

e Italian Archaeological Mission in Albania before and during _____ World War II

_____ *Lida MIRAJ* _____

In 1924 Albania was in a very chaotic political state. After the elections of January, when Ahmet bej Zogu (1895-1961), a former Austro-Hungarian officer, educated in Military school in Constantinople (1903-August 1912), took power, there was a coup attempt against him on February 23, and the government changed in March. Ahmet bej Zogu left Albania in early June 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 the 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 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 Durres, Marchese Carlo Durazzo and Mussolini himself regarding the creation of an Italian Archaeological Mission in Albania. So it was proposed a young archaeologist Luigi Maria Ugolini to 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

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

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

the Albanian Embassy in Rome had informed the 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 1 February the new government was created. Three years later he will declare himself the King of Albania. In 30 January Zogu asked Mussolini for creation of the friendship relations between Roma and Tirana. The Albanian government was looking to have relations with both Italian and British governments.⁵

Beginning in 1925 Rome 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. 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. In 8 February 1927 this pact was approved in ONU.⁷ Before the approval of the pact, on September 30, 1926 in Livorno, was organized a meeting 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 National Bank with principal 'sede' in Rome and the name of currency: Franga

1923 he stayed a year in Athens. It was always mentioned that he was member of Partito Nazionale Fascista (National Fascist Party) from 1924. See Zevi F. 'L'Archeologia italiana in Albania', *L'archeologia Italiana nel Mediterraneo* (Catania 1986) 171.

³ Central State Archives, Tirana: F. 295. V. 1924, K. 4, D. 34, Fq. 1-7, P. 10, Xh 709

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

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

⁶ Pastorelli, P. *Italia e Albania, 1924-1927* (Firenze 1967); Roselli, A. *Italia e Albania. Relazioni nanziarie nel ventennio fascista* (Bologna 1986).

⁷ Idem, 324. See and Pastorelli, P. *Italia e Albania, 1924-1927* (Firenze 1967); Lefebvre d'Ovidio F. *L'intesa italo-francese del 1935 e la politica estera di Mussolini* (Roma 1984); Roselli A. *Italia e Albania. Relazioni nanziarie nel ventennio fascista* (Bologna 1986).

⁸ Idem, 325-326,

(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 Albanian government asked a debt for 40 years in 62, 7 million golden francs from SVEA.¹⁰ On July 1925 Zogu gifted to the Yugoslavian government the Monastery of St Naum in the coast of Ochrid Lake and a piece of land in northern part of Vermosh region.¹¹

In this situation 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 Durres wrote to his office in Saranda that the Albanian President had ordered local authorities to permit archaeological excavations in Feniki (Phoinike).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 Italian Mission in Albania.¹³ The tract of the friendship between Italy and Albania began at the end of 1925 and was in effect in September, being concluded only on 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 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 Albania and Italy and these could serve as a base for the future "convivenza" between the two peoples.¹⁶

Ugolini began excavations at the classical site of Feniki (Phoinice), the capital of Epirus, its large acropolis is seven times bigger than that of 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 to Ugolini a letter of appreciation for the good job he was doing.¹⁷ At about the same time, interest in the classical past of the country was rekindled, and the first Albanian scholars, most notably Hasan Ceka, began to explore the archaeology of their country.

⁹ See Ratti, A. M. 'La vicende dell'economia albanese e la fortune del franco', *Rassegna Monetaria* (Roma 1936).

¹⁰ Ibidem.

¹¹ Ibidem.

¹² Ibidem, p. 16.

¹³ Aloisi, P. & Vrioni H. 'Il patto d'amicizia tra l'Italia e l'Albania', *Rassegna italo-albanese* Nr. 1 (Palermo 1927).

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, K. 16, D. 212, Fq 9-14, P. 6, Xh. 679, p. 10.

¹⁵ Central State Archives, Tirana: F. I. 295, V. 1925, D. 119-132, Fq. 1-6, P. 65, Xh. 1636

¹⁶ Jacomoni di Sansavino, F. *La politica dell'Italia in Albania* (Bologna 1965) 30-31.

