

LITERARY CONTEST IN THE HISTORICAL SCOPE OF THE ALBANIAN DRAMA**Creative and Performing Arts**

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Emin Emini

PhD candidate at the Academy of Albanological Studies, Tirana, Albania.
University of Prishtina. The Faculty of Arts. Dramatic Arts. Republic of Kosova.

Abstract

It is unquestionable that in order to reveal features and phenomena of Albanian drama with neoclassical tendencies, within the frame of its space and modest volume, it is necessary a diachronic look that enables the investigation and its placement in the wholeness of national dramaturgy. Especially this gains value and meaning in the period 1887-1939, before the Albanian literature was possessed by socialist realism. Immediately, from 1887 to 1939, in order to realize a comparative and inclusive approach to dramatic neoclassical poetry, it can be divided into two periods: the years 1887-1908 and 1908-1939.

INTRODUCTION

It is known that the dramaturgy in Albanian literature has been delayed in relation to poetry. "In Albania, which has always had a peasant population, excluding large centers of cities," as Robert Elsie writes, "until recently, dramaturgy neither took place up to where the poetry and prose did, nor was there any great attraction for the Albanian public. In the early twentieth century, drama came into existence in Albania at least as an independent literary genre".

While Rexhep Qosja underlines that drama was the poorest genre in the view of the diversity of the types and that the authors who dealt with the drama did not write with the same devotion that they wrote for the poetry.

Thus, the development of the drama until where the socialist realism in Albanian literature commences, captures two periods:

In the first period date and beginnings of the Albanian drama. From the first works, it couldn't be claimed any profound literary and dramaturgic elaboration, nor even a cohesion of the guiding principles which, in our case, were to be found in the neoclassical structures of conception and construction of the work.

And yet, in spite of this, this dramatic poetry and this stream seems to begin and appears somewhere with Sami Frasheri's "Besa" (1850-1904), albeit with a glimpse of another, and then it follows with the "Israelites and Philistine" of Fan Noli, with the dramas of Kristo Floqi "Karlo Topia" and "Pirro Neoptolemi", with the drama "The Death of Pyrrhus" by Mihal Grameno, followed by the dramas and melodramas of Gjergj Fishta "Juda Makabe", 'St. Francis of Assisi', "St. Luigi Gonzaga", "Odysseus", "Iphigenia in Aulis", with the tragedy of A. Z. Çajupi's "Man of the Earth", and the tragedies of Et'hem Haxhiadem "Ulisi", "Pirrua", "Achilles", "Alexander", "Diomedi", "Abel", "Skënderbeu", like other authors and other works that can be evaluated within

the principles of this dramatic course. But the question is whether they are all coherent and consistent with the principles of neoclassicism. This in no way can not be asserted, since by the dramaturgical literary situation of the time, as in its first steps and with little less experience, to different authors and their works there is a mix of principles and influences, there is a commonality of overlapping styles, preferences and not a solid and well-defined literary school method.

YEARS 1887 -1912

These are the years when Albanian dramaturgy begins to emerge in its early bulges. Thanks to the national Renaissance, the Albanians became aware that, alongside the praises of political thought, the illumination of the nation with knowledge and information in various fields, it was more than necessary the development of literature, often as a means of spiritual rebirth and dissemination of culture, love for the country, promoter of traditions, national virtues, its history, moral values, etc.

The genre of drama was, necessarily, the most suitable to create direct and powerful impacts on the public, for its own public character of perception.

The drama is followed by a large mass of people who would become an active part of its patriotic and moral subjects, its ideas and messages during the theatrical performance of the works, as it really resembled with the extraordinary expectations that were made to it. Let's remember here Sami Frasheri's drama "Besa", which has had a tremendous impact on the Albanian public of the first tenets of the twentieth century.

The first Albanian playwrights took on the drafting of the first texts in this genre, considering at least two main goals: a) the elaboration of an extremely difficult literary genre such was a drama, where the experience was lacking and thus becoming a natural part of Albanian literature and b) creating interactive communications with the public of the time in order to articulate patriotic ideas and messages in favor of promoting national sentiment, recognizing the history and traditions of the nation, awakening conscience, fostering a sense of pride, duty towards the homeland.

It is precisely this conceptual line that approaches the Albanian drama of its beginnings to both romantic ideals and the principles of neoclassicism.

This can be looked at in its essence and affirmation, since the homeland, the nation, duty for their sake, devotion and sacrifice for the efforts as well as great principles and the Albanian virtues as a nation (selflessness for the homeland, high national ideals, religion as worldview, rescue doctrine and identity premise, but also as mythical narrative etc.) appear as qualities in the aforementioned dramas, whether in the dominant form or in the more distant, indirect, and sometimes even in their peripheral forms.

