

**NAIM FRASHERI AND THE ALBANIAN LITERARY HISTORIOGRAPHY.
(REVIEW IN HISTORY OF ALBANIAN LITERATURE, 1983)**

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Abstract

Albanian literary historiography process has known from time to time attempts to amendment of Albanian corps. In recent developments, researchers' attempt seems to be revived once again to display another view of the history of the Albanian literature.

The aim of this paper is to show and argue the way it was researched on the figure of the so-called national poet of the Albanians in the volume of the History of Literature, 1983. The study is based on facts, observations, reflections disclosed over N. Frashëri in this piece of work of our historiography in front of other authors represented in the chapter on the Albanian National Renaissance Period, within an expressive literary tradition which he has helped build and measured the author's innovations. In this essay, the figure of N. Frashëri is discovered through the viewpoints of our literary historians.

The methodology follows the comparative, analytic and synthetic line in drawing conclusions on the conception of literary study on Naim and his work. It is aimed to determine the problems that the literary works of the author in question raises for the group of the researchers who compiled the volume History of Albanian Literature, 1983.

The research consists in the identification of several important conclusions on how and how much the factors out of the literature have affected the scientific studies on literature. This article highlights the necessity of objectivity in literary study process, as the only effective way to write on scientific basis the Albanian literary historiography.

Keywords: *historiography, research, reception, process, objectivity.*

Naim Frasher and the Albanian literary historiography. (A study on The history of Albanian literature, 1983)

The aim of this study is to show and argue on how the research is done on the image of the so-called the Albanian national poet on the volume The history of Literature, 1983. This study is grounded on the facts, observations and the reflections over N. Frashëri displayed on this volume of our historiography. The work for the compilation of this volume is conducted from Dh.S. Shuteriqi and the chapters VII-XI that include the voice on Naim Frashëri are compiled from Razi Brahimi and edited from Vehbi Bala.

The history of Albanian letters has developed in the progressive pace of the Albanian cultural history. Over the centuries, the Albanian literature has reflected the fate of the Albanian nation, the fate of a small country in a European region which for political, historical, economical and geographical reasons has remained undeveloped in this continent. In the course of the last 20 years we see a revival and the endeavors of the men of letters to present another view of the Albanian literature history.

The difference between literary historiography and other historiographies consists on the fact that it is impossible to assign in it a progressive movement (which can be seen foreign in the history of science and technology). Nevertheless there is an obvious continuity in the literary production, which is personalized in the specific character of literature as a community of *conventions* (linguistic, structural, such as literary forms, formal etc), organized as a *tradition* (Pazzaglia 2005: 8), in which every author is remade even when confronting it in the

exploration of the novelty. From one hand, in our tradition, the literary work institutionalizes subjectivity, the individual originality; on the other hand it is imposed as a special type of communication that faces the society, thus the public, which is a member of the literary tradition as well.

In my consideration I think that the least that can be done today is to understand and describe the values of the nation, to find the key of action and counteraction towards that which is more emergent, is to have the full, objective and fair writing of the history of the Albanian literature. A duty that is conceptualized and propounded even from the authority of this science in Albania. I refer to the author F.Dado when she claims that *The history of literature bears the fundamental function of the reconstruction of literature in the long processes of historical development, , by disclosing through the study of the artistic forms, the spiritual and creative evolution of the nation.* (Dado,2009:16)

In the preface of the work *The History of Albanian Literature*, it can be noticed the objective to make a scientific synthesis of the achieved results from the thitherto historical-literary studies. It is also explained that this work is built on the previous volume *The History of albanian literature*” 1959 and is required to be enriched with the new scientific achievements in the years to come in distance. (ASA , 1983:4)

Surely, being part of a certain context, the work is interrelated with the ideological theories and sublimises the reference on the marxist-leninist methodology and on the species of the leader of that time. There were these nonliterary factors that influenced strongly and negatively on the critical methodology of the time and specifically on the writing of the history of albanian literature.

In the confrontation that has to do with the history of albanian literature, this book has the purpose to give a broader answer in the aspect of meanings, interpretations and the values for those that want to approach to the literary production of Albanian people, by rebuilding the context that has directed the genesis of the studies. The text is developed according to the classifications of literary periods, with which the researchers work. The organisation of this book is done on the basis of the cronological pace of the albanian literature, precisely in three main periods: 1)The old albanian literature;2) The albanian literature of National Renaissance;3) the literature of the albanian state period during the years 1912-1939. It is confirmed by the scholars that it is legitimated the periodisation of the phases of the national history and it is emphasised that this has not prevented the treatment of the occurrences even out of the historical-political bounds. Such a form of study is attended even in a lot of other studies of this type, because of the fact that it is one of the mostly known and used by the literary historians in a lot of countries around the world. The foreign scholars assert that the division of the literary history on the basis of centuries is a cozy one. (Pazzaglia 2005: 6)

This division is accompanied by a detailed analysis of the phenomena, factors, representatives of the literary developments during these periods,by looking on the process as one which was closely related to the historical and political tyde of the coutry.

The main directions, the general coordinates of the twentieth century literary criticisms are given in accord with an interpretative key.

