

“Albania” Journal and the Defence of Albanian Case through Oral and Folk Composition during the First Year of its Editions



Ethnology-Folklore

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Abstract

To understand the role of Konica and the magazine "Albania" and to evaluate the formation and a kind of philosophy of the national strategy in the late nineteenth century it is necessary to stop some literary columns written in this magazine. In these sections are made urgent efforts to be addressed for national unity to a certain period in Albanian history, on the one hand, and in turn to ascertain who they are, according to Konica friends and enemies of Albania. Attempts to persuade people that what good to put ourselves a nation that value would give soon or later, and foreigners. Albanian people have already thought in his head and tried to independence and statehood. Developing a national propaganda genuine inaugurate a new awareness of civic life, where the Albanian national ideology and will become worthy of autonomy, justice freedom sovereignty and independence. Summary of national memory, also outlined new events through a bunch of poems. With Konica launches a new spirit in Albanian mentality, and critical eye. Until then, Albania and the Albanians were the first of poets and writers through the eyes of the heart and idealism, now seen through the eyes of the civilized European Albanians, who had a comparable level and not at all inferior to that of Western intellectual.

In order to understand the role of Konica and “Albania” journal and to evaluate the formation of a kind of philosophy of a national strategy by the end of the XIX century, it is necessary to take into consideration folklore and folk composition edited in this journal.

The folklore and folk composition expressed in this journal has treated Albanian wars and their great efforts for freedom and independence and for the protection of territorial borders, the role of rebellion leaders of that period. By summarizing the national memory through folk songs and by mixing recent facts, “Albania” journal wanted to arouse the nation and to bring the national consciousness, to promote a new awareness of the Albanian citizenship, ideologic and national ones where the Albanian would deserve freedom, justice, autonomy, sovereignty and independence.

We clearly feel in the folk songs of that period the echo of anti-ottoman wars, outbreak of rebellions, challenges against Ottoman army, wars for the protection of territorial borders. These folk songs implied that Albanian people have to rule their country by themselves and they have to fight to gain independence and citizenship.

The fame and success of Konica, F, are closely related to the “Albania” periodicals, which it was issued in Albanian and French language first in Brussels and later on in London after 1902.

By analysing Konica’s life and his writing career, Resuli. N firstly pointed out that: “Faik kept alive “Albania” journal with great efforts and hidden difficulties, yet it was the best edition of our national Renaissance for twelve years.⁶⁸

By knowing historical-social circumstances and situation in which Albania was found by the end of the XIX-th century, the main aim of ‘Albania’ journal was to produce and develop Albanian national awareness and consciousness. In order to achieve this aim, it was necessary that “Albania” periodicals have to be in “toske” and “gege” two main Albanian dialects and in French language, divided into different rubrics: folk composition and creativity, historical documents, patriotic poetries and poems, political notes as well as chronicals for religious, economical, social, philosophical and scientific issues.

The framework of “Albania” journal efforts to produce a national awareness and legitimacy in Albanian world of rights for freedom and independence, will be incomplete without the edition of folk composition and folklore which it serves like a mirror of Albanian soul.

⁶⁸ Abdullah Karjagdiu, with Konica to Europe, Tiranë, 1993, p. 15

During the first year of edition of “Albania” journal, march,1897-april, 1898, folklore and folk works edited in Albanian language was so various. This journal included: fairytales, folk songs as well as facts on some tribes of the North of Albania, on the wedding traditions in Albania and on Malesia Kanun (laws), whereas the rubric “Documents and facts on Albanian folklore were edited in French.

The focus of this conference paper will be the rubrics “Fairytales” and “Folk songs”. The rubric of fairytales “prahlë” has seven issues and the rubric of folk songs “Kenga te pophulit” has five other issues of this journal.

The first issue of “Albania’ journal on the folklore and folk composition opens with fairytales. We know that the fairytale has different functions and uses. It is used in different contexts for a certain intention and for different purposes. Fairytales are an important part of folklore because we can learn a lot from them such as the best and the worst side of the past life, traditions, customs, beliefs, man’s wishes and problems since in the early time in the past. ”*Përrallat janë pjesë e randësishme e folklorit, mund të njihet nëpërmjet tyre ndjesitë ose ligëshitë më të hershme, doket, besimet, andet e dishirat përshtypje droja e shqetësimi i njeriut qush prej kohëve fort të vjetra.*⁶⁹

By knowing the importance of fairytales and considering them as the mirror of people’s soul, Albania journal included fairytales to show readers that Albanian people are honest and their traditions and customs and Albanian folklore shows elements that can make Albanians feel proud of their nation. Albanian fairytales are so authentic and excellent that they have to be known from the other people of Europe.

