

Early Writings of the Philologist K.Cipo in Service of the National Cause



Literature

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Abstract

Cipo started his way towards science inseparable from that of his country and the Albanian nation, walking in the same street started quite early by scholars and intellectuals that put their passion and scientific work into the service of the national cause. This can clearly be seen in the writings of 1918s in the newspaper "The assembly" that was published in Rome, in Italian. It is the time when Albania had to be known not only geographically and politically, as it was not just a 'geographic expression', but also for its wellknown people and personalities in various fields of knowledge. His intellectual contemporary achievements in linguistics in general, and albanology in particular distinguished in those writings, as well as a devoted patriot who believed that he could serve his homeland with his pen. Furthermore, the pen of this scholar further elevates the national issue and makes it known in areas where Albanians, due to the historical conditions and circumstances, were not mentioned. Here he sets foot not with dither, but with the confidence of a professional, and authoritative scholar. The same must be said about writing essays in the field of literature and literary criticism. The aim of this paper is that through analysis and synthesis, comparing and approaching Cipo's writings in that period, to contribute and give more arguments in favor of the thesis that the Albanians, Cipo as an outstanding patriot as well, never saw science, literature and culture in general detached from national issues. On the contrary, they put it in its service.

Following the steps of a number of scholars and intellectuals who tried to have scientific issues at the service of the national cause, Cipo paved his way to science inseparable from the homeland and the nation.

The writings of 1918s in the newspaper "Kuvendi ", which came out in Rome in Italian, are clear evidence. It is the time when Albania had to be known not only geographically and politically, as it was not only a "geographical expression", but it was a nation of prominent people and personalities in different fields of knowledge. Not far, but only five years before that it was the verdict of the London Conference on the International Recognition of Albania as an independent nation and state, which should prove an ability to live as such and prosper in the following years.

It was the time, when the scientific world were discussing the ancient origin, in our case, Pelasgian origin of many wellknown peoples and nations in history. So I guess that, referring to the assumptions of comparative linguistics which shed light on a series of genealogical connections among a number of languages, the Italian students of La Sapienza at that time boasted of their immemorial pelasgian origin. In the same way, even the French and German students boasted of their Frankish and Gale origin, based precisely on these discussions and findings of comparative linguistics. (Riza S., "Revista Pedagogjike", 1973/3) The Italian philologist Gioverti was the first to conclude that Latin, too, derived from pelasgian after his detailed studies.

Was it the Albanians' right to boast of their immemorial origin, too? European linguistics providing the right material for this, showed great scientific interest for Albanian language as an indogerman language with autochthonous character. The Arbereshe researchers enhanced efforts to prove the thesis, which in this case suited well with the sense of being proud of their ancestry, the Albanian people was the continuation of an immemorial people (one of the most ancient in the Balkans and the Mediterranean), the Pelasgians and Albanian was the daughter or granddaughter of Pelasgian. Talking about language studies, and the literary creations, in particular, in the diverse creativity in this field, there

are works and masterpieces that mention and emphasize the origin, the antiquity of the Albanian nation in any case.

It is this historical, political, literary and scientific atmosphere that Cipo faced in May 1918, when along with Mustafa Kruja worked as external editors of the above mentioned newspaper, "Kuvendi".

It was published in Italian and it was the best occasion for them to make Albania and its issues known not only to Italians, including La Sapienca students, but also Germans, French and others who lived and studied in Italy. So Cipo became successful in his scientific studies following the steps of his uncle prof. Xhuvani, even Gurakuqi and Peçi whom he never forgot and respected for the discussions on Albanian language which took place at his house in Elbasan. Cipo, the young man, the second-year student of philology, of La Sapienca, attended studies in two areas: Language studies and Literature studies.

1. The Linguistics area

His intellectual contemporary achievements in linguistics in general, and albanology in particular distinguished in those writings, as well as a devoted patriot who believed that he could serve his homeland with his pen. Furthermore, the pen of this scholar further elevates the national issue and makes it known in areas where Albanians, due to the historical conditions and circumstances, were not mentioned. Here he sets foot not with dither, but with the confidence of a professional, and of a compact and authoritative scholar.

