

One of the most important leaders of Aromanians - writer and politician Nicolae Constantin Batzaria

Ivana JANJIĆ

Virginia POPOVIĆ

Faculty of Philosophy

University of Novi Sad, Serbia

ivana.janjic@ff.uns.ac.rs, popovic.virdjinija@gmail.com

I. Aromanian culture – Balkan culture

It is significantly important to learn the way of life and cultural heritage of Aromanian community as a Balkan community. Aromanian people are these who left an indelible mark on the culture of the Balkan peoples. One of the most important promoters of Romanian and Aromanian culture is Nicolae Constantin Batzaria. Nicolae put his works of this atypical community snatched from oblivion. He was born in the former Ottoman Empire in Aromanian family and raised in the spirit of Aromanian culture, educated in three countries. After schooling in Romania returns to Turkey, where he started his political engagement in revolutionary movement known as the Young Turks, he left them when the group became very radical. His love toward Aromanian people, their customs and culture is more strongly reinforced during training in Romania. He was chief inspector of the Romanian educational institutions in the Ottoman provinces of Kosovo and Salonika. His desire to contribute to the preservation of Aromanian culture led him in the paths of literature. His works will remain as a pillar of support for all future reminders on this community.

About Nicolae Constantin Batzaria little has been written in Serbia, and his works have been translated even less. It could be said that rarely we pay attention to the translation of not so popular literature. The Romanian's and Aromanian's literature is a large oeuvre, but it is not sufficiently present in Serbia. So the works of our author is unjustly neglected, forgotten and not translated. The aim of this paper presents the author's effort to find hidden treasure of Aromanian writer, diplomat, poet and politician.

Work of Nicolae complete mosaic of the world's literature and provide an alternative to the readers of popular literary works about cultures that are generally known. Nicolae's bibliography is impressive. It was particularly difficult, since there are so many extraordinary works, to extract a few stories that will represent the writer. The author hopes that succeeded

in not so simple endeavor and that managed to evoke writer. In the area where lived Nicolae Batzaria was the core of the Balkan linguistic communities, there were centuries blend into languages and cultures. The Balkan peoples and their languages are in the final stages of its historical development, the result of blending the Slovenian population in non-Slavic and non-Slavic population in Slovenian (Janjić, 2015).

II. Who is Batzaria?

One of the most important representatives of Aromanian (Tzintzars') community is Nicolae Constantin Batzaria¹, may be rightly considered as one of the most prolific writers in Romanian literary community. Versatility is his primary characteristic, because besides writing, he was active in politics and diplomatic relations too. He often wrote under the pseudonym Moș Nae ("Old Man Nae," a term of respect applied to the hypocorism of Nicolae).

He was born in 1874 in Kruševo, at that time Ottoman Empire, and in the present-day Republic of Macedonia. Kruševo²³ as the highest town in the Republic of Macedonia, besides Slovenian and Macedonian population is famous for Aromanian or Tzintzars'⁴ population that immigrated in the 18th century. Vlachs (as they call them in Macedonia) came from Moschopolis in today's Albania.

He was son of Constantin Batzaria, rich farmer and merchant. First classes attended in his native village, with instructors who were renowned, and one of them was well-known Aromanian teacher Steria Cosmescu. His education continued in Romanian high school in Bitola. His family had many relatives both in Romania, Anatolia, and the Khedive of Egypt. (Zbucea, 1999:79).

¹last name also Besaria, Basarya, Bațaria, Bazaria.

² arum. Crushuva

According to the Census 2002², the number of Vlachs in Macedonia decreases. They declare themselves in recent years as Macedonians. The situation is the same in almost all countries where lives of these community.

³ More about Batzaria's description of Kruševo in N. Bațaria, *Istoricul fundărei orașului Crușova*, In: Lumina (Bitolia), II/5, București, 1904.

⁴ Information about this ethnic community can be found under the guidelines: Mačegovlasi, Aromani, Armani, Makedorumuni, Makedonci, Aromânii, Armânji, Armâni, Vlaçi, Makedonji Tsintsar, Rrâmâni (in the northern part of mountain Pind), Κουτσόβλαχοι (in Greece), Vllech, çoban or Llaciface (Albania), Makedoromâni, Armâni, Macedoneni latini, Macedono-vlahi, Machedoni (in Romania). More about this topic in: Janjic 2012; Janjic 2011; Janjic 2011a; Janjic 2011b; Janjic 2009; Janjic, 2008.

School in Bitola⁵ started to work in 1880. In its benches taught many celebrities of Romanian and Aromanian political, cultural and social life. Future academics, scientists, teachers, professors, politicians have started education in this school. Among them was Nicolae Batzaria (Zbucea, 1999:63).

