

## MUSICAL LIFE OF THE ALBANIAN TOWN FROM THE LATE ANTIQUITY UP TO THE 17<sup>TH</sup> CENTURY

The first part of the study "Musical life of the Albanian town from the late antiquity up to the 17<sup>th</sup> century" titled "Schism or continuity" deals with the problem of the musical culture's continuity in Albanian territories based on iconographic and linguistic sources, any rare historical document and suppositions and analogical and comparative arguments.

Proceeding from the actual state, it is reached to the conclusion that in those towns in which it is still preserved the rural singing of the surrounding areas, the state in the past shouldn't have been much different such as in Gjirokastra etc. But in some of the towns where the rural music of the surrounding areas is preserved even nowadays quite well, it is also noticed another layer of the urban music that is very distant to the intonation sphere or structural indicators of the first. The most typical case of this kind is encountered in the town of Shkodra with the songs "Hengu" codified and structured according to the System of **Macames**. This layer seems to be quite ancient ("*kromatiku oriental*" is distinguished in the music of the old Greeks since in the 2<sup>nd</sup> century) as a result of the influence of Eastern music due to the movement of oriental populations in the region (Byzantium, Arabs, different Turo-Ugur populations, etc).

In the second part, "Towards the 17<sup>th</sup> century", there are examined the iconographic sources (displays of the eastern instruments in the ecclesial frescoes" testifying that the influence of eastern cultures on the Region became more evident especially since in the 13<sup>th</sup> century. Nearly in the same period, the first loans from Persian, Arab and Turkish languages emerged in the Region. In the beginning they were scarce and limited, but later they increased in intensity.

A document published by F. Duka (Detailed Defter of the

Liva of Vlora, year 1583), where there are also mentioned Roma (*kiptyian*) musicians (*mehters*), shows that in Albania the ottoman “cultural administration” started to be established, even though, for the moment, it was attached to the ottoman army and yet “unmixed” with the indigenous population (these *kyptyians* lived in the Muslim “communities” and not in the Christian quarters of the town – Berat by that time had no Muslim quarter).

In the third part, “The 17<sup>th</sup> century”, the study examines two main sources: the notes in the book of Evliya Çelebi, “*Sejjahatnaamesin*” and a Decree addressed to the *kadis* of Rumelia drafted in 1681, a document that is found in the State’s Archive.

According to the Çelebi’s notes, it is proved the existence of a folkloric stratum (urban and rural) of the music as well as that of a “cultural administration” in its fullest mode already. Meanwhile, the abovementioned document makes it clear that along the official cultural administration (*satirlari mehterleri*), in Albania existed another stratum of ambulant musicians (*calici mehterleri*), which seem to have settled there long before in view of the fact that they had been included completely in the taxing system as well.