

Prof. Dr. Antonio Bellusci

## QEMAL HAXHIHASANI AND THE ARBERESH WORLD OF ITALY

*(Based on the Correspondence with the Ethnologist A. Bellusci)*

This article provides part of the correspondence between the author Antonio Belushi and the renowned ethnologist Qemal Haxhihasani, a collector and researcher of folklore and dialectology, a philologist and a professor. We first met each other in Tirana, in the International Conference on Illyrians, on September 15-16, 1972, where he was invited to present his paper, and myself was invited as an Arbëreshpriest and scholar. It was an revered moment of joy and honor for me. Haxhihasani's papers encouraged me to pursue my research in the domains of Arbëresh and Arber folk culture in Italy and Greece. Our fraternal relationship continued as I kept sending the semiannual "League" magazine, which I had founded in Kozenza in 1980, and my other ethnographic publications. On his part, Q. Haxhihasani reiterated that if I need anything regarding publications, I could write to him".

This correspondence highlights the mutual awareness of different aspects of Albanian and Arberesh cultural lives as in the joyous words expressed by Q. Haxhihasani

*"... for the opportunity you have to visit Canada and the United States of America and for the cooperation you had with our patriots there to continue our noble struggle supporting the holy cause of liberation of our martyr, but heroic Kosovo".*

The correspondence also highlights the political pluralism in Albania, which "has opened a new era for the Albanian people". He was enthusiastic that the first pluralistic parliament in Tirana had adopted a very positive resolution for Kosovo, stressing that "it is every intellectual's responsibility to coordinate their activity with this perspective". Addressing Father Antonio Belushi, Q. Haxhihasani states, "We have gladly followed your activity, through the TV and the

*periodical press, especially with regard to Kosovo, which you justly call the second homeland”.*

The correspondence also identifies projects and ideas about how to unite the intellectual forces in researching for the Diaspora ethnological treasures as a wider comparative research, a coordination and interaction for a skilled and complex work. It is about publishing a comparative ethnological corpus for the Arbëresh of Italy and the Arbër of Greece, a complete publication on their heritage”.