose in Albanian as they are in English; because of typographical limitations, wherever the original examples had the double angles, they will usually be replaced in this book by "". Dashes are also commonly used to separate the speeches of participants in direct quotation. Standard punctuation practices have yet to be established in Albanian, so that a great deal of fluctuation can be observed in the use of commas (sometimes used, contrary to standard English practice, between a long subject and its predicate, before or after dashes, to separate two full sentences), semicolons (sometimes intermixed with colons), spacing before and after punctuation marks, and in the use of various competing devices for indicating direct quotation. The variety of punctuation conventions embodied in the examples of Albanian sentences throughout this book serves to illustrate this point more eloquently than any set of artificial examples.

D. Stress

In general, the main stress in an Albanian stem falls on its last syllable, the main stress of an Albanian word (for compound words with more than one stem) falls on its last stem, and the main stress of an Albanian phrase falls on its last word.

Dictionaries of Albanian differ in how they represent the location of word stress: some do it by marking the stressed syllable, some by indicating where the stem of the word ends, but most do not mark it at all. In this grammar we mark stem end (by a hyphen) and word stress (by an accent mark over a vowel) in general only as relevant to the subject at hand.

Table 1.2 illustrates the effect of various factors in determining word-stress placement.

In compound words, the last stem in the compound has the main word stress (marked here by an acute accent ‘); stressed syllables in words before the final one are reduced to secondary (marked by a grave accent ‘) weak stress (unmarked).

1.2.2 D. Stress
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 1.2 Examples of Stress Placement</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>STRESS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>COMPLEX STEM</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>With</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>inflectional suffix</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>non-verbal, non-inflectional suffix</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ending in a, e, o, ç, or ç plus consonant (except -llêk, plural -llêqe)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-thi, -as, -azi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>other non-inflectional suffixes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SIMPLE STEMS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>dembél ‘lazy’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>qytéd ‘city’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>shîpt ‘house’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>kalá ‘fortress’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>COMPOUND STEMS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>kû-dô ‘wherever’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>meglîth-atê ‘however’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>krîye-qytéd ‘capital city’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>vagôn-restorât ‘dining car’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>bükur-shkrîm ‘calligraphy’ (fine writing)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In a phrase, one syllable bears the main phrase accent (which may be marked by a double accent “”), phonetically marked by lengthening the syllable and beginning any pitch change called for by the intonation. The normal place for this phrase stress is on the stressed syllable of the last word in the phrase; any other position of the phrase stress indicates that the phrase-stressed word is being emphasized or contrasted.

When a stressed derivational suffix is added to form a different stem, the main word stress moves to the last syllable of the new stem: ï vårj-êr ‘poor,’ vårj-êr-î ‘poverty,’ vårj-êr-im ‘impoverishment,’ vårj-êr-isht ‘poorly.’

All inflectional suffixes are unstressed, as are all other suffixes ending in e, a, o (except in verb stems), ç, or ending in ç plus a consonant (except -llêk, plural -llêqe). In many cases, the particular grammatical function of these suffixes is no longer clear, but the lack of stress indicates that they are still suffixes. While some derivational suffixes, such as -shêm, -thi, -as,
and -azi, are unstressed, most others are stressed.

Stems which terminate in a consonant plus a liquid (r, rr, l, or ll) with or without a final -ë have citation forms with an unstressed -ë- between the consonant and the liquid, and without a final -ë. Citation forms which terminate in a consonant plus ĕ plus a liquid (r, rr, l, ll) may reflect:

1) a stem whose stem-vowel is ĕ, which is then stressed by the ordinary rule above: çakërë;

2) a stem without the ĕ; the ĕ is inserted in the citation form by a rule that prevents syllable-final consonant clusters ending in a liquid: vjetr- ‘old’;

3) a stem ending in the consonant plus a suffix terminating in ĕ plus a liquid: mbret-ër ‘kings’ (cf. mbret ‘king’).

Citation forms terminating in a consonant plus -ull may reflect:

1) a stem ending in -ull, in which case the u is stressed by the general rule above: fodull ‘vain person’;

2) a stem ending in the consonant plus -ll, which first inserts ĕ in the citation form by the same rule cited above, and then converts an unstressed ĕ before ll to ull by another rule: shembl > shembl > shembl ‘example’ (cf. shembëlej ‘exemplify’).

1.2.3 Syntactic and Morphological Constructions

Albanian SENTENCES, the constituent elements of discourse—represented in writing by an initial capital letter and a final punctuation mark (.) followed by another sentence or by nothing—are syntactically structured sequences of words. WORDS are marked off in writing by spaces around them. FULL WORDS may appear as utterances in their own right, while CLITICS are always attached grammatically to another part of the sentence.

