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AN ARCHIVAL RESEARCH REPORT ON THE ACTIVITY OF THE ITALIAN ARCHAEOLOGICAL MISSION IN ALBANIA (1924-1943)

Abstract: *It has been possible to examine and copies of the correspondence between Albanian and Italian Governments in establishing the Italian Archaeological Mission, including some telegrams of Italian Legacies and, manuscripts by Ugolini himself, etc. These documents found in the Central Archives of the State in Tirana are found at the documentary funds of the Ministry of Education, the Council of Ministers, the Ministry of Interior and the Italian Legacy in Albania.*

Based on these documents, the official date or the first step towards the realization of Italian archaeological excavations in Albania was taken on April 12, 1924, when the Ministry of Education notified the Ministry of Interior that Dr. L. Ugolini a, “well-prepared Italian archaeologist in the prehistoric studies” and “a friend of Albania” would be visiting. The Albanian Embassy in Rome had informed the Ministry of Education of his visit.

The letter of Roberto Paribeni on March 15, 1925 confirmed the beginning of archaeological excavations. On October 14, the head of the Italian Legation of Durrës wrote to his office in Saranda that the Albanian President had ordered local authorities to permit archaeological excavations in Feniki (Phoinike). The archaeological excavations began only in December 1926 and were very successful. But a year later, in December 1927, Ugolini informed the Albanian Minister of Education that the Italian Mission proposed to change the place of archaeological excavations from Phoinike to Butrinti (near Vivari lake in Santi Quaranta), and begin on the January 15, 1928.

Only in spring 1928 Ugolini moved from Phoinike to Butrinti. Ugolini excavated at Butrint for eight years (1928-1936) despite many health problems. The voluminous correspondence, preserved in the Archives, shows his special personality and great passion for archaeology. On the evening of October 4, 1936 Ugolini died in Italy.

On December 4, 1936 the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs announced that Roberto Paribeni, President of Reale Istituto Archeologico, had proposed Pirro Marconi, professor of Archaeology and Art History at the University of Naples and University of

Palermo, as the successor to Ugolini and to be named as the Head of the Italian Archaeological Mission in Albania. Marconi's activity in Butrint lasted just one year, because of his tragic death, flying to Rome, in late April 1938. After his death the excavations continued in June and July under Igino Epicoco and later that year, in accordance with a proposal by Roberto Paribeni, Domenico Mustilli, professor at the University of Naples, was named the director of Italian Archaeological Mission. The Italian surrender of September 1943 effectively ended all Italian concern with Butrint and with the archaeology of Albania. Italy had other more pressing problems closer to home.

29 November 1944, the Liberation day of Albania, opened a new chapter in its long history, the period of communism or the so called 'proletarian dictatorship' and, archaeology came to be organized in a very different way.

Key Words: *Central State Archives, Tirana; Italian Archaeological Mission; Butrint; Phoinike; Luigi Maria Ugolini.*

In 1924 Albania was in a very chaotic political state. After the January elections Ahmet bej Zogu (a former Austro-Hungarian officer, educated in Military school in Constantinople) took power, however, shortly after on February 23 there was a coup and the government changed in March. Ahmet bej Zogu left Albania in early June 1924 and, from June 16 Father Fan S. Noli, head of the Democratic Revolution and Albanian Prime Minister, led the government. Zogu was back in Tirana on December 24 and assumed power again. On January 31, 1925 Ahmet bej Zogu was both President and the head of the Government.¹

On the Italian side there was a long discussion and correspondence that took place between the head of the Levante Scientific Mission and the director of the National Archaeological Museum of Rome, Roberto Paribeni, the head of the Italian Legation of Durrës, Marchese Carlo Durazzo and Mussolini himself regarding the creation of an Italian Archaeological Mission in Albania. It was proposed that a young archaeologist, Luigi Maria Ugolini would organize the Italian Mission in Albania.

Based on the documents preserved in the Central State Archives in Tirana, the official date or the first step towards the realization of Italian archaeological excavations in Albania was taken on April 12, 1924, when the Ministry of Education notified the Ministry of Interior of the visit to Albania of Dr. L. Ugolini, "well-prepared Italian archaeologist in the prehistoric studies" and "a friend of Albania".² The Albanian Embassy in Rome had informed the

¹ *Historia e Shqipërië*, V. III (1912-1944).

² Luigi Maria Ugolini was born in Bertinoro (Romagna) in 1895 and graduated from the University of Bologna in 1921. He frequented during 1921 and 1922 the Archaeological School of Rome

Ministry of Education of his visit.³

The young Italian archaeologist, Luigi Maria Ugolini, student of the Italian School in Athens, journeyed through northern and southern Albania in April and September 1924. In this climate Ugolini twice met Mussolini at Bertinoro, once having a long conversation on the 'belvedere' terrace of the town.⁴ The creation of the Italian Archaeological Mission was linked with the political propaganda of the "Roman Empire" that Mussolini wanted to recreate.

On January 6, 1925, Ahmet Zogu changed the government and declared himself the Prime Minister. Then on January 21 he was declared the President of the Republic of Albania and, in February 1, the new government was created. Three years later he declared himself the King of Albania. On January 30, Zogu asked Mussolini for creation of the friendship relations between Rome and Tirana. The Albanian government was looking to have relations with both Italian and British governments.⁵

Beginning in 1925 Rome also wanted to have a better rapport with Albania. In March of that year an economic accord was signed between Albania and Italy and in August there was a secret pact that concluded in November 1926 with a treaty of friendship and security, known as the First Pact of Tirana.⁶ This pact was valid for 5 years and had 5 articles, but the most important was the first one. The British government approved this pact and the Greek government declared that they considered this pact as a diplomatic instrument. The French and Yugoslavian media were against it. On February 8, 1927 this pact was approved in ONU.⁷ Before the approval of the pact, on September 30, 1926 in Livorno, a meeting was organized between Benito Mussolini and the British Minister of Foreign Affairs, Austen Chamberlain. In this meeting Mussolini was clear that he couldn't invade the western part of Mediterranean, but he understood that he might go in the South East Europe.⁸

On March 15, 1925 the Albanian Minister of Finance in collaboration with an Italian financial group signed the agreement of the creation of the Albanian

and in 1923 he stayed a year in Athens. It was always mentioned that he was a member of Partito Nazionale Fascista (National Fascist Party) from 1924. See F. Zevi, "L'Archeologia italiana in Albania", *L'archeologia Italiana nel Mediterraneo*, p. 171.