A very important period for his formation is when he was a graduate student in 1881 and involved in teaching in the period 1891-1892 and 1895-1902.

During his education Batzaria stood out from the other students with developed imagination, cunning and desire to progress. However, after moving to Bucharest his talent was more recognized. He enrolled at the Faculty of Law and Faculty of Letters at University in Bucharest, unfortunately never finished college. During his studies gathered a lot of knowledge, met many people and connected with like-minded political future. After he returned to his native city, he began with the realization of plans. Started to work like church and a school inspector, as it provided an extensive range of possibilities of action (Janjić, 2015).

He was a polyglot; he spoke almost all Balkan languages, which is not to be ignored. That gave him an advantage when was selection for the Minister of Culture in the government of Young Turks.

He spoke excellent Romanian, but with an Aromanian accent (Cristea, 2011:11). It seemed he was very proud of, and without hiding it stood for it. Batzaria was arrested at old age, the reason was serving as a city councilor. He died in imprisonment shortly after the trial, like spinal cancer sufferer (Cioculescu, 2011:9).

III. Political activity

Political activity of Batzaria was really vast. As it is not the main theme of this book it will only be superficially presented. On this subject have been published capital works in which are treated all political involvement and activities of Batzaria.⁶ All ideas are formulated in a national context. His ideas were aimed at accurate determination of Romanian action

⁵ More about Batzaria's description of Bitola in N. Bațaria, *Călătorii pe la Aromâni*, II, Bitolia-Resna-Ohrida, In *Graiu bun*, I/10, București, 1907

⁶ More about that in: Gheorghe Zbucea, *O istorie a românilor din Peninsula Balcanică*, Editura Biblioteca Bucureștilor, Bucharest, 1999. Kemal H. Karpat, "The Memoirs of N. Batzaria: The Young Turks and Nationalism", in *Studies on Ottoman Social and Political History*, Brill Publishers, Leiden, Boston & Cologne, 2002, p. 556-585.

M. Şükrü Hanioglu, *Preparation for a Revolution: the Young Turks, 1902-1908*, Oxford University Press US, New York City, 2000.

in the Balkans. These ideas were purely intellectual, and were aimed at maintaining the school and church in the Romanian language. At the beginning of the century there was a series of discussions on this topic in political circles of Bucharest (Janjić, 2015).

The causes for discussions were only different political visions. Evident nationalism appeared already in 1903 when he criticized the Greek offensive against Aromanian institutions. He already openly called for action against inhuman and perfidious enemy. One of the magazines with a nationalist orientation was Romanian from Pind (Românul de la Pind) in 1903, under the direction of N. Batzaria, in cooperation with Aromanians from Turkey. The magazine was published almost five years, while Batzaria was director until 1907.

So, the nationalistic fervor can be seen in the motto: *Timeo Danaos et dona ferentes!*⁷ Some of newspapers were published in English and in French because the plan was to show to whole Europe information about issues and problems of Aromanians (Gică, 2006:7).

Involvement to politics was not at all surprising. Joined the organization Young Turks, his work in this organization, in addition to variety of activities, included the writing for this political organization. As a result, he wrote *In Turkish prisons and in the Islamic world. Turkey of the Young Turks (În închisorile turcești și Din lumea Islamului. Turcia Junilor turci* (1922)). Nicolae Iorga wrote the preface for this book in 1922 (Antonianan 2003:6). This could serve as another indication how great and valuable was a critical apparatus and creative Batzaria's spirit.

Elected like senator in 1908 in the legislative bodies of the Young Turk of Constantinople in 1912 December was appointed like Minister of Public Works in the Turkish government, and in 1913 is delegate in same government, like peace treaty's signatory in London same year.⁸ In 1912 he became minister of public works in the Young Turk government. In this role he was delegated by the government in 1913 to represent peace treaties Ottoman Empire after the Second Balkan War (Antonianan, 2003:6). He made a distinction to be prone from this fraction when only functioning became too radical, emigrating from Istanbul to Switzerland during the First World War. He later returned to Romania where he was elected as a senator in 1920 in government general Averescu.

⁷ Paraphrased in English as the proverb "Beware of Greeks bearing gifts". Its literal meaning is "Fear the Danaans [Greeks], even those bearing gifts" or "even when they bear gifts".

