

MIT'HAT FRASHËRI'S ALBANOLOGICAL CONTRIBUTION, THE SPLENDOR OF HIS PATRIOTISM

Nobody knows exactly when Mit'hat Frashëri came up with the idea called "Lumo Skëndo", for the establishment of the Albanological Institute. Everything was learned only when he said it out loud. It was March 4, 1929, when he bequeathed all his movable and immovable property for the establishment of an albanological institute that would do honor to Albania. And he did this in silence, without noise or commotion. Perhaps this desire originated in his childhood. He was born on March 25, 1880 in the beautiful city of Ioannina. Ever since he was little he found himself among the many and wonderful books, and as he grew older, he increased their number more and more. His library became large, one of the richest among the libraries of Albanian families and was called "Library of Frashërlinje". When he arrived in Albania, the number of books was several thousands. In 1938 the library of Lumo Skëndo numbered about 20, 000 volumes written in French, English, German, Italian, Greek, Turkish, Albanian, etc. There were also many books that had once been part of the libraries of Archduke Ferdinand of Austria, King Constantine of Greece, Napoleon Bonaparte, the sultans, Mahmut I Pashë Shkodra, etc. He also owned 200 manuscripts, some of them by albanologists, not counting the collections of newspapers and magazines in foreign and Albanian languages, other carefully preserved documents, speeches, announcements, posters, etc., printed or handwritten. Everything that existed in his magnificent library had to do mainly with Albanology, Balkanology and the Albanian nation. When he arrived in Tirana, the library took its name, the "Lumo Skëndo" Library.