³ Central State Archives, Tirana: F. 295. V. 1924, D. 34, ff. 1-7.

⁴ Newspaper *Il Resto di Carlino*, 23 September 1924, 26 September 1924.

⁵ *Historia e Shqipërisë*, V. III (1912-1944), p. 319.

⁶ P. Pastorelli, *Italia e Albania, 1924-1927*; A. Roselli, *Italiae Albania. Relazioni finanziarie nel ventennio fascista*.

⁷ Idem, 324. See also P. Pastorelli, *Italia e Albania, 1924-1927*; F. Lefebvre d'Ovidio, *L'intesa italo-francese del 1935 e la politica estera di Mussolini*; Roselli A. *Italia e Albania. Relazioni finanziarie nel ventennio fascista*.

⁸ Idem, pp. 325-326,

National Bank with principal 'sede' in Rome and the name of currency: Franga (Albanian) and Franchi (Italian) were both written on them.⁹ The financial Italian group was from the Società per lo Sviluppo Economico dell'Albania - SVEA. On May 29, 1925 the Albanian government asked a debt for 40 years of 62, 7 million golden francs from SVEA.¹⁰ In July 1925 Zogu gifted to the Yugoslavian government the Monastery of St Naumon the coast of Ochrid Lake and a piece of land in the northern part of Vermosh region.¹¹

A letter from Roberto Paribeni, on March 15, 1925, confirmed the beginning of archaeological excavations. On October 14, the head of the Italian Legation of Durrës wrote to his office in Saranda that the Albanian President had ordered local authorities to permit archaeological excavations in Feniki (ancient Phoinike, the capital of Epirus).¹²

But only on May 10, 1926 did Ahmet Zogu, and the Minister of Foreign Affairs, J. Vrioni, approve the agreement for archaeological excavations by the Italian Mission in Albania.¹³ Actually the tract of the friendship between Italy and Albania began at the end of 1925, but was in effect only in September and concluded later on, in November 27, 1926.¹⁴ The parties did not forget to note that this agreement had the same articles as the one approved for the French Archaeological Mission.¹⁵ Jacomoni, the Italian Consul in Albania, had a strong political interest in the archaeological agreement, because archaeological research demonstrated the ancient links between Albania¹⁶ and Italy and these could serve as a base for the future "convivenza" between the two peoples.¹⁷

Ugolini began excavations at the classical site of Feniki (Phoinice) where its large acropolis is seven times bigger than the acropolis of Athens. Ugolini was the first to undertake systematic excavations there, and he uncovered a Greek treasury of the fourth century BC, a Roman cistern, a bath-house, and ruins of temples. The two successful campaigns revealed a complex archaeological sequence and the Albanian King sent a letter of appreciation to Ugolini for the good job he was doing.¹⁸ At about the same time, interest in the classical

⁹ See A. M. Ratti, "La vicenda dell'economia albanese e la fortune del franco", *Rassegna Monetaria*.

¹⁰ *Ibidem*.

¹¹ *Ibidem*.

¹² *Ibidem*, p. 16.

¹³ P. Aloisi, & H. Vrioni, "Il patto d'amicizia tra l'Italia e l'Albania", *Rassegna italo-albanese* Nr. 1.

¹⁴ In the Central State Archive in Tirana is preserved the article from the newspaper and the translation into Albanian. (F. II. 251, V. 1929, D. 1043, Fq. 1-3, P. 6, Xh. 1309). See also Central State Archives, Tirana: F. 263, V. 1926, D. 212, ff. 9-14, ff. 10.

¹⁵ Central State Archives, Tirana: F. I. 295, V. 1925, D. 119-132, f. 1-6.

¹⁶ L. M. Ugolini, *Albania Antica 1*.

¹⁷ F. Jacomoni di Sansavino: *La politica dell'Italia in Albania*, pp. 30-31.

¹⁸ *Ibidem*, pp. 43, 44.

past of the country was rekindled, and the first Albanian scholars, most notably Hasan Ceka, began to explore the archaeology of the country. It is important to mention that the first Albanian, who made the archaeological excavations and created an Archaeological Museum in the Convent of Franciscans in Shkodra, is Father Shtjefën Gjeçovi.

The antiquities of Dyrrachium are published in 1926 by an Austrian fellow, B. Saria.¹⁹ The British writer, Paul Edmond, made some trips in Albania in the period when Italian and French Missions were doing excavations in antique sites, and published a book for “the land of the eagle”.²⁰ In the review of the French Mission, *Albania*, a French travel Agency, Etoile, took out an advertisement inviting people to visit Greece, passing through Dalmatia and Albania.

On November 22, 1927 a tractate of “protective alliance”, between Albanian and Italian Governments, was agreed, named “The Second pact of Tirana”. In fact this was the same pact as the first one of 1925, but did not include the 5 year time limit.. Instead, the new alliance was signed for a period of 20 years. Some months later, on August 31, 1928, other secret military pacts were signed between Italy and Albania. In December 1927 Zogu approved the diplomatic relations between the Republic of Albania and the Vatican State.²¹

In December 30, 1927 the President of the Albanian Republic proclaimed the decree of the Convention between the Albanian and Italian Governments for Archaeological Excavations, although the Italian Archaeological Mission had already been in action for several years. Ugolini had already published a book on the archaeological survey he did in Albania from 1924 to 1926, and Paribeni had written the preface.²² Two well-known Italian archaeologists, Pericle Ducati and Giuglio Quirino Giglioli, immediately published long articles that mentioned this book and the activity of Ugolini and his Mission in Albania.²³ Another scholar, Radu Vulpe, included Ugolini’s book in a historical review.²⁴

In January 1928 Ugolini moved the excavations from Feniki to Butrint.²⁵

¹⁹ B. Saria: “Antikenaus Durazzo”, *JÖAI*, 23/2 (1926) pp. 242-246.