NOTE

In Albanian all clitics are thus PROclitics. Many other languages have ENclitics, which are attached to a word that precedes them. In Albanian, when a clitic is attached after a word, it becomes suffixed to that word and is no longer separated off by a space: e.g., më silih ‘you bring to me’/ silihëmi ‘bring to me!’ show the clitic më ‘to me’ in both positions.

Considered grammatically, every word is constituted of one or more MORPHEMES; considered phonologically (i.e., in terms of their sound), of one or more PHONEMES; considered orthographically (i.e., in terms of their spelling), of one or more GRAPHEMES (we will call them LETTERS in this book).

On the basis of their morphological structure and range of syntactic functions, full words are classified into various PARTS OF SPEECH, described in later chapters of this grammar: nouns, verbs, adverbs, adjectives, prepositions, conjunctions, proforms, determiners, and particles.

In this book we will distinguish between the words noun, pronoun, adjective, verb, adverb, number, preposition, and conjunction, which are names of parts of speech defined as single words with a characteristic set of syntactic functions, and the words nominal, pronominal, adjectival, verbal, adverbial, numerical, prepositional, and conjunctional, which are the names of the respective syntactic roles played by these parts of speech, but may also be played by other words or combinations of words. For example, nouns may be used, among many other uses, as the subject of a verb, but other parts of speech may under certain conditions also serve that function (e.g., Dy erdhën nga Berati. ‘Two came from Berat’); in such a case we could say that the number dy ‘two’ here has a nominal use, is used nominally, has been nominalized, or even is a nominal.

A PHRASE is a sequence of one or more words in a sentence which form a syntactic unit in relation to the rest of the sentence. A CLAUSE is a phrase containing a finite verb (a verb
whose ending reflects the person and number of its subject). A COMPLETE SENTENCE contains at least one clause not introduced by a conjunction, but unlike edited English sentences, edited Albanian sentences are often not complete in this sense.

Albanian sentences are made up of various combinations of verbal, nominal, adjectival, adverbial, conjunctional, and interjectional phrases and particles.

1.2.4 Words and Morphemes

A number of words consist of a single morpheme. For the most part these Albanian words (and their English counterparts) belong to such invariable parts of speech as adverbs, prepositions, and conjunctions: lart 'high,' drejt 'straight,' afër 'near,' në 'in,' me 'with,' e 'and,' por 'but,' se 'that,' unë 'I,' ti 'thou,' ju 'you,' ne 'we,' kush 'who'.

The citation forms of a number of nouns and verbs also consist of a single morpheme called a ROOT: mal 'mountain,' mlik 'friend,' punë 'work,' hap 'open' pl 'drink,' shes 'sell,' etc. The root is the lexical nucleus of the word, the carrier of the basic lexical meaning of the word. In terms of its grammatical function, the root acts as the central STEM of the word, i.e., that part to which affixal morphemes (=AFFIXES), if any, may be attached. So in larg-o-j 'remove,' larg-im 'removal,' larg-esë 'distance' I larg-ët 'distant,' larg-as 'indirectly,' the root larg- 'far' contributes the core lexical meaning in all these words. In words of one morpheme, the root is equal to the word itself: e.g., the root of the adverb larg 'far' is larg-.

The morphemes in a word that are attached to stems are AFFIXES—PREFIXES if they precede the root, or SUFFIXES if they come after it. Affixes which create new stems are called DERIVATIONAL or WORD-FORMING; affixes which mark the syntactic function of a word are called INFLECTIONAL. Inflectional suffixes are called ENDINGS. Words or stems which contain a single root, with or without inflectional endings, are called SIMPLE; words or stems with more than one root are called COMPOUNDS; and words or stems with one or more derivational affixes are called DERIVED.

Words formed from a stem by inflectional suffixes are said to belong to the INFLECTIONAL PARADIGM of that stem. Inflectional paradigms of verbs are called CONJUGATIONS while those of nouns, pronouns, and adjectives are called DECLENSIONS. In most conjugations and declensions the word forms are analyzable into morphemes whose occurrence is predictable in that form given just the citation form of the word and its general grammatical category. But in some paradigms, particularly those of very frequently used words, some forms are not so predictable. In such cases, a good dictionary will specially list and identify the aberrant forms, in addition to giving enough synonyms or descriptions of the meaning(s) of the word and supplementary grammatical information to allow the user to understand how the word is used in most cases.