¹⁷ Ibidem, p. 43, 44

the antiquities of Dyrrachium are published in 1926 from an Austrian fellow, B. Saria.¹⁸ The British writer, Paul Edmond, did 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”.¹⁹ In the review of the French Mission, *Albania* a French travel Agency, Etoile, with page publicity invited people to visit Greece, passing from Dalmatia and Albania.

On November 22, 1927 was signed a tractate of “protective alliance” between Albanian and Italian Governments that was named “the Second pact of Tirana”. In fact this was the same pact with the first one of 1925, but it was not any more noted the limit of time for 5 years. The new alliance was signed for a period of 20 years. Some month later, in August 31, 1928, other hidden military pacts are signed between Italy and Albania. On December 1927 Zogu approved the diplomatic relations between the Republic of Albania and the Vatican State.²⁰

On 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.²¹ Two famous Italian archaeologists, Pericle Ducati and Giulio Quirino Giglioli, immediately published long articles that mentioned this book and the activity of Ugolini and his Mission in Albania.²² Another scholar, Radu Vulpe, included Ugolini’s book in an historical review.²³

In January 1928 Ugolini moved the excavations from Feniki to Butrint.²⁴ This great classical, Byzantine and Venetian site is beautifully situated on the southern frontiers of Albania, between the Ionian Sea and Lake Butrint. Ugolini never forgot to mention the fact that the first exploration in this archaeological site was conducted in 1418 from the Italian humanist, Cyriacus of Ancona.²⁵ Butrint was undoubtedly selected as the focus of the Mission because of its Vergilian associations. The approaching celebrations intended to mark the bimillennium

¹⁸ Saria, B. ‘Antiken aus Durazzo’, *JÖAI*, 23/2 (1926) 242-246.

¹⁹ Edmond, P. *To the land of the eagle* (London 1927).

²⁰ *Historia e Shqipërisë*, V. III (1912-1944) (Tirana 1984) 329-330.

²¹ Ugolini, L. M. *Albania Antica* (Roma 1927).

²² Ducati, P. ‘Albania Antica’ *Resto del Carlino* (Bologna 22. VI. 1927); Gigliolo, G. Q. ‘Albania Antica’, *Giornale d’Italia* (Roma, 1. X. 1927).

²³ Vulpe, R. ‘Luigi M. Ugolini. Albania Antica, Vol. I, Ricerche Archeologiche’, *Revista istorica* (Ottobre-dicembre 1927).

²⁴ Central State Archives, Tirana, F. 263, V. 1928, Dosja 162, Faqe 1-6, Poza 11, Xh. 984. See and Magnani, S. ‘Butrinto, Virgilio e l’immaginario antico’, *L’archeologo scopre la storia. Luigi M. Ugolini (1895-1936), Quaderni bertinoresi*, (Bertinoro 1996) Giornata Internazionale di Studi per celebrare il Primo Centenario della nascita del cittadino L.M. Ugolini, 59-71..

²⁵ Ugolini, L.M. ‘L’Antica Albania nelle recenti scoperte archeologiche italiane’, *Rassegna Italiana* (Roma, marzo 1928) 221-222.

of the poet's birth were undoubtedly a factor in the move.²⁶ 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 Reale d'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 1923.²⁷ Ugolini's professor of archaeology, Pericle Ducati, visited Butrint in 1929 and published an article in an important Italian newspaper, publicizing the activities of his "giovani amici," Ugolini, Monaco and Nuccitelli.²⁸