²⁰ P. Edmond. *To the land of the eagle*.

²¹ *Historia e Shqipërisë*, V. III (1912-1944) pp. 329-330.

²² L. M. Ugolini: *Albania Antica* 1.

²³ P. Ducati: “Albania Antica” *Resto del Carlino* (Bologna 22. VI. 1927); Giglioli, G. Q. “Albania Antica”, *Giornaled'Italia* (Roma, 1. X. 1927).

²⁴ R. Vulpe: “Luigi M. Ugolini. Albania Antica, Vol. I, Ricerche Archeologiche”, *Revistaistorica* (Ottobre-dicembre 1927).

²⁵ Central State Archives, Tirana, F. 263, V. 1928, Dosja 162, ff. 1-6. Also see Magnani, S. “Butrinto, Virgilio e l’immaginario antico”, *L’archeologoscopre la storia. Luigi M. Ugolini (1895-1936)*, *Quadernbertinoresi*, (Bertinoro 1996) Giornata Internazionale di Studi per celebrare il Primo Centenario della nascita del cittadino L. M. Ugolini, 59-71.

This great classical, Byzantine and Venetian site is beautifully situated on the southern frontier of Albania, between the Ionian Sea and Lake Butrint. Ugolini never forgot to mention the fact that the first exploration of this archaeological site was conducted in 1418 by the Italian humanist, Cyriacus of Ancona.²⁶ Butrint was undoubtedly selected as the focus of the Mission because of its Vergilian associations. The approaching celebrations intended to mark the bimillennial of the poet's birth were undoubtedly a factor in the move.²⁷ The brief sojourn of Aeneas at the city en-route for Italy was an attractive element that was well fitted to the precepts of *Romanità*. Butrint was to be one of the destinations of the prestigious 'Crociera Virgiliana', an extended cruise around many Mediterranean archaeological sites with Vergilian connections, sponsored by the Accademia Realed'Italia. Aeneas and Butrint reinforced Italian policy on the eastern side of the Adriatic and Ionian seas, already seen as interventionist thanks to the Corfu incident in 1923.²⁸ Ugolini's professor of archaeology, Pericle Ducati, visited Butrint in 1929 and published an article in an important Italian newspaper, publishing the activities of his "giovani amici", Ugolini, Monaco and Nuccitelli.²⁹

Ugolini, however, utilized the Virgilian connection sparingly. His reports to the Foreign Ministry do not emphasize this factor, and his academic work concentrated on the later classical archaeology of the city. However he did go so far as the one of the Hellenistic gates of the city, the *Porta Scea*, after the gate supposedly seen by Aeneas. His archaeological results were tremendous and included the Theater, the Asclepius Temple, the Baptistery, the *Stoa*, the Lion Gate and Scea Gate, Roman Baths, City Walls, and the Venetian Castle.

The Albanian Government changed again on May 11, 1928. On July 11, 1928 Mussolini wrote to the Italian Minister in Tirana to make clear that if there were changes in Albanian constitution Italians would have to protect Ahmet Zogu, the Albanian President. On August 31, a military pact between Italy and Albania was signed. On September 1, after that was approved the constitution and the statute, A. Zogu, the Albanian President, declared that the Albanian Republic would become the Albanian Kingdom and he the Albanian King, under the name Zog I. On September 5, he created the new Government and named

²⁶ L. M. Ugolini: "L'Antica Albania nelle recent scoperte archeologiche italiane", *Rassegna Italiana* (Roma, marzo 1928) 221-222.

²⁷ F. Zevi, *op. cit.*, p. 179. See also J. Ancel: *Le Balkan face à l'Italie* and T. Tittoni: *Questioni del giorno (Tunisia-Abisinia-Bessarabia-Libia-Jugoslavia-Albania)*.

²⁸ G. Susini *op. cit.*, p. 109.

²⁹ P. Ducati: "Archeologia Italiana in Albania", *Corriere della Sera* (24. I. 1929). In 1937 Ugolini's popular book, and his last work on the subject, *Butrinto, Il Mito d'Enea* (Butrint, the Myth of Aeneas), was published posthumously; it referred directly to the Virgilian connection.

Koço Kota, as the Prime minister. On December 1, the National Assembly was changed into the Parliament and with the new Statute the monarchy was the democratic-parliamentary system. After that the Albanian Kingdom, was recognized by Italy, Greece, Hungary, Uruguay and U.S.A. (15 September 1928), before being recognized by Great Britain, France and other European states.³⁰

During the years 1929-1933 Albania was involved in the general post war crisis. In January 1930 the Head of Albanian Parliament, Pandeli Evangjeli, met Benito Mussolini in Rome. On March 4, 1930 the Government of Koço Kota had been changed and the new Government was headed by Pandeli Vangjeli.³¹ The Government changed again in 1935 and M. Frasheri was elected as the Prime Minister. This Government stayed in power until November 7, 1936. Two days later the new Government reverted back to Koço Kota. On January 31, the new elections approved the Government of Koço Kota.³² The Balkan Pact of February 9, 1934, signed by all the Balkan countries except Albania (Albania was not invited to the talks) and Bulgaria, is hard to say that was transformed in a war instrument, but it did not become a peace instrument, too.³³ The big problems of a small country, such as Albania, were published on September 1, in the *Revue de Paris*.³⁴

In the beginning of 1931 in Saranda and Corfu the British Navy, comprised of 6 war ships, arrived for the second time. They stayed there for 10 days (17-26 January). The admiral James, 6 officers and the son of the head of Gendarmerie, General Sir Joclyn Percey, went down to Saranda in January 21 for a hunting expedition. The “Queen Elizabeth” stayed in Vivary and officers visited Butrint accompanied by the Italian Mission who was excavated there.³⁵ The first group of British Navy, under the command of Admiral Davies, visited Durrës on October 7, 1930.³⁶

The British Navy, composed from war ships “Queen Elizabeth”, “Anthony” and “Bryony”, arrived again in the waters of Durrës on July 10, at 9. 30 a.m. and stayed there for 5 days, till July 15, at 9.30. The “Queen” stayed

³⁰ *Historia e Shqipërisë*, V. III (1912-1944), p. 346. See also I. Swire: *Albania, the rise of a kingdom*, Id. *King Zogu and Albania*.

