

## HASAN KALESHI – ONE OF THE MOST WELL-KNOWN PERSONALITIES OF THE ISLAMIC AND ARAB CULTURE IN THE BALKANS

Dr. Hasan Kaleshi is an honored and praiseworthy figure, who left illuminated traces in the field of Oriental studies. His loss created a vacuum that no one can fill up in this branch of life and science. As a genuine orientalist, he never mixed his life with political ambitions and, at the same time, he remained loyal to human facts and an authentic researcher. An important fact in his life and intellectual background, which constituted a particularity in the field of studies where this Albanian personality gained popularity, was his religious identity that is reflected both in the nature of his creativity and in his researches.

He was born in Serbetine village in the region of Kerçova, Macedonia. He completed the elementary school in his birthplace and the high one in Skopje. In 1952, he graduated at the University of Belgrade, Branch of Orientalistics. Also, he was accorded the titles Master and Doctor by the same University on the theme: "The earliest vaqfs' documents in Arabic found in the region of Macedonia".

He commanded several foreign languages, such as: Albanian, Macedonian, Turkish, Serbian, Arabic, German, English, French, Italian etc. Those played an essential role in making the figure of the Orientalist Hasan Kaleshi known in different European scientific circles and beyond. Also, those enabled the author to publish his numerous writings in many various countries of Europe and East.

In 1965, he turned back to Yugoslavia and worked at the Institute of the Albanological Studies in Prishtina. He continued there up to 1973, when he was elected Chief of the Department of Orientalistics at the University of Kosova and at the same time he worked as pedagogue of Arab language and literature. He passed away after three years, in 1976.

It is worthy to be mentioned that Dr. Kaleshi participated in many

international and regional events and activities dedicated to orientalist studies. In some of them, he had the fortune to meet and exchange opinions with many of Arab writers, to whom he had served by translating their literary works such as: Mahmud Tejmur, Teufik Al-Hakim, etc. During the period 1949-1975, he wrote and published many important studies and researches in various languages. He could not translate a large part of them from the languages in which they were published. Meanwhile some of them are lost, and the rest are collected in a series of volumes. The number of realized studies and researches surpasses 350, without including the books. A part of them are dedicated to Albanian language and literature, such as: "Remarks on the language used in our journalism", 1949; "The contemporaneous Albanian language in Yugoslavia", 1952; "The written Albanian literature in Arab alphabet", 1957 etc. Whereas, it can be said that he dedicated the major part of his activity to the translation of a range of works of Arab authors such as Ibn Rumi, Xhubran Khalil Xhubran, Bulend El-Hajderi, Nizar Kabbani, Sulejman Al-Isa etc, in different languages of the region, and publishing separate studies in the framework of the Arab literature, such as: "The Contemporaneous Egyptian literature", 1956, "Novelties in the modern Arab poetry", 1965. He has translated a series of short stories by the well-known Arab writer, Mahmud Tejmur. Also he has prepared a text in Albanian for the University on the History of Arab Literature. Part of the masterpieces realized by Dr. Hasan Kaleshi is the Serbo-Croatian-Arab Dictionary, which was successfully completed in collaboration with the renowned researcher Kamil El-Buhi, one of the most distinguished personalities in the field of orientalist studies during '50-ies. The dictionary was published after the authors had passed away. It includes about 50 000 entries and idioms. Also, Dr. Kaleshi had published a range of articles and researches in Serbian, Arabic and Albanian aiming to introduce the old and new Turkish literature and at the same time, he translated works of the distinguished ottoman writers. Proceeding from this long life experience and vast creativity in the field of the oriental studies, Dr. Kaleshi deserves in eternity the most positive evaluations coming from all around the world as a remarkable emblem of the European Orientalist studies and one of the few ones in this field for the region of the Balkans.

Translated by: Eris Koliqi