Ugolini, however, utilized the Virgilian connection sparingly. His reports to the Foreign Ministry do not emphasize this factor, and his academic works concentrate 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 was changed again in May 11, 1928. On July 11, 1928 in a letter of Mussolini for the Italian minister in Tirana was clear the order of Italian government that in the moment of the changes in Albanian constitution Italians have to protect Ahmet Zogu, the Albanian President. On August 31, 1928 was signed a military pact between Italy and Albania. On September 1, after that was approved the constitution and the statute, A. Zogu, the Albanian President, declared the change from the Albanian Republic to the Albanian Kingdom and himself as the Albanian King, under the name Zog I. On September 5, he created the new Government and named 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 known from Italy, Greece, Hungary, Uruguay and U.S.A. (15 September 1928), before being known from Great Britain, France and other European states.²⁹

During the years 1929-1933 Albania was involved in the general post war crisis. On January 1930 the Head of Albanian Parliament, Pandeli Evangjeli, met in Rome with B. Mussolini. On March 4, 1930 the Government of Koço

²⁶ Zevi, F. *op. cit.*, 179. See and Ancel, J. *Le Balkan face à l'Italie* (Paris 1928) and Tittoni, T. *Questioni del giorno (Tunisia-Abisinia-Bessarabia-Libia-Jugoslavia-Albania)* (Milano 1928).

²⁷ Susini, G. *op. cit.*, 109.

²⁸ Ducati, P. *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.

²⁹ *Historia e Shqipërisë*, V. III (1912-1944) (Tirana 1984) 346. See and Swire, I. *Albania, the rise of a kingdom* (London 1929); Id. *King Zogu and Albania* (London 1937).

Kota changed and the new Government was headed from Pandeli Vangjeli.³⁰ The Government was changed again in 1935 and M. Frasheri was elected as the Prime Minister. This Government stayed in the power until November 7, 1936. Two days later the new Government was headed from Koço Kota. On January 31, the new elections approved the Government of Koço Kota.³¹ The Balkan Pact of February 9, 1934, signed by the Balkan countries except Albania (Albania was not invited in the talks) and Bulgaria, is hard to say that was transformed in a war instrument, but it did not become a peace instrument, too.³² The big problems of a small country, such as Albania, were published on September 1, in the *Revue de Paris*.³³

In the beginning of 1931 in Saranda and Corfu arrived for the second visit the group of British Navy, composed with 6 big war ships. They stayed there for 10 days (17-26 January). The admiral, James, officers and the son of the head of Gendarmerie, the General Sir Joclyn Percey, went down to Saranda in 21 January for hunting. The "Queen Elisabeth" stayed in Vivary and officers visited Butrint accompanied from Italian Mission who was excavated there.³⁴ The first group of British Navy, under the command of Admiral Davies, visited Durres on October 7, 1930.³⁵ The British Navy composed from war ships "Queen Elizabeth", Anthony" and "Bryony" arrived again in the waters of Durres on July 10, at 9.30 a.m. and stayed there till 9.30 a.m. in 15 of July. The "Queen" stayed three miles distant from the port and was visited on July 12 from 300 persons and on July 14 for other 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.

The admiral Chatfield had the appointment with King Zog in the morning of July 14. The Albanian government organized an official dinner in the same day for the honor of Admiral Chatfield, his head, Admiral Bailay and other British in the Hotel Continental in Tirana. There were invited Italians and the commandant Silvio Montanarella, the captain of Fregata. In this reception participated the Albanian Minister of Foreign Affairs, J. Vrioni, etc.. The British Navy left Durres in the morning of July 15, and in the same date Sir Chatfield wrote a letter to the captain Silvio Montanarella thanking him for the hospitality in the first day of their arrival and the assistance during the sojourn.³⁶ In that period the British Consul was Mr. Hadwin and he stayed in Durres.³⁷

³⁰ See and Traglia, G. *L'Albania di re Zog* (Roma 1930).

³¹ *Historia e Shqipërisë*, V. III (1912-1944) (Tirana 1984) 362.

³² See Shpuza, G. 'Albania and the Balkan Pact of the year 1934', *Studime Historike* 1-4 (1996) 37-58; Id, 'Albania between the Balkans and Apennines-1934', *Studime Historike* 1-2 (1998) 59-77.