³¹ See also G. Traglia: *L'Albania di re Zog*.

³² *Historia e Shqipërisë*, V. III (1912-1944), p. 362.

³³ See G. Shpuza: “Albania and the Balkan Pact of the year 1934”, *Studime Historike* 1-4 (1996), pp. 37-58; Id, “Albania between the Balkans and Apenines-1934”, *Studime Historike* 1-2 (1998), pp. 59-77.

³⁴ V. Martin: “Petit pays, grand problème: l'Albanie”, *Revue de Paris* (1st September 1932).

³⁵ Central State Archives, Tirana: F. 263, V. 1931, D. 100, f. 1; F. 263, V. 1931, D. 6, f. 6-7. See also the newspaper *Ora*, Nr. 272, 16 January 1931; Nr. 281, 27 January, 1931; newspaper *Arbënia*, N. 126, 18 January 1931.

³⁶ Newspaper *Ora*, N. 272, 16 January 1931.

three miles distant from the port and was visited on July 12 by 300 persons and on July 14 by another 300. In the yacht “Bryony” was the Lady Chatfield, the wife of Admiral, Sir Ernle Chatfield, the commandant of British Navy in Mediterranean, and their daughters. Admiral Chatfield had the appointment with King Zog on the morning of July 14. The Albanian government organized an official dinner on the same day for the honor of Admiral Chatfield, his head, Admiral Baily and other British in the Hotel Continental in Tirana. There were invited Italians and the commandant Silvio Montanarella, the captain of Fregata. The reception was also attended by the Albanian Minister of Foreign Affairs, J. Vrioni, etc.. The British Navy left Durrës on the morning of July 15, and on the same date Sir Chatfield wrote a letter to the captain Silvio Montanarella thanking him for the hospitality on the first day of their arrival and for the assistance during the sojourn.³⁷ In that period the British Consul was Mr. Hadwin and he stayed in Durrës.³⁸

Apart from the official members of the Missions that stayed in Albania for most of the time, other fellows came to visit Albania and they published either studies on different topics connected with their excavations and research or paintings. Vincenzo Ciardo was a painter who came in Albania in 1929 and painted landscapes and portraits.³⁹ Dario Roversi Monaco, Ugolini’s collaborator and engineer, published an article in 1934 on the Italian Archaeological excavations.⁴⁰ G. Castellani (1858-1038) published an article on Albanian coinage in 1932.⁴¹ Another Italian fellow, Pericle Perali (1884-1949), published a book on the earliest origins of Albania.⁴² The architect, Follin, from R. Istituto Veneto came to Albania to study Venetian monuments and stayed in Butrint in the winter 1931. Italian fellow, E. Armao published a book in Rome about the reports between Venice and Albania.⁴³ The Venetian and Italian traces in northern Albania are the theme of a study by S. Bettini, published in a Venetian Review in 1933. Some years later he published another article in the review *Albania* about the traces of art in Albania.⁴⁴ Luigi Cardini from Istituto di Paleontologia Umana di Firenze, a member of the Mission, excavated the prehistoric site near

³⁷ Central State Archives, Tirana: F. 263, V. 1931, D. 100, f. 10-13, 18.

³⁸ Central State Archives, Tirana: F. 263, V. 1931, D. 102, f. 1.

³⁹ Ciardo, V. ‘Una breve campagna pittorica in Albania’, *Japigia* (Rome 1931); Id. ‘Il clima pittorica dell’ Albania’, *Meridiano di Roma* (Roma 1940).

⁴⁰ D. R. Monaco: “Rilievi e Scavi Archeologici Italiani”, *Bolletino del Sindacato Provinciale Fascista Ingegneri*.

⁴¹ G. Castellani: “Albania numismatica”, *Rassegna Numismatica* (Roma 1932) n. 7, 8, 9, pp. 203-221.

⁴² P. Perali: *L’Albania e i “divini Pelasgi”*.

⁴³ E. Armao: *Venezia e Albania*.

⁴⁴ S. Bettini: “Testimonianze di civiltà d’arte in Albania”, *Albania*, I, (1939) pp. 93-146; Id. “Orme d’Italia e di Venezia nell’alta Albania”, *Rivista di Venezia* VII (1933) pp. 535-550.

the village of Xara, 8 km distant from Butrint. M. Monti Gennaro published two studies with the sources founded in Naples on the history of Albania.⁴⁵ Alfonso De Franciscis, from the University of Naples, and Antonio de Luca were also members of the Italian Archaeological Mission in that period. De Franciscis wrote an article on the inscriptions of Butrint.⁴⁶ Giuseppe d'Amico was the restorer of the Venetian castle and other monuments in Butrint. In the same period an English baron, Geoffrey Neale Cross (1904-) published a book with the study in the Greek Constitution of Epirus.⁴⁷

Meanwhile Leon Rey continued his excavations at Apollonia, the Albanian Minister of Education informed the Municipality of Fier, on August 14, 1931, that Mr. Clarence Manning from Columbia University was supposed to visit Pojan (Apollonia), but no other documents are preserved concerning his visit.⁴⁸ Another scholar, A. Brühl, published two articles in the volume *Albania*, about the archaeological excavations in Apollonia in 1931-1933, for the inscription in the Agonothetes monument, and for the inscriptions of Durrës city.⁴⁹ The mints of ancient Albania and their circulation are studied from the Italian numismatist, Lorenzo Cesano e Laura Breglia, and published in different reviews.⁵⁰ Another French scholar, Lemerle, published the chronic of the excavations and discovering in Albania.⁵¹ The American fellow, J. Whatmough, published in 1933 the Illyrian inscriptions founded in Italy, as the pre-italic dialects.⁵² The Venetian and Italian remains in northern Albania were the theme of a study published in the *Revista di Venezia* in 1933.⁵³

In the Museo della Civiltà Romana⁵⁴ are preserved the lists of workers

⁴⁵ M. Monti Gennaro: "La storia dell'Albania e le sue fonti napoletane", *Studi albanesi* I (1931) & Monti Gennaro: "Due documenti sconosciuti sull' Albania, di Alfonso d'Aragona", *Studi albanesi* I (1931).