Albanian dramaturgy starts with Arbresh figures such as De Rada, Leonardo de Martino and Anton Santori, who write the first plays in the Arbresh dialect. Certainly before the "written form", the genre of the drama was first cultivated in the form of folk performances on stage, with scattered parts and sketches of repeated subjects, in the so-called "folklore theater".

The first drama, though in a form that is not clearly structured, is the melodrama of the liturgical character "*Christmas Eve*" of Leonardo de Martinos (1830-1923, poet and playwright, born in Puglia, Italy). It was staged that year (December 24, 1880) in Shkodra in the Franciscan Fathers Church by the students of the "Saverian College". *Christmas Eve* was a simple part where he possessed pastoral liturgical form as an imitation of the pastoral Italian drama of the XVI century. In its interior, besides the ritualistic and folkloric elements of the Christmas celebration, the religious layer of a popular character becomes the filling element of its subject. It consisted of 6 characters, 2 choruses, and was divided into 3 scenes with two scenarios or location settings, which changed from time to time. It brings the rituals of the Christmas celebration, the Albanian folk songs and folk dances of Arbresh, as well as scenes, dialogues and quotations from the birth of Christ.

Later in 1882 this college featured the drama "The Son of the Jew", Pash Babi's translation and adaptation from the work of Molier "The Wicked Thinker" in an original version and engagement of Father Gj. Fishta (1905), as well as the tragicomedy *Kushtrim* or *Mark Kuli Kryqitas* written by Shtjefën Gjeçovi (1905).

But before this sketch-drama of priest De Martino, was the other Arbresh Franciscan Anton Santori, in 1848, the one who wrote the first tragedy in the verses under the title *Geroboamo*. The drama is in the written version and was not put on the stage. But two years before the release of this drama, in 1846, we have the other proof that Jeronim De Rada wrote in Italian the 75-page numismatic tragedy. This drama he edited by structuring into five acts titled *Sofonisba*. In 1877 Sami Frashëri published in Turkish the drama *Besa*, which, as it is known, was published in Albanian in 1902. However, it must be stated that these plays remained in scripts or as literary publications, since in their time they were unable make it on stage.

As we look at drama as a very complete literary structure, or gender requirements, it is more or less the same idea that Franciscan Anton Santori's drama "*Emira*" (1819-1894) is the initiator of Albanian dramaturgy, although it is not denied at all the existence of a the unknown tragedy of Santorum "*Neomenia*", which scholar Klara Kodra in the newspaper "*Drita*" dated May 5, 1974 would appreciate as "his first dramatic work and the first tragedy in our literature".

The "*Emira*" drama was published in De Rada's "*Fjamuri i Arbrit*" (1886-1887) newspaper, only three of its first acts. Later it was published in full. But this first drama structured as such was not put on stage at the time of publication (1885) and even in the later years. The work in general, according to the first text of the Albanian theater history compiled by Xhemal Broja, it lacks the so-called "*vis dramatika*".

This same author in 1891 wrote the tragedy "Alles Dukagjini". From the collected data, the dramatic parts of Anton Santorini "Neomenia", "Emira", and "Alles Dukagjini" failed to appear somewhere in any scene or environment in our country, they remained part of the script, not the stage theatrical performance. At the end of his life, De Rada wrote the drama "Sofonisba", which he named it as "historical drama". The work was published in Napoli in 1891. According to researcher Klara Kodra "the work we have it in front of us is written in Italian, but De Rada affirms in his foreword that first it was written in Albanian and later translated it into Italian, in order to be known worldwide". In the preface of the drama, De Rada wrote: "I made it talk - and how could I do it differently? – the true Albanian language; but I knew that it would contradict my intentions, being a strange language to all, and yet I did so by promising to myself that I would later translate it into the familiar Italian language. " However, it should be noted that the drama "Sofonisba", although it does not take the subject from the Albanian world, at its core according to the author it was focused on the virtue and soul of the Albanian man with his best features, "the purity, the strength of character, stoicism".

A special form of dramatic literature such as "exchange of letters" structured as a didactic teaching dialogue, as a "conversation" to elaborate knowledge in Albanian schools is reflected in the late 19th and early twentieth century. Their authors, patriotic teachers Gjasim Qiriazi, Petro Nini Luarasi, etc., in addition to a liberated form of teaching, also intended to create the theatrical facets of the didactic teaching character by touching important phenomena and problems, such were for example, the exposure of patriarchal attitudes against schooling mainly of girls. Gjasim Qiriazi "expresses the democrat and progressive thought that only from a knowledgeable and wise mother we may expect good and knowledgeable children."