³³ Martin, V. 'Petit pays, grand problème: l'Albanie', *Revue de Paris* (1st September 1932).

³⁴ Central State Archives, Tirana: F. 263, V. 1931, D. 100, p. 1; F. 263, V. 1931, D. 6, P. 6-7. See and the newspaper *Ora*, Nr. 272, 16 January 1931; Nr. 281, 27 January, 1931; newspaper *Arbënia*, N. 126, 18 January 1931.

³⁵ Newspaper *Ora*, N. 272, 16 January 1931.

³⁶ Central State Archives, Tirana: F. 263, V. 1931, D. 100, p. 10-13, 18..

³⁷ Central State Archives, Tirana: F. 263, V. 1931, D. 102, p. 1.

Except 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 the painter who came in Albania in 1929 and painted landscapes and portraits.³⁸ Dario Roversi Monaco, Ugolini's collaborator and engineer, published an article in 1934 on the Italian Archaeological excavations.³⁹ G. Castellani (1858-1038) published an article on Albanian coinage in 1932.⁴⁰ Another Italian fellow, Pericle Perali (1884-1949), published a book for the earliest origins of Albania.⁴¹ 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 in Rome a book about the reports between Venice and Albania.⁴² The Venetian and Italian traces in northern Albania are the theme of a study of S. Bettini, published in a Venetian Review in 1933. Some years later he will published another article in the review *Albania* about the traces of art in Albania.⁴³ Luigi Cardini from Istituto di Paleontologia Umana di Firenze, as member of the Mission, excavated the prehistorical site near 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.⁴⁴ 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.⁴⁵ 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.⁴⁶

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.⁴⁷

Another scholar, Brühl, published two articles in the volume *Albania*, about the

³⁸ Ciardo, V. 'Una breve campagna pittorica in Albania', *Japigia* (Rome 1931); Id. 'Il clima pittorica dell'Albania', *Meridiano di Roma* (Roma 1940).

³⁹ Monaco, D. R. 'Rilievi e Scavi Archeologici Italiani', *Bolletino del Sindacato Provinciale Fascista Ingegneri* (Bologna 1934).

⁴⁰ Castellani, G. 'Albania numismatica', *Rassegna Numismatica* (Roma 1932) n. 7, 8, 9 203-221.

⁴¹ Perali, P. *L'Albania e i "divini Pelasgi"* (Roma 1942).

⁴² Armao, E. *Venezia e Albania* (Roma 1935).

⁴³ Bettini, S. 'Testimonianze di civiltà d'arte in Albania', *Albania*, I, (1939) 93-146; Id. 'Orme d'Italia e di Venezia nell'alta Albania', *Rivista di Venezia* VII (1933) 535-550.

⁴⁴ Monti Gennaro, M. '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).

⁴⁵ De Franciscis, A. 'Iscrizioni di Butrinto', *Rend. Accad. Napoli* XXI (1941).

⁴⁶ Cross, G. N. *Epirus: a study in Greek constitutional development* (Cambridge 1932).

⁴⁷ Central State Archives, Tirana: F. 263, V. 1931, D. 6, Fq. 104-112, P. 6, Xh. 39, P. 110; F. 295, V. 1931, D. 79, Fq. 122-131, P. 10, Xh. 1217, P. 127

archaeological excavations in Apollonia in 1931-1933, for the inscription in the Agonothetes monument, and for the inscriptions of Durres city.⁴⁸ The mints of ancient Albania and their circulation are studied from the Italian numismatist, Lorenzo Cesano e Laura Breglia, and published in different reviews.⁴⁹ Another French scholar, Lemerle, published the chronic of the excavations and discovering in Albania.⁵⁰ The American fellow, J. Whatmough, published in 1933 the Illyrian inscriptions founded in Italy, as the pre-italic dialects.⁵¹ The Venetian and Italian remains in northern Albania were the theme of a study published in the *Revista di Venezia* in 1933.⁵²