⁴⁶ A. De Franciscis: "Iscrizioni di Butrinto", *Rend. Accad. Napoli XXI* (1941).

⁴⁷ G. N. Cross: *Epirus: a study in Greek constitutional development*.

⁴⁸ Central State Archives, Tirana: F. 263, V. 1931, D. 6, ff. 104-112, 110; F. 295, V. 1931, D. 79, ff. 122-131, ff. 10, f. 127.

⁴⁹ A. Brühl: "Fouilles de la Mission Française à Apollonie d'Illyrie (1931-1933). L'inscription du monument des Agonothetes", *Albania* Nr. 5 (Milano, Roma, Paris 1935), pp. 43-46; Id. "Inscriptions de Durazzo et de Tirana. Inscriptions du dépôt municipal de Durazzo", *Albania* Nr. 5 (1935), pp. 7-42.

⁵⁰ L. Cesano: "Monetazione e Circolazione sul suolo dell'antica Albania". *Atti e mem. Ist. Ital. Di numism. VII*; L. Breglia: "Monete di Babba", *Numismatica* (1941); Id. "Nuovielementi di conoscenza per la circolazione monetale e la storia dell' Epiro", *Rend. Accad. Napoli XXI* (1941).

⁵¹ P. Lemerle: "Chronique des fouilles et découvertes archéologiques: Albanie", *BCH* (1936), pp. 473-474.

⁵² Xh. Gosturani: *Historia e Albanologjisë*, pp. 37.

⁵³ S. Bettini: "Orme d'Italia e di Venezia nell'alta Albania", *Rivista di Venezia VII* (1933).

⁵⁴ Museo della Civiltà Romana ideated from Giuglio Quirino Giglioli, was inaugurated in 1927 as the Museum of Impero Romano in the locals of the former pastificio Pantanella alla Bocca della

and their payments from May-October 1936. They were each paid 7 days, 10 lek a day. So for the period 24-30 May there were 7 workers and they were paid 442 lek. Between the 31 May-7 June there were 37 workers and the amount of money they were paid 176.50 lek. Between the 7-13 June there were 56 workers and they were paid 3145.50 lek; 14-20 June were 20 workers, paid 1699 lek; 28 June - 4 July there were 12 workers and they were paid 733.50 lek. Between August and the end of October there were 33 workers. In November when there were only 3 workers. Each list is confirmed by the Albanian “caposcuadra” and are written their names as; Kristofer Verli, Avni Asan and Miço S. Koço.

Ugolini excavated at Butrint for eight years (1928-1936) despite many health problems. His voluminous correspondence shows his special personality and passion for archaeology. He did his best to integrate the initially politically motivated Italian Mission into the political life of Albania. His final years as the director of the Mission were marked with his ill health, which he neglected for the sake of continuing his work. He was in Butrinti, excavating and awaiting visitors, in November 1934. In a letter, dated November 10, he mentioned the visit of the English Consul of Corfu and Cephalonia and other English people and, he continued “a good phase of excavations”. He was preoccupied with whether or not his funds would arrive.⁵⁵ There is no other information until the summer of 1935, when on August 14, Ugolini was sick and sent on short notice a telegram from Corfu “Operatomi urgenza unico rene condizioni allarmi”.⁵⁶ A month later Italian Legation had not been informed further regarding his health and wanted more information.⁵⁷ We do not know how long he stayed in the hospital and when he returned to the excavations. A telegram on March 28, 1936 noted that Ugolini was in Rome in a hospital, named “Casa di Cura”, in Villa Torri.⁵⁸

Verità. After the beautiful exhibition *Augustea della Romanità* (1937-38) it is inaugurated in the actual sede only in 1955 and has mostly reproductions. The Palace (1939-52) was gifted from the State to the FIAT company and is constituted from two symmetrical buildings connected with a colonnade. Architects of the complex are: Aschieri, Peressutti, Bernardini, Pascoletti. Museum has a variety of documents on the history and civilization of Rome from the origins to the VIth century AD. Is important the plastique of Rome in the age of Costantino, the biggest and most completed one, the copies of the Traianus column, etc. Some of the copies and reproductions were parts of archaeological exhibition of 1911 in the Baths and of the exhibition *Augustea della Romanità* (1935) in Palazzo delle Esposizioni. Copies were made in the Thirties in all the territory of Roman Empire from the most known archaeologists of the époque (Pallottino, Colini, Pietrangeli, Romanelli, etc.).

⁵⁵ Central State Archives, Tirana: F. 263, V. 1934, D. 147, ff. 92-98, f. 96.

⁵⁶ Central State Archives, Tirana: F. 263, V. 1935, D. 240, F. 1-6, p. 4.

⁵⁷ *Ibidem*, f. 5.

⁵⁸ Central State Archives, Tirana: F. 263, V. 1936, D. 196, F. 1-5, P. 6, Xh. 777, p.2.