So, the short stories and fairytales” The flower of the mountains” “Lulja e malevet” is in the first seven issues of the journal. This fairytale describes Albanian southern man, his lifestyle, their traditions and customs as well as the beauty, bravery and intelligence of Albanian woman, wars of Albanian people to protect their country, the attractions of the place, Albanian mentality and mind and their concept for freedom and citizenship. At the beginning of the fairytale, there are mentioned members of the family and future heroes which they became agents of the action. Nature is described so beautifully with: “*Sa qe ëmbël te rinte neriu nd’ ane te lumit te qelqtë cili shkonte neper pshatin, te shikonte lodrat e pishqeve ne fund te ujave, te deghonte lighirin e unte te ujes qi kërcente gur mi gur. Kur kthente neriu syte drejt malit, mali qe si trim i ri me na tuf pemsh dhe lishes; vetem ne krye- lark lark- bardhesia e bores te pasosme kujtonte na pleqësi tashi te larte. Kur hidhte neriu syte drejt fushes, fusha qe e majme, e thelhe, dhe po niste te ghelberonte*”(rivers, beautiful villages, mountains, beautiful fields etc)⁷⁰, as well as Albanian customs and traditions“.. *Pa shikoni ata kuajte qi po dalin nga pshati: sa bukur kapardisen trimat qi i hipin, me fustanellat tre-qint e pese-dhjetë qindesh, me xhamadane të arta, dhe me pushkat lare florie, te vjetra si Adhami.*”(Albanian knights riding, their special clothes and gold guns as old as Adam)⁷¹ There is a contact between the reader and heroes in these cases below: heroes of the short story and fairytales, Shega, and two of hers cousins Toskua and Moskua, they differ from each other from their virtues and vices. Shega is the symbol of Albanian woman. She is compared with the best beautiful woman on Earth and she is compared with the beautiful fairies of the mountains: “*Lesherat e saj u-tundne e i derdheshin ne kurriz si ni lum i steret; balhe te ghere dhe te bardhe, sy te zeza qi shenjin si hark, hunde as te ggate as te shkurte, goje vogeloshe, dhembe te zborite, gryke te qumeshte, trendafilje ne faqe dhe qershi ne buze.*” (She has long-shoulder hair, white and a large front, black eyes, small nose, small mouth, white teeth and her cheeks are red as roses and cherry lips)⁷² There is embodied the character of malesore and Albanian woman profile on Shega. She is clever, wise, and fair. She is so brave because she fights for freedom of her country with the men.

⁶⁹ Star of the light, Shkodër, 1940, p. 425.

⁷⁰ Albania magazine volume 1, 1897, 1898, Durrës 2010, p. 20.

⁷¹ Albania magazine volume 1, 1897, 1898, Durrës 2010, p. 20.

⁷² Albania magazine volume 1, 1897, 1898, Durrës 2010, p. 39.

The main character in Albanian fairytales is the youngest brother who embodies human virtues such as bravery, encouragement and intelligence. But in the other fairytale “The flower of the mountain” Lulja e malevet” this is not true because the youngest brother is less mature than the oldest brother. The youngest brother can not understand what it is necessary and the most important “*Te kish qene miaft i mesuar, do te kuptonte sa shije ka vendi i ti: qytetaria nuk eshte te fryhet duke përqeshur zakonet e vendit ti; Zakonet janë zakone vetem mendja do ndruar dhe zbkuruar: ç’ka te ben te veshurit, te ndenurit, te ngrenit dhe te tjera menyrash zakone me qytetarine?*”(the youngest brother doesn’t know the customs and traditions)⁷³ It is the oldest brother who embodies great human virtues and he follows all Albanian traditions and customs of his country which were endangered by the enemy on one side and by the ignorance and lack of knowledge on the other side. We can see from the fairytales how foreigners value and appreciate Albanian folk costumes and clothes, their folk songs, dances and weddings and this is done to show Albanians to have faith on themselves and respect for their traditions and customs. ”*Kur të huajt duke parë rrobat qe veshin shqiptaret, kenget e dasmave, valhet – i pelqejne dhe i ghejne aqe te bukura, ngaha na dolin keta hundengritur, cilet, për shkak te qyteterise, ghejne te liga ghith ato hirerat e Shqiperise?*”⁷⁴

All Albanian folklore and fairytales have revealed the war of Albanian people eventhough locally, it was part of their great efforts for freedom and independence. The most part of heroes are women and in the fairytale “The flower of mountains” Lulja e maleve, the hero is Shega who was found in difficult situation and she fights with bravery against the enemy next to her cousin. It is portrayed the heroism of Albanian women which they took part in the war and fight for freedom and independence. The main characters ran away. It is the boy who kidnaps the girl who is in danger. We can see the phenomenon of endogamy as a rubbish of mentality and minds and it is related to different periods of time.

There are also two funny short stories, one of them is Albanian and the other is translated from French. These fairytales are based on nowadays real life and they describe powerful people who are so hungry for wealth and they want to steal people’s wealth. There is a contrast and contradict between intelligence and ignorance, justice and injustice. People satirizes these exploiters. Albanian people even they are in the dark and invaded by the enemy, they are clever and they react to the vices of these bad people.