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 originally politically motivated Italian Mission into the political life of Albania. Increasingly marked Ugolini's final years as the director of the Mission ill health, which he neglected for the sake of continuing his work. He was in Butrinti, excavating and waiting visitors, in November 1934. In a letter, dated November 10 he mentioned the visit of the English Consul of Corfu and Cefallonia and other English people and, he continued "a good faze of excavations". He was preoccupied with whether or not his funds would arrive.⁵³ There is no other information until the summer 1935, when on the August 14 Ugolini was sick and sent on short notice a telegram from Corfu "Operatomi urgenza unico rene condizioni allarmi".⁵⁴ A month later Italian Legation had not been informed further regarding his health and wanted more information.⁵⁵ We do not know how long he stayed in the hospital and when he was returned to the excavations. A telegram of March 28, 1936 noted that Ugolini was in Rome in a "Casa di cura", in Villa Torri.⁵⁶

In 1936 he was again seriously ill, and by September had left Butrint and was hospitalized in Italy. On June 7, 1936 Ugolini was in Butrinti 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

⁴⁸ Brühl, A. 'Fouilles de la Mission Française à Apollonie d'Illyrie (1931-1933). L'inscription du monument des Agonothetes', *Albania* Nr. 5 (Milano, Roma, Paris 1935) 43-46; Id. Inscriptions de Durazzo et de Tirana. Inscriptions du dépôt municipal de Durazzo', *Albania* Nr. 5 (1935) 7-42.

⁴⁹ Cesano, L. 'Monetazione e Circolazione sul suolo dell'antica Albania'. *Atti e mem. Ist. Ital. Di numism. VII* (Roma 1932); Breglia, L. 'Monete di Babba', *Numismatica* (1941); Id. 'Nuovi elementi di conoscenza per la circolazione monetale e la storia dell'Epiro', *Rend. Accad. Napoli XXI* (1941).

⁵⁰ Lemerle, P. 'Chronique des fouilles et découvertes archéologiques: Albania', *BCH* (1936) 473-474.

⁵¹ Gosturani, Xh. *Historia e Albanologjise* (Tirane 1999)37.

⁵² Bettini, S. 'Orme d'Italia e di Venezia nell'alta Albania', *Rivista di Venezia VII* (1933).

⁵³ Central State Archives, Tirana: F. 263, V. 1934, K. 4, D. 147, F. 92-98, P. 6, Xh. 1358, p.96.

⁵⁴ Central State Archives, Tirana: F. 263, V. 1935, D. 240, F. 1-6, P. 7, Xh. 898, p. 4.

⁵⁵ Ibidem, p. 5.

⁵⁶ Central State Archives, Tirana: F. 263, V. 1936, D. 196, F. 1-5, P. 6, Xh. 777, p.2.

was good.⁵⁷ On July 8, 1936 Mr. Vrioni with a telegram from Corfu informed the Albanian Ministry of Foreign Affairs that the Prince of Greece, that 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.⁵⁸ There are no other data about his visit, etc. but is mentioned that a lot of tourists went to visit Butrint in August of 1936 and Ugolini was still there.⁵⁹ On October 5, the visit of the French Minister in Tirana was announced, but Ugolini was not at Butrint.⁶⁰ There are not documents recording when he left Butrint for Bologna at "Casa di Cura" and in what conditions his health was, but is clear he was in very alarming state. In the night of October 4, 1936 Ugolini died in Bologna at the age of 41 years.⁶¹ No one had believed that Ugolini, a very active and hardworking scholar, was in such dire physical health. His niece, Alma Buratti, told me 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 in hospital with optimism to resolve his health problems and after that he had to go married with his girlfriend from Rome.⁶² The death of Ugolini closed the first phase of the activity of the Italian Archaeological Mission in Albania.

⁵⁷ Central State Archives, Tirana: F. 263, V. 1936, D. 196, F. 6-11, P. 6, Xh. 778, p. 7.

