

THE ARBËRESH AND THE BEGINNINGS OF ALBANIAN NATIONALISM

Matteo Mandalà

University of Palermo, Dipartment of Albanian Language.
E-mail: matteo.mandala@tin.it

Abstract

Research carried out over the last decades in the albanological centers of Palermo and Cosenza, have brought to light a largely unpublished manuscript materials, generally unknown before, mainly belonging XVIII century. The study of these materials, the life of their authors, which until now were superficially mentioned here and there, as well as relevant cultural and historical context has allowed us to achieve results with an extraordinary importance not only in terms of recognition historical development of culture and literature among Arbëresh, but above all in terms of the development process in the "national" identity culture aspect. The discovery of these ideas after a few centuries, causing a real revolution today in Albanology, brings with it the need to review the epistemological concept of periodicity (especially literary history), in terms of the political background of some qualitative terms (as for example: identity, nation, nationalism) that have generally characterized the Renaissance, especially in Albania and Balkan. The contribution of Arbëresh intellectuals during the nineteenth century is truly breathtaking. This not only quantitatively, but in the qualitative point of view. Roots of this process in the complex, which was extended until the first years of the XX century, should looking for in the eighteenth century. The last result has epistemological character and relates to the necessity to change or update the Renaissance time limits in academic texts of Albanian schools. Renaissance was born not unexpected as the mid-nineteenth century, but was the result of a long process that took ideological thread among Italy's Arbëresh more than a century before the birth of Romantic.

Keywords: *arbëresh, renaissance, albanological centers, manuscript, albanology.*