This volume is dedicated to the complex development that has characterized the Albanian literary phenomenon from XVI-th century till the beginning of the previous century. Very diversified and torturing events are juxtaposed during these periods. Our culture and literature was taking form in the background of occupations and wars with the Turks and then we have the versatile attempts towards the proclamation of the Independence. In a natural and contextual way we see the dynamism of the constant dialectics between the traditional culture and the new artistic and the literary forms of the modern civilization.

The work of Naim Frasheri surely cannot be seen separated from the literary system of Albanian romanticism and in this point of view it is probably the most exalted peak of this period. This work surely represents the most advanced and progressive component of the Albanian democratic and patriotic intelligence. This fact is noticed surely by all the critics, theoreticians historians of the Albanian literature starting with Mit'hat Frashëri, Çabej, Maloki, Konica, Bulka and concluding as a peak with the monographic of Rexhep Qosja, who directed the series of Naim Frasheri works published in the last years, without leaving aside another detailed study such as that of Dh.Shuteriqit, followed by Jorgo Bulo, Sabri Hamiti ecc. In general his writings have a first hand importance for all the development of our literature.

The part on the National Renaissance takes the most space in the History of Albanian Literature. It consists of seventeen chapters and the XI one pertains to the most studied and quoted author of the history of Albanian literature, culture and education. Chapter VIII titled as introduction, describes the National Renaissance as a massive movement which expands in and out of the country, in the Albanian colonies. There are treated the historical circumstances, ideology and politics, cultural and artistic activity. The phases through which this movement expanded are designed in a single division. An important part in the book takes the scholars' attempts for a general characterization of the Renaissance literature, characteristics which became part of all the educational texts of literature in secondary schools and universities. After the '90s the scholars consider the period designation and the literary orientation of the artistic works as a single contradiction. (Çapaliku,1995:29)

In the conception of the study on romanticism in "History of Albanian literature" there is also evidence on the topics in general which can be noted in the works of the representative authors, the devices and the literary genres are analyzed and in the closing of the chapter there is a considerable space for the esthetic and critical thinking that associates this important phase of the Albanian literary historiography. As scholar F. Dado noted, the history of the literary evolution has continually been a specific process of the exchange of different currents (Dado,2006:171) and the National Renaissance is seen as such in the setting of the Albanian literary process. Within a few years this literature underwent a vigorous development and was enriched having a starting point on De Rada works, maybe earlier, and continuing with other important authors of the Albanian romanticism as a literary orientation. By observing this studying line in History of Albanian literature, 1983, we can straighten out that this way of study is connected to the typology of the literary theory of positivism, connected to the study of history, sociology and psychology of respective authors.

The study in general, correlates purposefully and one-sidedly to the Marxist model of the interpretation of a nation's literary history by being installed and functioning without fail as an ideology criticism.

In the chapter on Naim Frashëri there is almost the same process. In the beginning of the chapter an abstracted evaluation on the author takes the first place, by considering him as "the disciple of Albanianism", a referential definition which can be noticed everywhere. A superior importance is given to the fact that in this point of view Naim Frasheri's work reflects the situation of the national movement of the time. (ASA,1983:176)

The exhibitory itinerary starts with his biography which tells about the life phases of the author in Frashër, Janinë and Istanbul replenished with facts and details about the poet's life chronology by always relating it to the essential contribution about the service on the national issue. From the living in Turkey there are detailed that are related only to the patriotic movement and other elements from his biography and his relation with the Turkish country and culture which is very important for the cultivation of the thinker and the artistic maturity of the poet, are missing.

Today to the corpus of the writing on N. Frasheri more and more studies on his life and activity in Istanbul are being added, such as Naimi in Constantinople from Laurant Bica or part of Bioletra of Sabri Hamiti. These works and other studies want to fill the gap that exists in the Albanian studying laboratory over the author.

As an important factor, the mentality and the social and political points of view, are analysed in detail, by emphasizing the illuminist convictions, while as pertains to the religious mentality he is reflected on the point of view where the pantheist philosophy that he embraced comes near to materialism. By alluding that Naimi wrote “Karbala” to oppose the religious sect (sunnism) that existed as an official religion in the Ottoman Empire, it is sought to give the idea that in this way he denounced the state order. In different points of view from 1936 one of the emblematic scholars of linguistics, and of Albanian literature in his beginnings, E.Çabej asserts that in N. Frasheri we can see a strange mixture of western and oriental influence (Çabej 2009:48)

Naturally the question arises: How sure can we be about these contemplations when he for 18 years was one of the most respectable employees of this Empire? Even when it is admitted from the author of this study, his referring to God, in the verses of his poems, from the authors of the literary historiography volume it is presumed that it serves as an element of style and artistic form only. (ASA,1983:183).

Without wanting to enter in deep philosophical and theological analyses we notice that this consideration is discrepant with the authentic philosophical and religious theories and concepts by misleading in this way the readers.