⁵⁸ Central State Archives, Tirana: F. 152, V. 1936, D. 279, page 1-17

Page 1

Mbretnjia Shqiptare
Prefektura e Gjirokastrës
Nr. 215 RES

Gjirokastrë, më 6/6/1936

P.T.

Ministrise P. te Mbrendeshme
Zyres Sekrete
Tirane

Per dije, parashtrrojme se mbas shkreses Nr. 7-35/2 RES d. 5/6/1936 te Komandes Qarkut ketueshem, ka mbrit ne Butrinto Arqeologu Z. Ugolini dhe ka lluar nga germimi i germimeve
Prefekti
(Timber+ rrm)

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Min. For. Affaires
Tirane

Kerkyra, më 8. VII. 1936

Princi trashëgimtar i Greqisë që është në Korfuz ka dëshirë të vizitojë Butrinton ditën e hënë.
Lutemi nënani instruksione

Vrioni

⁵⁹ Central State Archives, Tirana: F. 263, V. 1936, D. 196, F. 18-22, P. 6, Xh. 780, p. 21.

⁶⁰ Central State Archives, Tirana: F. 263, V. 1936, D. 196, F. 18-22, P. 6, Xh. 780, p. 21, 22.

⁶¹ He was back from Casa di Cura Villa Toschi, where had a surgery from Prof. Gasparini, the same physician who cured him during the war.

⁶² I thank very much Mrs. Alma Burati, Ugolini's niece, who lives in Forlì, for the details and her mother memories about Ugolini.

e Albanian Ministry of the Interior preserves documents pertaining to a German, Werner Niemeyer, who came on June 27, 1936 to write a book on 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.⁶³ On December 4, 1936 the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs announced that Roberto Paribeni, President of Reale Istituto Archeologico, proposed Pirro Marconi, professor of Archaeology and Art History in the University of Naples and University of Palermo, to be named the Head of the Italian Archaeological Mission in Albania, as the successor of Prof. Ugolini.⁶⁴ 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.⁶⁵ There is a gap in the information until February 1937, when Pirro Marconi arrived to continue the excavations.⁶⁶ On March 27, Cont. Galeazzo Ciano visited Belgrade and signed with the Yugoslavian Primeminister, Millan Stojanović a pact of the friendship between Italy and Yugoslavia. On April 1937, the Italian Minister of Foreign Affairs, Cont. G. Ciano, visited Albania.⁶⁷ On July 17 Marconi had an audience with Ahmet bej Zogu and had with him a “cordiale colloquio”.⁶⁸ During the summer, Pirro Marconi did some survey in Acrocerauni and the cave of Velcia, near Vlora.⁶⁹

On January 1938 CTI (Center of Italian Tourism) was asked to publish a Guide of 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,⁷⁰ 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	

⁶³ Central State Archives, Tirana: F. 152, V. 1936, D. 291, p. 106.

⁶⁴ Central State Archives, Tirana: F. 263, V. 1936, D. 198, F. 1-4, P. 5, Xh. 782, p. 1.

⁶⁵ Central State Archives, Tirana: F. 263, V. 1936, D. 200, F. 1-2, P. 2, Xh. 786.

⁶⁶ *Ibidem*, p. 4.

⁶⁷ *Historia e Shqipërisë*, V.III (1912-1944) (Tirana 1984) 413.

⁶⁸ *Ibidem*, p. 28

⁶⁹ Central State Archives, Tirana: F. 263, V. 1937, D. 244, F. 15-19, P. 6, Xh. 1000, p. 12.

⁷⁰ Central State Archives, Tirana: F. 263, V. 1938, D. 140, P. 16.