There are two articles published under the title "Etymological studies of the Albanian language compared to Greek, Latin, German and Persian", signed with the pseudonym 'Scampensis'. In the published articles on Cipo's life and work there are different opinions on the fate of this long treatise. (Cipo. R, Monografia 2003) The fact that the article was only published in two issues of the newspaper (on 12 and 31 July) and that it was still the introduction of the scientific treatise, leads us to conclude that for the newspaper editorial it seemed quite enough. This is further reinforced by the evidence of Cipo's son, Robert, who comments on a sheet of paper written in Italian and was found 80 years later among the loose manuscripts of the author. From its contents, we come to the conclusion that it is part of a great material that speaks about the above topic.

Let's stop at what we find published in those years. The paper opens with an expression of Foy's "A writer who raises a monument to his country is the happiest."¹

The purpose of the patriotic initiative of the 26-year-old author can easily be understood by just scanning, without the need of a deep analysis. He works with his conviction that the newly launched work contributes to the establishment of the "national monument" as expressed by him. The paper itself shows that it was not written on the spot, as it often happens in the editorial requirements for current articles. It was well-planned and thought, which emerges from the title itself: Etymological Studies... otherwise the young scientist would not have the courage to get that title, but would find another word instead of the word *studies*. It can be anything, by the way; *observations on, survey over, talking about or Albanian language compared to...* etc., etc other assumptions. But we have the black in white: *studies*. Hence Cipo is aware that it is the time to present scientifically topics and issues of great importance to European and albanological science.

It is a work that the author has previously launched and now finds occasion to publish in the form of a scientific divulgativ article. If you see the beginning of the article: "*Ethnographic studies, long and tedious, have already shown more clearly that the ancient languages are only sisters of a common mother, the ramifications of an original language. My goal is not seeking what that immemorial language was, by*

¹ Maximilien Sébastien Foy (1775 – 1825) French military leader, statesman and writer.

which the other languages were developed; I also, as a humble successor do not feel myself enough competent to discuss about what the destruction of the scholars has been and still is". ("Kuvendi", 1918)

He wrote so simply and comprehensibly, on purpose, so that the newspaper articles could get to the ordinary Albanian reader or the Italian ones, moreover to make things clear to the latter, because many of them did not know where Albania was (in the 30's it was thought that Albania was in Africa, near Abyssinia). "The researchers of compared languages - the writer of the article explains- include the Albanian language among those of Indo-German lineage, because there is close kinship with other languages of the same origin, such as Sanskrit, seudian, Persian, Slavic, Illyrian, teutonian .. . Latin and Greek. "

He knows from the beginning, the very moment he grasps a pen to write, that this enterprise is not easy, nay it is very difficult, perhaps even without a breakthrough. But, for him as a second-year student in philology, the desire and the found facts are just enough. "I am the one, who uttered in the cradle the harmonious language of Pirro and Skanderbeg, ... will it be my responsibility to get involved again in that enterprise with multiplied hopes? I do not believe to give the reserchers of our language a perfect work. The main objective where my humble work will be based on, is to point out the pre-Homeric antiquity (our underline, A.B.) of the Albanian language in comparison with Greek, Latin, German, Persian. My fervent desire is to inscribe an ideal history (meaning: imaginary A.B.) of the Albanian language as Vico has done for Latin, Giovan Christopher Adelung for the German one."

In elaborating the issue, Cipo proceeds as an experienced researcher who before dealing with details, he raises the issue of study in a broader context of the development of nations relying on other data such as the field of history, as well as that of geography, archeology etc. and the achievements of these sciences in this field.