After March 1936 he was again seriously sick, and by September he had left Butrint and was hospitalized in Italy. On June 7, 1936 Ugolini was in Butrint planning aerial photos of the excavations, proposing that one of the Mission members be on board the plane. He suggested that the best hours were 9 a.m. and 4 p.m., when the light was good.⁵⁹ On July 8, 1936 Mr. Vrioni sent a telegram from Corfu informing the Albanian Ministry of Foreign Affairs that the Prince of Greece, who was staying in Corfu, wanted to visit Butrint. On July 2, the Ministry of Interior has ordered the Prefect of Gjirokastra, Mr. Nikolla Zoi, to organize the reception and accompany of the Prince.⁶⁰ There are no other data about his visit, etc., but it is mentioned that a lot of tourists went to visit Butrint in August 1936 and Ugolini was still there.⁶¹ On October 5, the visit of the French Minister in Tirana was announced, but Ugolini was not in Butrint.⁶² There are no documents recording precisely when he left Butrint to go at the “Casa di Cura” or in what condition his health was, but is clear he was in very serious state. On the night of October 4, 1936 Ugolini died at the age of 41.⁶³ No one had believed that Ugolini, a very active and hardworking scholar, was in such dire physical health. His niece, Alma Buratti, told the author that the physician who operated him during the First World War and did the fatal surgery, understood his hard and very serious problems. Ugolini himself entered hospital with optimism that his health problems would be resolved and he had planned to marry his girlfriend in Rome.⁶⁴ The death of Ugolini marked the end of the first phase of activity of the Italian Archaeological Mission in Albania.

The Albanian Ministry of the Interior preserves documents pertaining to a German, Werner Niemeyer, who came on June 27, 1936 to write a book on

⁵⁹ Central State Archives, Tirana: F. 263, V. 1936, D. 196, F. 6-11, P. 6, Xh. 778, p. 7.

⁶⁰ Central State Archives, Tirana: F. 152, V. 1936, D. 279, page 1-17

Page 1: MbretinijaShqiptare

Prefektura e Gjirokastrës

Nr. 215 RES Gjirokastrër, me 6/6/936. P.T. Ministrisë P. Të Mbrendëshme, Zyrës Sekrete, Tiranë.

Për dije, parashtrijmë se mbas shkresës Nr. 7-35/2 RES d. 5/6/936 të Komandës Qarkut këtueshem, ka mbrit në Butrinto Arqeologu Z. Ugolini dhe ka filluar nga gjermimi i gjermimeve. Prefekti (Timber+sign)

Page 5: Min. For. Affaires, Tiranë. Kerkyra, me 8. VII. 1936.

Princi trashëgimtar i Greqisë që është në Korfuz ka dëshire të vizitojë Butrinton ditën e hënë. Lutemi nemnani instruksione. Vrioni.

⁶¹ Central State Archives, Tirana: F. 263, V. 1936, D. 196, F. 18-22, P. 6, Xh. 780, p. 21.

⁶² Central State Archives, Tirana: F. 263, V. 1936, D. 196, F. 18-22, P. 6, Xh. 780, p. 21, 22.

⁶³ He was back from ‘Casa di Cura’ Villa Toschi, where he had a surgery by Prof. Gasparini, the same physician who cured him during World War I.

⁶⁴ I thank very much Mrs. Alma Burati, Ugolini’s niece, who lives in Forlì, for the details and for the memories from her mother about Ugolini.

an Albanian topic, but it is not clear what type of book he wanted to write and we do not know if he ever succeeded.⁶⁵

On December 4, 1936 the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs announced that Roberto Paribeni, President of Reale Istituto Archeologico, had proposed Pirro Marconi, professor of Archaeology and Art History at the University of Naples and University of Palermo, be named the Head of the Italian Archaeological Mission in Albania, as the successor of Prof. Ugolini.⁶⁶ On December 22, 1936 Francesco Jacomoni di San Savino, the Italian Minister at the Embassy of Tirana, proposed the opening of the Italian Institute of Culture in Tirana.⁶⁷ There is a gap in the information until February 1937, when Pirro Marconi arrived to continue the excavations.⁶⁸ On March 27, Cont. Galeazzo Ciano visited Belgrade and with the Yugoslavian Prime Minister, Millan Stojanoviç signed a pact of friendship between Italy and Yugoslavia. On April 1937, the Italian Minister of Foreign Affairs, Cont. G. Ciano, visited Albania.⁶⁹ On July 17 Marconi had an audience with Ahmet bej Zogu and had with him a “cordiale colloquio”.⁷⁰ During the summer, Pirro Marconi did some survey in Acrocerauni and the cave of Velcia, near Vlora.⁷¹

On January 1938 the CTI (Center of Italian Tourism) was asked to publish a Guide on Albania in English, Italian, German and French. This Guide was to be ready by the end of 1938 and was printed in the beginning of 1939. In a letter that Marconi wrote on January 26, 1938 to the Italian Minister in Tirana,⁷² he detailed the chapters:

Geology, geography, climate, flora, fauna	6 pages Prof. Almagià
Anthropology, demography, religion	6 pages Prof. Baldacci
Linguistic e literature	4 pages Prof. Leotta
Costume e folklore	5 pages Dr. Larusso
Ancient History	1 page Prof. Marconi
Medieval and modern History	5 pages Prof. Montanelli
Archaeology and Arts	5 pages Prof. Marconi
Public works, roads, etc.	7 pages Eng. Zanuccoli
Economy, industry and trade	7 pages Comm. Lombardi
Bibliography e cartography	3 pages Prof. Marconi

⁶⁵ Central State Archives, Tirana: F. 152, V. 1936, D. 291, p. 106.

⁶⁶ Central State Archives, Tirana: F. 263, V. 1936, D. 198, F. 1-4, P. 5, Xh. 782, p. 1.

⁶⁷ Central State Archives, Tirana: F. 263, V. 1936, D. 200, F. 1-2, P. 2, Xh. 786.

⁶⁸ Ibidem, p. 4.

⁶⁹ *Historia e Shqipërisë*, V.III (1912-1944), 413.

⁷⁰ Ibidem, f. 28

⁷¹ Central State Archives, Tirana: F. 263, V. 1937, D. 244, f.15-19, f. 12.

⁷² Central State Archives, Tirana: F. 263, V. 1938, D. 140, f. 16.