⁸Literatura armânească: Nicolae Batzaria

<https://esentearmanesti.wordpress.com/2012/06/03/literatura-armaneasca-nicolae-batzaria/>

Batzaria was for a while a senator of Bihor. This is shown by the report of the parliamentary commission report on the survey that was performed in Basarabia (Bațaria 1921:1-70). The report was sent in 1921 and written in 70 pages. It gives us an insight into the situation in Basarabia public administration and state districts, police, opinions and complaints from citizens, education, newspapers and on their closure, education, church, court, finance ministry, ministry of commerce, telecommunications, health, agriculture and not lack the proposals on the restructuring and stabilization, better control and disciplinary measures. A part is dedicated to requests, complaints, desires, the most common the request that can see single mothers, war invalids, pensioners or to increase assignment of income. The report is generally based on Appeals and Complaints of the citizens, the problem with officials and description of concrete situations. Finally it is given a summary by district, as well as observations, findings and recommendations of the Commission for the survey. The systematic work and dedication are characteristic for Batzaria (Janjić, 2015)

IV. Magazines and idea to create

In January 1903, Bitola starts to get out newspaper "Lumina"⁹. Batzaria, together with the teaching staff of Romanian school made the first magazine of Aromanians in the territory of former "European Turkey" (Zbucea, 1999:58). The first director of the magazine was Dumitru Cosmulei until 1903 while Batzaria was editor from January to December 1904.

Lumina is considered as the best magazine of Aromanians. Romania from 1907 to 1908, financially supported the magazine, with the sum of 2,880 lei and at last authorities have abolished help (Gică, 2006:7).

"Lumina" is published from 1903 to 1908 in Macedonia. It is considered as one of Aromanian magazine with "the longest" editions. Some of the texts were written in Aromanian dialect (Lascu, 2002:23). As noted on the first page, the magazine was published once per month. Batzaria often wrote for Lumina. Topics that have processed ranged from political to social, economic and educational.

⁹ Almost all issues of the magazine "Lumina" are available in electronic form on the website of the Digital Library of Bucharest (Biblioteca Digitală a Bucureștilor)

<http://digitool.dc.bmms.ro/>

Digital Library of Bucharest sorted by years magazine "Lumina" almost all edition, so it's easier to search.

The magazine, which was edited by the committee varied over the years. The subtitle was “*National magazine of Romanians from Ottoman Empire*” (*Revista populară a românilor din Imperiul Otoman*) i “*National magazine of Romanians on the right side of the Danube*” (*Revista poporană a românilor din dreapta Dunărei*).

In the magazine "Lumina" were published educational and didactic materials but were able to find texts of political and national character. This newspaper was "the journal of teaching staff and priests" in Macedonia, which gave a special character to this publication (Zbucnea 1999:58). In journal also doctors published articles. Their goal was to "cultivate literary Romanian language to be taught in schools in European Turkey" (Lascu, 2002:23).

In addition to the goals that were primary, with publication of texts they wanted to educate teaching staff, but also to preserve the "little sister" – Aromanian dialect (Lascu, 2002:23).

This kind of activity on this territory was essential. Aromanian community wanted to strengthen their community and national sense, preserve Romanian language in this territory but also Aromanian dialect. Scope of texts that could be read was indeed different, ranging from poetry and prose written in dialect, children's literature, the study of folklore, health, women's issues and so on (Janjić, 2015).

At that time, a significant number of members of the Aromanian community began to migrate. Thus, in newspaper "Lumina" is often addressed this problem. As stated, "the most common emigration was to America" (Lascu, 2002:23).

Batzaria collaborates with weekly magazine "Balkan Peninsula" (*Peninsula Balcanică*). This weekly magazine started publishing in 1893 as "the national authority of the Romanians in Macedonia". Since 1901, changes its name to "Newspapers of Macedonia" (*Gazeta Macedoniei*). Magazine under the same name was published from 1897 to 1898 (Berciu-Drăghicescu & Pariza, 2004:4).

Most newspapers, publications, magazines, weeklies had a political connotation. They have stood the current political, ethnic, educational problems related to the Aromanian community. A large number of magazines were active during the period from 1880 to 1940. Once the number of Aromanian magazine was bigger than today. Here are some of them: „Balkanika“ (Balcanica), „The Albanian-Romanian life“ (Viața albano-română), “Voice of Maceodonia (Glasul Macedoniei), „Magazine of Macedonia“ (Gazeta Macedoniei), „Flag“ (Flambura), „The Echo from Pindus „Ecol Pindului" (Zbucnea, 1999:58).

V. Conclusion

Nicolae Constantin Batzaria is the most prolific Aromanian writer from didactic genre: his many anecdotes are reading today with the same pleasure, especially because he managed to put them in a perfect form, adequate for national taste. This paper is only an introduction to the creation and work of one of the biggest Aromanian creator. His work is almost unfairly forgotten by scientists and left in a corner of the library. He equally deserves to be treated like all famous Romanian writers. His role was not only creative, but also political because kept the Romanian language and therefore the Aromanian dialect throughout the Balkans.

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