

Edlira TROPLINI

SOME PRESERVING FEATURES OF CHAM DIALECT

By an examination carried out on the traditional version of Cham dialect through a detailed study of this dialect of the old Cham generation, we concluded that nowadays, important phenomena from the phonetic and morphologic character point of view as well as very interesting words of Cham lexical fund are still kept fresh.

The old Cham generation still retains in speech the old phenomena of Cham dialect, such as: putting stress on the first syllable in the words with emphasis on last syllable; the presence of emphasis with logical function; presence of phoneme *ë* (deriving from a stressed *a* of Gegh dialect) in its phonetic system; change of the stressed vowel *ë* into *i* in the words: *běj* (do), *është* (is) etc; lack of phoneme *y* and its neutralization into *i*; presence in the dialect of some particular interrogative or relative pronouns (*çish, se*) (*how, that*); remnants of neutral gender; some preservations in the lexical field, such as *kallmar* (kind of dessert similar in taste with baklava), *qahi* (pie with cheese), *skaminè* (mulberries), *mirgale* (almond), *cukunidha* (nettle), *tumane* (bloomer), *xhixho* (uncle) *xhexhé* (uncle's bride), *nu* (mother), *dajkël* (uncle's bride), *thapë* (nails), *koca* (tress), *çeç* (elder brother), *kumbi* (button) etc. All these phenomena show preservation in Cham speech nowadays. Not only so, but the speech of the old Cham generation carries several other phenomena, which are present in the speech of Arbëreshes wherever they are located, such as the preservation of the old *-l-* in between vowels; preservation of the long vowels in different words; preservation of consonant clusters: *kl, gl, lk, lg*, which respond respectively to consonants *k/q, g/k*; groups: *jk, jg* etc.; preservation of the latter, as well as form of the first

singular personal pronoun *û* (*unë*) (I) etc. prove once again today the closeness of this speech with the ancient language of Buzuku. These meeting points and similarities in most cases with early Albanian are nothing else, but old traces or archaisms with high value to scholars today.

On the other hand, we recall that this population is characterized by a continuous mechanical movement. After the 1944-es, it moved in the form of an internal Diaspora into almost all over the coastal Albania from Konispoli to Shkodra. This prompted them to preserve everything with fanaticism. Everything had to be Cham from top to end, including the speech, which runs parallel with the development. In this perspective, the primary problem for Chams became even the way how they were going to integrate with the Albanian community. Thus, Chams could not escape from that important process for the current socio-linguistics as it is witnessed by all the cases of binary in speech, and as a result the presence of the dialectal bilingualism, a key feature; or all those other phenomena of the traditional Cham dialect are not found nowadays.