In March 1938 Albanian King, Ahmet Zogu, approved the creation of the Naples' Bank in Albania (Banco di Napoli-Albania) with the administrative center in Tirana. Some days later, in April 1938, Cont. Ciano was invited to the wedding of the Albanian King. During this sojourns he tried to approve a mining concession of the Azienda Mineraria Metaliferi Italiana - AMMI. This concession was signed by the Albanian Government a year later, in March 1939.⁷³

The tragic death of Marconi at the age of 41, as he was flying to Rome, in late April 1938, interrupted his work in Butrint. After his death the excavations continued in June and July under Iginò Epicoco and later that year, in accordance with a proposal by Paribeni, Prof. Domenico Mustilli from the University of Naples was named the director of Italian Archaeological Mission.⁷⁴

On August 13, 1938 the King Zog, with his wife, Geraldina, and his sister, Senije, visited Butrint. They signed the visitors' book and added the date of their visit.⁷⁵

On July 11, 1938 the Italian Legation of Tirana by telex n. 1971,⁷⁶ noted that Father Fulvio Cordignano (1887-1951) was doing archaeological research in northern Albania on Byzantine and Venetian art. (Studio complete delle chiese, monasteri, castelli e rovine dell'Albania, mettendo in piena luce l'apporto di Roma e di Venezia).⁷⁷ An English numismatist published a book about the coinage of Damastion, the Illyrian city that was supposed to be near silver mines.⁷⁸

⁷³ *Historia e Shqipërisë*, V.III (1912-1944), 417-418.

⁷⁴ D. Mustilli: "L'ultimo quadriennio di attività della mission archeologica in Albania (1937-40)", *Centro studi albanesi dell' Acc. d'Italia* II (1943); Id. "Relazione preliminare sugli scavi archeologici in Albania (1937-1940)", *Rendiconti della classe di scienze morali e storiche* VI, Vol. II (1942), pp. 678-685; Id. "Roma e la sponda illirica", *Quaderni dell' Impero. Roma e il Mediterraneo* (Roma 1942); Id. "Rassegna bibliografica", *Rivista d'Albania* III (1942); Id. *La conquista romana della sponda orientale adriatica* (Napoli 1941); Id. "Relazione preliminare sugli scavi archeologici in Albania 1937-40", *Rend. Acc. Italia* II (1941); Id. "Gli Illiri nell'Epiro", *Le Terre albanesi redente. II.- Ciameria* (Roma 1941); Id. "L'opera di Luigi N. Ugolini", *Rivista d'Albania* Vol. II, Fasc. 1 (Napoli 1941); Id. "Rassegna bibliografica", *Rivista d'Albania* II (1941); Id. "Archeologia del Cossovo", *Le terre albanesi redente* (Roma 1941); Id. "Gli scavi Italiani di Butrinto", *Romana* (Roma Aprile 1940), pp. 183-191; Id. "Rassegna bibliografica", *Rivista d'Albania* I (1940); Id. "La civiltà preistorica dell'Albania", *Rivista d'Albania* Vol. I (Milano 1940); Id. "Gli scavi italiani di Butrinto", *Romana* IV (1940), pp. 1-11; Id. "Roma e l'Albania", *Conferenze dell' Ist. Sup. Orientale*, n. 3 (1940); Id. "Viaggiatori e archeologi italiani in Albania", *Romana* II (1939), pp. 1-9.

⁷⁵ The visitor's book that contains the signatures is preserved at the personal archive of I. Epicoco, now property of his grandson, Mr. Tadei.

⁷⁶ Central State Archives, Tirana: F. 263, V. 1938, D. 140. ff. 135-140.

⁷⁷ See F. Cordignano: *L'Albania attraverso l'opera e gli scritti di un grande missionario italiano: il p. Domenico Pasi (1847-1914)*; Id. *Geografia ecclesiastica dell'Albania degli ultimi decenni del secolo XVI alla metà del secolo XVII* (Roma 1934) (*Seria Orientalia Christiana*), XXXVI-4, nr. 99; Id. *Saggio di un regesto storico dell'Albania* (Scutari 1937-40).

⁷⁸ J. M. F. May: *The coinage of Damastion*.

On February 5 Mussolini decided to invade Albania. The occupation of Czechoslovakia by Germany on March 15, 1939 obliged Mussolini to have stronger position into Balkans. The definitive decision for the occupation of Albania is dated 23 March 1939.⁷⁹ Mussolini intended on showing his independence from Hitler and, perhaps aiming at the formation of a new Mediterranean empire, free from German control, invaded Albania in early 1939 and, from the Albanian frontier, crossed into Greece late in 1940. Beginning on April 7, 1939, with the first day of the Italian invasion, led by General A. Guzoni, Albania was involved in the Second World War. On the same day Zogu left Albania and went to London.⁸⁰ On April 8 Tirana was occupied by the Italian army.⁸¹ After that both the French and Italian Archaeological Missions in Albania were completely halted although the French Mission had been nearly finished since 1938. The hiatus in archaeological research lasted a year. The outbreak of war with Greece in October 1940 found Butrint on the front line. The feeble Italian offensive of that year was repulsed and Santi Quaranta was captured by the Greek army on December 6, although subsequent intervention by German forces placed Epirus and Butrint under Italian control again. After the Italian invasion the number of publications on Albania increased. Michele Gervasio published an article for ancient Albania.⁸² Borreli published an article about the coins of ancient Albania.⁸³

“We could see nothing of Europe’s old Kulturland”- Wilhelm Prüller wrote in his diary at the end of three weeks in the South Balkans-Crease people and poor, impossible clay huts and houses As far as I can judge, this nation is at least two thousand years behind and lives only from its age-old, if epoch-making, cultural tradition.”⁸⁴

On July 19, 1940 the Albanian Ministry of Education requested to have Italian specialists as advisers in the office of “Archeologia e Belle Arti”, one being Igino Epicoco for “Belle Arti” and the other, Claudio Sestieri, for Archaeology, (Ispettore nel ruolo delle Antichità e Belle Arti attualmente presso il Museo Nazionale di Napoli).⁸⁵ After that both Igino Epicoco and Claudio Sestieri lived in Tirana, attached to the Ministry of Education. In Naples they

⁷⁹ *Historia e Shqipërisë*, V.III (1912-1944), p. 437.