Naim’s lyrics are widely analyzed by noticing from the beginning that they take the main part in the poet’s composition. It is analyzed the patriotic theme which is widely used in his poetry through the illustrations of the verses and the comments of the scholar. An important place is dedicated to the thematic interpretation and the motifs of “Livestock and Farming”. I can mention here that it would be very worthy for the readers the structural analysis of the poem, where among other things it is missing even an important comparative view between this work and “Georgics” and “Bucolic” of Virgil from which a thematic and structural parallelism ensues.

By approaching the volume “The summer flowers”, especially to the poem “The beauty” it is accepted a kind of influence from oriental literature but it is considered totally marginal. By resting in this point and in the romantic features of his poetry, I get back to Çabej when he arrives in conclusions such as “romantic is the religious breath that permeates his work and is compounded with mystic Islamic color (Çabej 2009:48). In the studies in the `30s (I have in mind here Krist Malokin in the work study Oriental or occidental) it is continually emphasized that the influence of Persian and Arab oriental literature is very important in his poetry of the erotic motif. In this line the last studies are being oriented, as well as in those of the `30s the men of letters are of the opinion that he in his poetic creations, whether in Persian or Albanian, is influenced considerably from the poet, mystic and the coloss of Persian literature, Mevlana Xhelaledin Rumiu. (Tamimdari,2008:4)

Furthermore, the scholar J.Bulo, by being concentrated on the characteristics of his poetics, notices the physiognomy of the Persian lyrics by separating the contemplative and meditative character in the Sufi spirit and the symbolic decorative style. The characteristic motifs as well, the philosophical meditations according to Bulos are developed in the natural layer with an elaborated poetic Albanian language.(Bulo,1998:40)

The references in this part of text refer to the leader of that time and the opinions of the scholars Çabej, Maloki etc., which are the cornerstone for the history of Albanian literature, are put aside. Albanian has always been between the east and the west, between the orient and the occident and the intercultural relations are found everywhere in its centennial history.

Such continuity is tracked down for the other part of the poet's work, where in a summarized and in a general way his lyric is treated in foreign language and which today is recurring as an object of study for the critic.

Information and interpretations are given for the pedagogical poems and fables. The subsequent subdivisions pass in a minute presentation for the epic-historic poem "History of Skanderbeg". The theme and the subthemes are mainly treated and the style and the structure of the work are analyzed in only a short paragraph. It is also pointed out Naim's prose as a valor mainly on the pedagogical and moralistic message.

In the end of the chapter, the historians of that time summarize the characteristics and the mediums of Naim's poetry as a rich literary inheritance. It is properly emphasized the strong foundation of his poetry in the exhaustible source of the Albanian folklore. There are some deficiencies in the technique by the authors such as excessive elongations, unnecessary repetitions and unduly moralizations. These are seen in the context of the position of literature in Albanian during the XIXth century. With pejorative notes, Konica is referred for his judgment on Naim Frashëri whom he criticized precisely for the moralizations and the fact that the concentrations on the themes had affected the esthetic value of his poetry. In conclusion Naim Frashëri is appraised as an innovative writer and ideologist of that time mainly regarding the themes referring to the history of Albanian literature of 1959.

The chapter is concluded by glorifying the fact that the state of that time highly valued this personality by decorating the distinguished personalities with the Decree that has his name.

This sort of academic institution has its own weight in the area of literary historical studies for the Albanian literature and culture. Surely we are speaking here about an important engagement in the field of the Albanian literary historiography. The authors' efforts go through the way of the writing and the reception of the literary work in the context of the time, setting and place. A panoramic large scene is brought in this volume by our scholars where surely can be seen that literature is historically related to the anthropologic and social developments of the mankind.

This work is all the more valued, when this precious relic has not been overcome yet and it is not achieved another History of Albanian Literature.

In conclusion I daresay that the research of this work thoroughly and the analysis of the chapter dedicated to Naim Frashëri singularly it is worth being in the center of attention for two reasons.

- The first is to study the volume "History of Albanian literature" as such, by searching there the noting of important theory problems of the historiography of Albanian letters. The achievements should be accepted objectively and we should give in every conception which is not related to the literary theories. The partial judgements of the artistic works and especially of our literature has disputed for a long time the national values of Albanian scientific culture in Albania and elsewhere.
- I think that the other objective should concentrate on the comparative view with earlier historical-literary studies, during '30 of the XXth century, the work in question, and critic texts that are written today on Naim Frashëri to precisely define his place in the history of Albanian literature.

One of the interesting and always current issues as applies to the literary art is that literature is a dialogue. By means of the analyses of this dialogue it is possible to understand how a text attracts a considerable attention from the public.

As it seems the critic thinking of all the times reserved to Naim Frashëri the elected place in the Albanian literary circle. In the realm of the literary studies about the author, surely a

considerable part occupy the histories of literature published inside or outside the country. We shouldn't forget that the last history of albanian literature was written by a foreign researcher Robert Elsie so as to tell us that we should be more considerate and persistent towards the fundamental issues of our culture and science.

The problems of a nation's existence are related to the power of initiative to go forward, as well as the strong implantation in its character. Be appreciating that which comes as a message from the predecessors , by changing in the name of advancement and development we will walk safely in the road of progress.

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