The folk songs involved in Albania” journal during the first year of its edition belong to the historical epic. Fairytales describe the life of southern Albanian man, six folk songs show the honest and warrior profile of the northern Albanian man. These songs belong to the historical epic where there are historical people and simple ones. The folk songs Selman Lika, Ago Mar Gega and Juse Jolhdashi are earlier songs than the songs of anti-ottoman wars because of the elements such as: war against thieves of livestock, to protect the name of the family as well as there are shown traditions and customs and laws of Albanians who live and fight in these regions. These elements are embodied in the hero not as individual qualities but as laws of the whole society. We can understand from the lines the setting of the events. We can see elements of Albanian people’s right and justice such as besa, faith, beja, swear, koria shame, and gjaku bloodfued: *Se mi baj be se asht mushka emi / Po mi baj be ndashi me pleq*⁷⁵. We can see a farming setting with donkeys, goats and the shepher with his dog. These songs bring the desire and Albanians willingness for freedom since in the early times with special ethnopsychologic features such as faith, honesty, courage and bravery. The three other songs: Kënga e Ulqinit (the song of Ulcin), Hamz Kazasi, Lam Daci, edited in this journal belong to the period of Anti-Ottoman war. We can notice the history of our nation, rebellion led by great warriors from ordinary people such as Hamz Kazasi who was the leader of the rebellions which broke out in Shkoder against Ottoman rule and government of that time, wars and fights in the North of Albania, Hot and Gruda where

⁷³ Albania magazine volume 1, 1897, 1898, Durrës 2010, p. 52

⁷⁴ Albania magazine volume 1, 1897, 1898, Durrës 2010, p. 93

⁷⁵ Albania magazine volume 1, 1897, 1898, Durrës 2010, p. 182

Albanian were settled./*Pa gjak malet mos me i lshue*⁷⁶ The song calls for war to protect Albanian territory and land and this songs brings elements of people awareness as well as continuous patriotism and national ideas./*E ka marr vesh Evropa /ushtar trima nxjerrka Shqypnia*⁷⁷.

The song of Ulcin in Albania journal has it preface in the form of a Call because Albania is in danger. /*Shqiptaria është në rrezik, Shkqejt po rrethojnë venin ton. Bullgarët kanë hymun për gjithë ansh n'zemër t'Shqypnis*⁷⁸ Themes treated in this song are mixed and combined with other themes and issues on the danger of losing Albanian territorial borders, the opening of Albanian schools, freedom and independence and susceptibility of Albanian case. By guessing the danger that our nation will become extinct from the enemies, the author tries to tell Albanian that Ottoman government is helping our neighbours to enter in our country and the opening of Albanian songs will be the solution for that. The author concludes the preface by connecting the past with the tradition and the present with the tradition: *A u ka dal mendsh moti kur Ulkrini i therun, i coptuem vikaste e rënkonte? Atherë këndonit ktu kangen e Ulkrinit, t'cilen e ka bamun populli ene t'cilen e kena nigjue do vjet ma par ne Dibër.*⁷⁹

The song of Lam Daci shows the heroism of special individuals who fight with great bravery against the invaders who tried to press Albanian resistance. The song shows Albanian awareness and power and potentials to take responsibility of his release and independence. The main hero is characterized by self-control, courage, optimism, faith on his powers. The song describes on one side the enemy with a great army and on the other side the hero as a great warrior and honest and patriotic who hates the enemy: */krisi topi te gështenja / kull e Lamit dridhet mrena/ nuk më dridhet kulla mrena / kam dy djem si luanë/ ene Shabanin me shtat zemra*⁸⁰.

The main motifs which make certain regions act are the ideas to destroy the state of invasion and to win the main battle of the national release, freedom and independence. The songs memorised important historical events. It is discovered the spiritual world of Albanian people, their will for freedom, patriotism, the power of their character and endless energy of Albanian people. There are treated different themes and the most important recent and present problems, revolts and political and social conflicts to the enemy, war and fight against every aggression to the efforts for national freedom, fights to protect territorial borders of our country. Also these songs warned for the danger of our neighbours to invade our country or to separate pieces from our land.

“Albania” journal was so successful and was a powerful light and voice of Albania and Albanians by the end of the XIX-th century and at the beginning of the XX-th century. This was the proper time when this light was so necessary to save the nation from poverty and from Ottoman invasion and for the protection of Albanian territorial borders. This article presented not only Albanian folklore collected and edited in this journal where we can see various values of Albanian culture and tradition but also we conclude that Albania journal promoted these values in encouraging Albanians to stand up for their rights and in making them conscious of that.

⁷⁶ Albania magazine volume 1, 1897, 1898, Durrës 2010, p. 149.

⁷⁷ Albania magazine volume 1, 1897, 1898, Durrës 2010, p. 149.

⁷⁸ Albania magazine volume 1, 1897, 1898, Durrës 2010, p. 149.

⁷⁹ Albania magazine volume 1, 1897, 1898, Durrës 2010, p. 149.

⁸⁰ Albania magazine volume 1, 1897, 1898, Durrës 2010, p. 206.