National Renaissance Ideologist the erudite Sami Frashëri (1850-1904) rewrites his drama with Albanian subject "Besa" in Albanian. It was originally launched in Istanbul and played three times there. Then it was played in a number of cities of Albania, Kosovo, Chameria with a tremendous emotion and success. The drama brought about a tragic reality, synthesized in the basic anthropological phenomenon of Albanians: Besa. "More beautiful than what's been played here in Korca," was then written in the press, "nowhere else was ever played ... the clothes they wore were chosen and fairly of the gold ..." The women's roles were played by men, for the very conditions of that time (e.g. Vahideja by Mihal Grameno, Merushja by Thanas Floqi, etc.). The show was also given in Ioannina, where for the first time it was played on the Albanian stage. "The cafeteria was full of watchers who did not stop crying: Long live Albanian national amateurs..." wrote the newspaper "Korça".

It is understood that the first Albanian dramas, when the Albanian state was not yet created, have their undeniable place and significance in the history of dramaturgy not only as a "reborn, patriotic mission" but also in the aesthetic level. Authors who created before 1912 a certain quality and artistic level are: A.Z. Çajupi (1866-1930) with comedies 14 Years Old Bridegroom (1902) and After Death (written in 1910, published only in 1937) which have resisted the time and are occasionally taken from the theater and enrolled in scene.

Later Çajupi also wrote the tragedy in the verse *The Man of the Earth* (1907), as well as the drama *"The Duty"* which was left in the script. *"Love for the Fatherland"* (1901), *John of the Albanian* or *The Triumphant Albanian* (1902), and the *Leader of the Two Dibras* (1902) by Shtjefën Gjeçovi create a trilogy. They were not published and recognized through other sources. *The Curse of the Albanian Language* (1905) and the tragedy in the verses of *Pyrrhic Death* (1905) by Mihal Grameno, drama *The Love of Motherland* (1909) by Namik Delvina, *Prisoners* (1911) of Tito Toska in which in its foreword speaks about the need to set up a national theater. In that period Gjergj Fishta (1871-1940) wrote the melodrama of *Saint Francescan of Assisi* (1909), while Kristo Floqi (1876-1949) wrote the drama *Religion and Nationality* (1912). It should be stated at this stage that dramaturgy was tempted to bring some ideas and problems that strongly influenced public awareness of their patriotic spirit, the advocacy of historical periods and characters that had remained in popular memory and was turned into references to pride and national identity, the deliberate evocations of the past, the emergence of the virtues of the Albanians as the noble ancient nation, the resistance to conquest and assimilation from other nations, the preservation of language and identity, etc. Like everywhere in the Albanian poetry, as well as in drama was evoked the perverted time of Skenderbeg. The drama written in that period is *"The Israelites of Philistine"* by Fan. S. Noli (1902) and published in 1907.

CONCLUSION

The Problem of Reception or Why they are not put on stage today?

As one takes them as literary works rounded up within itself, thus as a real literary reality and not as a dramatic literary reality predestined to return to theatrical performances, the general idea is that the dramas and tragedies of Jeronim de Rada, Sami Frasheri, Et'hem Haxhiademi, Gjergj Fishta, Kristo Floqi, Mihal Grameno and Fan Noli can not communicate with today's time, at least on two levels:

1) The lack of playful theater structures with vibrant, energetic action and temporithmic functional diagrams, with stage adaptability in space and time conception, with favorable variability or events such as external action proceeding or compositions and penetrations in personal disturbances such as internal psychic proceeding,

2) The lack of literary dramaturgic structures with a dialogue that would create more psychological tension, with the flow of events and actions arising, with less presence of narrative and parasitic elements that slow down the action and create empty and unnecessary spaces.

The well known sentence that "for tastes one cannot discuss" brings to the level of judgment and appreciation the highly individual, unrepeatable and subjective profile of every perceptionist and consumer of art and literature. But, on the other hand, as we flee the individual and go to a community, group or community of people that we can call public, or theater

attendant, etc., then we come to the other idea that tastes move, change, that they have indicators of mutual connections, communion and close appraisals. Within the subjectivity and the "indisputability" are also embracing the convergent pleasures, which are already related to the time when the work comes into contact with the reader and viewer, in which social category and on what cultural levels are those who follow and watch them, how much is the spiritual, moral, and social convergence of the dramatic literary holiness with what the affirmation of the work affirms, in what intensity the meeting points between the work and its reader are realized.

In his book *"The Criticism of Judgment"*, the well-known and esteemed philosopher Immanuel Kant wrote: "The principle of taste has two perceptions of itself:

1. Thesis: The judgement of taste is not based on concepts, as if that were to happen, he would not have been open to any conflict (a decision made through evidences).

2. Antithesis: The judgement of taste is based on concepts, because otherwise, regardless of the variety of judgment, there would not be any open path, nor even for the debate of this judgment (a purpose of the necessary approval of others with him)".

From this it is understood that tastes are both personal and general; they accept some basic concepts for evaluation, and also avoid aesthetic doctrinal categorizations. There are low, weak, primitive, and distorted flavors, as there are also low, strong, right, and cultivated tastes to sophistication. At a glance, the artistic tastes of a time express themselves at that time, derive and are conditioned on it. In this sense, they also have a relative character and are changeable.

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