⁸⁰ He stayed in London till the end of the Second World War, after that moved first to Egypt and later in France, where he died in 1961.

⁸¹ M. Udina: “L’unione italo-albanese e sua natura giuridica”, *Rivista d’Albania* (Milano 1940) fasc. 4, pp. 425-427.

⁸² M. Gervasio: “L’Albania antica”, *Iapigia* X.

⁸³ L. Borreli: “Le monete dell’antica Albania”, *Numismatica Romana* (May-June 1939), pp. 68-73.

⁸⁴ W. Prüller: *Diary of a German Soldier*. Translated by H. C. Robbins.

⁸⁵ Central State Archives, Tirana: F.261, V. 1940, D. 313, ff. 17-24.

organized an exhibition about Albania that was called “Oltre Mare”.⁸⁶ According to Prof. Selim Islami, Domenico Mustilli in his last visit to Albania in the sixties recounted having seen parts of sculptures from Albania still in the Museum from the exhibition.

When Albania was part of the Italian Kingdom, interest in publishing studies with Albanian themes increased. In this period a Center for Albanian Studies was created near the ‘Reale Accademia d’Italia’ and the ‘Istituto per gli Studi di Politica Internazionale’, published an Albanian Journal every three months edited by Francesco Ercole (1884-).⁸⁷ The Italian Touring Club published a guide book on Albania in Milan, by Luigi Vittorio Bertarelli (1859-1926) with 221 pages, geographical maps, etc.⁸⁸ In the same year maps of the Albanian coast were published.⁸⁹ Giuseppe Massani published in Rome from Il Rubicone a book with the title Albania. Of course in this book is described the glory of fascism and mentioned that the perspective of this country and this people “ordinato e fiero. Orgoglioso del suo passato, conscio del suo avvenire” is only in the conditions of the fascist Albania.⁹⁰ De Franciscis, a former member of the Italian Archaeological Mission in Albania, published an article on the inscriptions of Butrint.⁹¹ Giuseppe Valentini published a study on the numismatic of Albania.⁹²

From December 1940 to April 1941, Albania was involved in the Italian-Greek war. From that period existed a war law in Greece, considering Albania as an enemy state. The Italian King, Vittore Emanuele III, declared the king of Italy, Albania and Ethiopia, would come to visit Albania in May 1941. In Tirana, while he was crossing a principal road, on May 17, he was shouted at by a young Albanian, named Vasil Laçi (1922-1941) and this was a sign against Italian occupation. The young Albanian was condemned in Tirana by the army-court and executed on 27 May 1941.⁹³

The Albanian Ministry of Education authorized the Italian Consulting specialist for Archaeology, Arts and Libraries, Prof. P. C. Sestieri, to go to Byllis and to do archaeological excavations in May 1942. He was paid with 10 000 Albanian gold franks.⁹⁴ Leon Rey’s old excavations at Apollonia were also re-opened by Sestieri. The Italians had always been curious about the work the

⁸⁶ D. Alizoti: “L’Albania alla mostra d’Oltremare”, *Albania* 2-3, pp. 102-106.

⁸⁷ See: F. Ercole: *Rivista d’Albania*.

⁸⁸ L. V. Bertarelli: *Albania*.

⁸⁹ A. Sestini: “Le pianure costiere dell’ Albania”, *Bollettino della Reale Società Geografica Italiana* (Roma, Settembre-Ottobre 1940), pp. 513-527.

⁹⁰ G. Massani: *Albania*.

⁹¹ A. De Franciscis: “Iscrizioni di Butrinto”, *Rend. Accad. Napoli XXI* (1941), pp. 284-290.

⁹² G. Valentini: “Saggio di numismatica Albanese”, *Numismatica Romana* (1941).

⁹³ *Fjalori Enciklopedik Shqiptar*, p. 592.

⁹⁴ Central State Archives, Tirana: F. 295, V. 1942, D. 333-343, ff. 1-8.

French did in this ancient city, although Ugolini in his first book did not describe Apollonia in detail since it was under French authorities. Ugolini did not forget to mention in the first volume of *Albania Antica* that Apollonia was first visited from an Italian archaeologist, B. Pace, and then, explored by an Austrian Mission (Praschniker and Schober) and then some French archaeologists were doing some archaeological excavations.⁹⁵ M. Buffa published an article about the gravestone founded in Durrës,⁹⁶ and S. Masci published in the same review an article about Apollonia.⁹⁷

Security deteriorated over the next two years, with the partisans being active in the southern mountains of Albania. During this period Italians continued archaeological excavations in Butrint, in 1942-1943 under Umberto Marchetti. The materials of the Mission were transferred, according to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, to the Ministry of Popular Culture in Tirana, in February 1943. On March 17, Umberto Marchetti informed the Italian Legation in Tirana that it was important to create an Office, to preserve the archaeological site and its deposits.⁹⁸ The Italian surrender of September 1943 effectively ended all Italian concern with Butrint and with the archaeology of Albania. Italy had other more pressing problems closer to home.⁹⁹

On November 29, 1944, the Liberation day of Albania, a new chapter in the long history of this country opened the period of communism or the so called 'proletarian dictatorship' and, archaeology came to be organized in a very different way.

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⁹⁵ L. M. Ugolini: *Albania Antica* 1.

⁹⁶ M. Buffa: "Trovamento di un cippo iscritto a Durazzo", *R. Alb.* IV (1942).

⁹⁷ S. Masci: "Lo scalo d'Apollonia", *R. Alb.* IV (1943), pp. 206-211.

⁹⁸ Central State Archives, Tirana: F. 261, V. 1942, D. 841, ff. 2-11.

⁹⁹ Ciano, G. *Journal Politique, 1939-1943* V. I-II.

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