A. Allomorphs

A morpheme may not always appear in the same phonetic form. Depending on what affixes it is used with, the root morpheme of the verb djeg 'burn,' for example, appears in different parts of its conjugation in the form djeg-, digi-, or dogi-. These are not three different morphemes, but rather different ALLOMORPHS of the same morpheme. The root morpheme of this verb is really the set of its allomorphs djeg/-digi/-dogi-. In the same way, the endings -i and -u that mark the indefinite genitive, dative, and ablative singular or the nominative definite singular cases of certain nouns will be considered to be two different representations of the same morpheme, since the difference between them rests on differences between the phonemes that precede them rather than on a difference in grammatical or semantic function. If the preceding phoneme is g, k, h, l, ë, or à (in monosyllables), the morpheme will have the allomorph -u; otherwise the allomorph is -i: zogu 'the bird,' shoku 'the comrade,' ahu 'the beech,' njerit 'the person,' dheu 'the earth,' kau 'the ox'; but lisi 'the oak,' mësimi 'the lesson,' kalli 'the horse,' përrët 'the creek,' vëllai 'the brother'. The same rule applies to the
ending -i/-u of the past definite tense of certain verbs: lagu ‘he moistened,’ but hapi ‘he opened’.

B. General Processes that Create Allomorphs in Albanian

When two or more morphemes are joined to form a word, as happens in forming compound stems, in forming derived stems with prefixes and suffixes, in forming inflected words with inflectional endings, and in attaching clitics to verb forms, the morphemes may take on shapes determined by certain quite general rules.

1) In all combinations, if two vowels, one of which is unstressed ĕ, come together, the ĕ drops:

bashkë + atdhetár = bashkatdhetár
bashkë + -im = bashkim
shëpël + -ësë = shëpisë
xhaxhá + -ënë = xhaxhánë

2) At the end of a word, unstressed ĕ will drop if the word stress is not on the preceding syllable. Thus, many suffixes and endings which have allomorphs ending in ĕ will have other allomorphs without that ĕ, depending on whether they follow a stem with an unstressed or stressed final syllable, respectively:

lulë + -ënë = lulen
vajzë + -ësë = vajzës
márr + -i- + -më = márrim
gjufë + -ëzë = guhëz
njërez + -i- + -të = njërezit
i + hékur + -të = i hékurt

3) When a stem ending in a vowel is followed by a suffixed element (a derivational suffix, inflectional ending, or bound clitic) beginning in an identical vowel, one of them is dropped--an unstressed one, if there is one:

batërdi + -is = batërdis
lajthi + ishtë = lajthishtë
fatbárdhë + -ësë = fatbárdhësë

But notice that if the second vowel does not begin a suffix, no contraction takes place:

krë + engjël = kryëngjël
pa- + anësë = panësë
jó- + organik = joorganik
anti- + imperialist = antiimperialist

4) In combinations of ç with a following voiceless consonant, the ç becomes sh:

c- + faq = shfaq
ç- + prish = shprish
ç- + këput = shkëput

Followed by a voiced stop or fricative, ç becomes zh:

c- + blokoj = zhblokoj
ç- + duk = zhduk
ç- + vesh = zhvesh

The particle ç’ ‘what’ maintains its status as a proclitic rather than prefix, and is always separated from the following word in the orthography by an apostrophe. In pronunciation, however, it is voiced before voiced stops or fricatives, so that it has the sound of xh or zh before words beginning with such consonants:

1.2.4 B. General Processes that Create Allomorphs in Albanian


\[ \text{č' + buke = č'buke (pronounced xhbuke)} \]
\[ \text{č' + do = č'do (pronounced xhdo or zhdo)} \]
\[ \text{č' + verē = č'verē (pronounced xhverē)} \]

5) In combinations of s with a following voiced stop-or-fricative, s becomes voiced z:
\[ s + bardh = zbardh \]
\[ s + gjat = zgjat \]
\[ s + vogël-oj = zvogël-oj \]

The particle s’ ‘not’ maintains its constant spelling in the orthography, but in pronunciation it follows the same rule:
\[ s' + bie = s'bie (pronounced zbie) \]
\[ s' + gjendet = s'gjendet (pronounced zgjendet) \]
\[ s' + vras = s'vras (pronounced zvras) \]
CHAPTER 2
Verbs and Verbal Phrases

2.1 Basic Grammatical Categories in Verbs

A VERBAL PHRASE (abbreviated VP) is a word or sequence of words serving in typical functions of a verb, such as forming the nucleus of a clause (the PREDICATION) or of a participial phrase. Every VP must contain a verb as its nucleus, which in turn may be preceded by verbal proclitics and followed by one or more complements. VERBAL PROCLITICS may mark negation, mood, aspect, or tense. Complements may be verbal, adverbial or nominal.

The VERB is that part of speech which forms the nucleus of a predication, exhibiting grammatical distinctions in person, number, mood, tense, and voice. The verb typically denotes an action, state, or changed state in a subject, although verbs used as auxiliaries or semi-auxiliaries have largely lost such a direct semantic connection with the subject, and other verbs are used without any external subject at all.

FINITE verbs exhibit the characteristic grammatical distinctions of person, number, voice, mood, and tense that typify verbs. The form of a finite verb itself reflects the distinctions in person and number of its subject: In addition, pronominal clitics attached to a verb, finite or non-finite, may indicate the person and number of its object (for transitive verbs only) or referent (for any verb).