In March 1938 Albanian King, Ahmet Zogu, approved the creation of Naples Bank (Banco di Napoli-Albania) in Albania with the administrative center in Tirana. Some days later, in April 1938, Cont. Ciano was invited in the wedding of Albanian King. During this sojourns he tried to approve a minierary concession of the Azienda Mineraria Metaliferi Italiana-AMMI. This concession was signed from Albanian Government a year later, in March 1939.⁷¹

The tragic death of Marconi at the age of 41, as he was going to Rome, in late April 1938, interrupted his work. After his death the excavations continued in June and July under Igino 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.⁷²

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.⁷³

On July 11, 1938 the Italian Legation of Tirana by telex n. 1971,⁷⁴ noted that Father Fulvio Cordignano (1887-1951) was doing archaeological research in northern Albania on Byzantine and Venetian art. (Studio completo delle chiese, monasteri, castelli e rovine dell'Albania, mettendo in piena luce l'apporto di Roma e di Venezia).⁷⁵ An English numismatist published a book about the coinage of Damastion, the Illyrian city that was supposed to be near silver mines.⁷⁶

On February 5 Mussolini decided to invade Albania. The occupation of Czechoslovakia from Germany on March 15, 1939 obliged Mussolini to have stronger position into Balkans. The definitive decision for the occupation of Albania

⁷¹ *Historia e Shqipërisë*, V.III (1912-1944) (Tirana 1984) 417-418.

⁷² Mustilli, D. 'L'ultimo quadriennio di attività della missione 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 morale e storiche* VI, Vol. II (1942) 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)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) 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) 1-9.

⁷³ In the personal archive of I. Epicoco, now propriety of his grandson, Mr. Tadei, is preserved the page of visitor's book with their names.

⁷⁴ Central State Archives, Tirana: F.263, V. 1938, D. 140. Fq. 135-140, P. 6, Xh. 1125, p. 138.

⁷⁵ See Cordignano, F. *L'Albania attraverso l'opera e gli scritti di un grande missionario italiano: il p. Domenico Pasi (1847-1914)* (Roma 1933-34); 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).

⁷⁶ May, J. M. F. *The coinage of Damastion* (London 1939).

is dated in 23 March 1939.⁷⁷ Mussolini intended on showing his independence from Hitler and, perhaps aiming at the formation of a new Mediterranean empire, free of German control, invaded Albania early in 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. In the same day Zogu left Albania and went to London.⁷⁸ On April 8 Tirana was occupied from Italian army.⁷⁹ After that were closed totally both French and Italian Archaeological Missions in Albania, although French Mission had already almost closed since 1938. The hiatus in archaeological research lasted a year. The outbreak of war with Greece in October 1940 found Butrint in 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 again under Italian control. After the Italian invasion the number of publications on Albania increased. Michele Gervasio published an article for ancient Albania.⁸⁰ Borreli published an article about the coins of ancient Albania.⁸¹

“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.”⁸²

On July 19, 1940 the Albanian Ministry of Education, asked for the Italian specialists as advisers in the office of “Archeologia e Belle Arti”, one, 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).⁸³ After that both Igino Epicoco and Claudio Sestieri lived in Tirana attached in the Ministry of Education. In Naples they organized an exhibition about Albania that was called “Oltre Mare”.⁸⁴ According to Prof. Selim Islami, Domenico Mustilli in his last visit at Albania in sixties told him that he have seen parts of sculptures from Albania remained 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

⁷⁷ *Historia e Shqipërisë*, V.III (1912-1944) (Tirana 1984) 437.

⁷⁸ He stayed in London till the end of the Second World War and after that moved first to Egypt and later in France, where he died in 1961.

⁷⁹ Udina, M. ‘L’unione italo-albanese e sua natura giuridica’, *Rivista d’Albania* (Milano 1940) fasc. 4, 425-427.

⁸⁰ Gervasio M. ‘L’Albania antica’, *Iapigia X* (1939).

⁸¹ Borreli, L. ‘Le monete dell’antica Albania’, *Numismatica Romana* (May-June 1939) 68-73.

⁸² Prüller, W. *Diary of a German Soldier*. Translated by H. C. Robbins (London, New York 1963).

