

THE PERSONALITY OF GJERGJ KASTRIOTI - SKENDERBEY IN LITERATURE AND FOLKLORE

The legendary braveries of the Albanian hero, Gjergj Kastrioti, lasted for 25 years, and he, as it might be said metaphorically, was *"a steel armor in the Europe's breast"*. Hence, the works dedicated to him would follow unceasingly in the course of centuries by reviving and reemerging our hero as many times as the progressive currents both at home and abroad needed a **personality-symbol**, a strong link to sustain the younger generations in the patriotic wars. At the same time, the historical studies and European literature accepted his supreme mission as *a worthy protector of the Balkans and European civilization* calling him *"knight of freedom"*, whereas his people called him *"the Dragon of the Balkans"*.

The great quantity of different historical and literary works (plays, novels, short stories, poems and verses), approximately 400, written mainly in foreign languages, is a clear evidence of the vivid interest aroused in Europe by the enlightened personality of Gjergj Kastrioti, who may be considered as one of the emblematic figures, not to say the most emblematic one, in Europe. *"Gjergj Kastrioti made all the centuries speak out about him. And, every century, every age has spoken out with its own voice and revealed something new in him"*.

The personality of Skenderbey has drawn not only the attention of historians but also that of writers of world's literature. A large number of authors of different ages and literary currents have approached this personality by creating a wide range of works of various genres and kinds of literature. We can mention some plays written by Italian and French authors dedicated to this personality such as, *"The braveries of the Prince Skenderbey, defeater of the Sultan Murat"*, (1973) by Antonio Xamboni, *"Skenderbey, prince of Albania"* (1770) by Maurizio Gerardini, then, *"Skenderbey"* (1786) by Pol Debuson.

With time, from the stages of dramatic theatres, these plays started to be performed by the English and German ambulant troupes, thing that increased the popularity of our hero more and more.

This article analyses the big place occupied by the personality of Skenderbey in the Literature of the Albanian Renaissance, which was inspired by ideals of the war for national liberation of the Albanian people.

In his poem "History of Skenderbey", Naim Frasheri would give the tone to the entire following Albanian literature. This path of Naim would be followed by other poets of Renaissance as well, such as A. Z, Çajupi, N. Mjeda, Asdreni, R. Siliqi, etc, who in their creations tried to associate the memory of Skenderbey with the tasks laid down by the movement for national liberation. Even after the liberation of Albania from the foreign harness, the theme of Skenderbey would remain still an actual one; because the example of his unparalleled resistance continuously teaches the Albanian people how to face heroically the waves of foreign pressure. Interest and contemplations in dealing with the personality of Skenderbey have been shown since in the beginning in the in the literature of the Albanian territories in ex-Yugoslavia as well. In those circles, the personality of Skenderbey has been approached in new dimensions by poets such as Enver Gjergjeku, Rexhep Hoxha, Beqir Musliu, Muhaed Kërveshi, Daut Demaku, Jakup Ceraja, Teki Dervishi, Ymer Shkreli etc. Among the lays we can mention; "Gjergj Kastrioti –Skenderbey" by Ahmed Çerkezi with a strong lyric and narrative character and the verse "Nikë Kosova" by Jakup Ceraja. The following years would bring again new works, even more interesting ones. The name and the works of Gj. K. Skenderbey would enter in the verses of almost all Albanian poets, whereas the range of novels and historical plays where he is the main character would increase significantly.

First of all, it deserves to be mentioned the novel "Skenderbey" of Sabri Godo. The personality of Skenderbey, as we mentioned above, has been willingly approached by almost all the Albanian and Arberesh authors of modern times, some with any lyric, some others with any poem or much longer creations.