With this sound methodological foundation he is convinced that linguistic data and their arguments speak in favor of the old (pre-Homeric forefathers) of his people. "The nature of monosyllabic words is the most vital document of antiquity of a language" (Kuvendi, 12 July 1918)

Cipo brings arguments based on scientific bases to confirm the antiquity of Albania and Albanian language. So he thinks that the flourishing of onomatopoeia, as a phenomenon of incomplete and cultivated language, can be faced in undeveloped 'barbaric' languages, as he calls them, or may be found in those languages which were once so developed and prospering, but now they have almost disappeared. He argues that, leaving the function of language to express intellectual and moral ideas, verbs, which have the opportunity to express abstract ideas get lost at first, then it is the turn of the use of adjectives, "whose duty is to specify the quality and the means of objects ..." " for this reason, the convinced researcher states that the etymological analysis of a language or different languages, but sisters, who belong to the same group, verbs must be thought as creations of a later stage ..." ("Kuvendi", 31 July 1918)

Cipo thinks that they originate from exclamations (interescions), or from concrete names. "In the study of Albanian language taking in consideration these conclusions, we will find the most important roots of ancient Greek in it, preserved with all their freshness"

After this he argues that " Pelasgians spoke in Kolik dialect which compared to the literary requirement of Athenians, their refined tastes which necessarily required a refined language as well, was so poor and rudimental. Athenians on their side, though they spoke Greek which had its roots in Eole Highlanders and their dialects, called that language "barbaric idiom". Cipo mentions some other facts about Pelasgians and their language focusing on some of the few features and peculiarities of that language.

So, Pelasgians were called in different historical periods Epiriot, Thesalio; also Macedonians and Albanians. For further arguments in favour of Albanian antiquity and its origin from a pre-homerik dialect, the author gives as (phonetic) language evidence the frequent use of diagma (doubling the -g), the

explanation of names (onomastics) of some Olympus gods by means of the latter. “We talked earlier that a Pelasgian language or Kolik was the most ancient of Greece, from where it can be argued that many Greek gods have taken their names from this idiom ...” (“Kuvendi”, 31 July 1918) Is this issue still continuing to this day to be the subject of mutual debates and studies, the subject of works and voluminous writings, but at the same time, the target of our pride as an ancient nation in the Balkans? Cipo fairly young with scientific correct attitude, with simple examples confirms this link and pre-Homeric forefathers origin, without any abuse or speculation, that are "justified" in service to the national issue many times today.

At the end of the article the author, the researcher from Elbasan (Skampensis) concludes with some examples for the efforts of various researchers, but, according to him, not any convincing evidence to explain scientific names of gods with the Albanian means.

He, like many other grammarians and albanologists of the Albanian language, before and after him, is convinced that the scientific study serves more to the national issue when he is serious, there is real evidence, not considering passion. This is Cipo's idea at the end of two articles on the topic of linguistics in the journal ‘Kuvendi’ of Rome.

2. The Literature area

The same must be said for writing essays in the field of literature and literary criticism. In this paper, he also wrote about Fishta's poems, the image of the work of De Rada and Naim Frashëri (whom he loved and admired the most), but he did not neglect Asdreni and V.Prenushi. His scientific literary pseudonym will be used until 1923. Later he used the pseudonym ‘Nisus’ and another period of full maturity started, that of a worker and great entrepreneurs of prominent importance to our culture in general and linguistics, criticism and literary stylistics in particular. We will have another opportunity to talk about this.

Taking into consideration this phenomenon in the field of albanological science, which began in the pages of the newspaper ‘The assembly’ that continued to astonish (not too much to say) the Albanological opinion of the time and I do not think that there is more accurate and comprehensive characterization that S. Riza states for Cipo in the 20th anniversary of his death, “... one of the most classical philologist of the Albanian language and the most elegant promoter of the literary Albanian language that the history of local albanology recognizes.” (“Revista Pedagogjike”, 1973).

Conclusion

Dear reader, let me have the luxury to quote for Cipo the same words that he devotes to Naim Frasherri in 1936, without omitting or adding anything: “He is a patriot. I do not see it necessary to add that word any epithet, because, when the merit of a man is so great, adjective is spurious. His friends are all working fairly for the benefit of Albania, all those who trust in our young people, who should not only prepare themselves for the next day, but today, they should sit in the men's assembly, where they discuss the problems closely linked with the fate of the country. His friends are all those who believe in the progress of the country, work together for an ideal, because it is a holy work, because qui laborat orat. For these services brought to language, nationality, and brotherhood, Naim (Cipo in this case as well, my comment A.B.) is honored. I kiss his hand and his teachings make me feel a man and Albanian, too.” (‘Lulet e Verës’, ‘Illyria’, 1936).