⁸³ Central State Archives, Tirana: F.261, V. 1940, K. 18, D. 313, Fq. 17-24, P. 10, Xh. 2839, p. 22.

⁸⁴ Alizoti, D. ‘L’Albania alla mostra d’Oltremare’, *Albania 2-3* (Roma 1940) 102-106.

created near the 'Reale Accademia d'Italia' and the 'Istituto per gli Studi di Politica Internazionale', which published an Albanian Journal every three months edited by Francesco Ercole (1884-).⁸⁵ The Italian Touring Club published a guide book on Albania in Milan, by Luigi Vittorio Bertarelli (1859-1926) with 221 pages, geographical maps, etc.⁸⁶ In the same year were published maps of the Albanian coast.⁸⁷ 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 was mentioned that the perspective of this country and this people "ordinato e ero. Orgoglioso del suo passato, conscio del suo avvenire" is only in the conditions of the fascist Albania.⁸⁸ De Franciscis, a former member of the Italian Archaeological Mission in Albania, published an article on the inscriptions of Butrint.⁸⁹ Giuseppe Valentini published a study on the numismatic of Albania.⁹⁰

From the December 1940 to April 1941, Albania was involved to 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 Etiopia, came to visit Albania in May 1941. In Tirana, while he was going across the principal road, on May 17, he was shouted from 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 in 27 May 1941.⁹¹ The Albanian Ministry of Education authorized the Italian Consulting specialist for Archaeology, Arts and Libraries, Prof. P. C. Sestieri, to go to Byllis to excavate in May 1942. They paid him with 10 000 Albanian gold franks.⁹² Leon Rey's old excavations at Apollonia were also re-opened by Sestieri. The Italians had always been curious on the work French did in this ancient city, although Ugolini in his first book did not described Apollonia in details since it was under French authorities. Ugolini did not forget to mention in the first volume of *Albania Antica* that firstly Apollonia was visited from an Italian archaeologist, B. Pace, and after that was explored from an Austrian Mission (Praschniker and Schober) and then some French archaeologists were doing some archaeological excavations.⁹³ M. Buča published an article about the gravestone founded in Durres,⁹⁴ and S. Masci an article in the same review about Apollonia.⁹⁵

⁸⁵ See Ercole, F. *Rivista d'Albania* (Milano 1940)

⁸⁶ Bertarelli, L. V. *Albania* (Milano 1940).

⁸⁷ Sestini, A. 'Le pianure costiere dell'Albania', *Bollettino della Reale Società Geografica Italiana* (Roma, Settembre-Ottobre 1940) 513-527.

⁸⁸ Massani, G. *Albania* (Rome 1940).

⁸⁹ De Franciscis, A. 'Iscrizioni di Butrinto', *Rend. Accad. Napoli XXI* (1941) 284-290.

⁹⁰ Valentini, G. 'Saggio di numismatica albanese', *Numismatica Romana* (1941).

⁹¹ *Fjalori Enciklopedik Shqiptar* (Tirana 1985) 592.

⁹² Central State Archives, Tirana: F. 295, V. 1942, K. 33, D. 333-343, Fq. 1-8, P. 59, Xh. 726, p.8.

⁹³ Ugolini, L. M. *Albania Antica* 1 (Roma 1927).

⁹⁴ Buča, M. 'Trovanento di un cippo iscritto a Durazzo', *R. Alb.* IV (1942).

⁹⁵ Masci, S. 'Lo scalo d'Apollonia', *R. Alb.* IV (1943) 206-211.

Security deteriorated over the next two years, with the partisans active in the southern mountains. During this period Italians continued excavations in Butrint, in 1942-43 under Umberto Marchetti, who continued these excavations. 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 the Office, to preserve the archaeological site and its deposits.⁹⁶

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.⁹⁷

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

⁹⁶ Central State Archives, Tirana: F. 261, V. 1942, D. 841, P. 2-11.

⁹⁷ Ciano, G. *Journal Politique, 1939-1943* V. I-II (Paris 1947).