Issues concerning literary and linguistics contribution in the poem

*The Songs of Milosao* by Jeronim de Rada

Dr. Suela Kastrati
Alexander Moisiu University
Durrës, Albania

Dr. Greta Jani
Alexander Moisiu University
Durrës, Albania

The aim of this paper is to highlight the contribution of the poet Girolamo De Rada in Albanian literature. We are focused on the poem "The Songs of Milosao" and have collected the phraseology, in order to reflect not only the real values of Albanian language, but also the contribution of De Rada in the process of phraseology accumulation. De Rada is consider to be the messenger and the most vigorous voice of Romantic movement in Albanian literature; this movement which got inspired by De Rada boundless energy on behalf of national awakening among Albanians in Italy and in the Balkans, later evolved into a typical national Romanticism in the Renaissance time in Albania. His literary and publicist activity, literary and political one, were not only a tool to develop community awareness in the Arbërësh community in Italy, but also to lay the foundations of Albanian national literature.¹

He developed a productive activity in the area of language studies; he paid attention to issues concerning Albanian nation and Albanian language origin, while protecting their ancientness. De Rada is one of the first native scholars who conveyed studies about Albanian grammatical structure. In his two grammar works (1870, 1894), he exposed aspects which were unstressed earlier by Albanian scholars and Albanologists; also he analyzed unstudied or unknown linguistics phenomena². In his grammar works are given interesting linguistic data of Arbërësh dialect. He continued his effort made for a unified Albanian alphabet, which would give the appropriate system for Albanian language with Latin letters, completed with diacritical marks. According to the linguistic activity of De Rada, it is important to mention that he organized two congresses of Albanian language, the first (1895) in Koriliano Kalabro, the second (1897) in Lungro (Arbërësh Linguistic Congresses). He gave lessons of Albanian language in Arbërësh College of St. Mitër Korona for decades, until his death.³

Quite extensive is the poetic activity of De Rada. He began publishing in an early age, but the work that brought him fame as a poet with remarkable talent is the lyrical-epic poem *The songs of Milosao* (1836), which is considered to be the first great work of Albanian literature. In the center of the work is the story of a young couple who got together after many obstacles. The author is not limited to condemn the class prejudices that hinder the happiness of the young couple; the poem underlines the idea of the patriotic duty and the willingness to fight for the homeland. Milosao is the lyrical hero and a character of action.⁴

As a poet, especially with *The songs of Milosao*, De Rada was highly appreciated by European literary circles⁵. In general the whole poetry in Albanian language of Girolamo De Rada is difficult to be judged due to an overall lack of thematic unity in his three major works, as well as due to his propensity for constant changes in the revised editions, which changes the mood, emotional needs and literature likes in different periods of his long life. In most cases, the revised editions seem to have

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² Ib., pg. 15.
⁴ See: Jup Kastrati, Klara Kodra, Vepra letrare 1, Jeronim De Rada, Tiranë, 1987, pg. 9.
reduced the value of above literary works. Although the poetry of De Rada seemingly is built on Albanian traditional themes, if we analyze it deeper, it results to be written about him.

The poem brought enthusiasm at its first exit; nowadays it continues to be positively evaluated by a huge range of writers, scholars, linguists and literary critics. Albanian well-known critics have given their judgment about this work, which had turned to be a hymn of admiration. He soon became known in Europe; the great writer of French literature, Victor Hugo praises the Arbëresh poet: “Who wants to see the fulfillment of modern romantic poetry, should read The songs of Milosao. French poet and scholar, Lamartine wrote "Poetry has come from your shores and there should be back again."

Hence the object of this study is a reflection of phraseological units in the poem "Songs of Milosao", it should be noted that the material is collected after the deep analysis of all Albanian variants of the poem and the original Arbëresh version. In general, most of phraseological units and other expressions that are included in this poem reflect real values of Albanian language. These units, help to deeper recognize the richness of the phraseology of Albanian spoken language, which in the case of De Rada, is a language that is developed far from home.

De Rada wrote in an archaic language of Arbëresh colonies in Calabria. He tried to consolidate the artistic expressions, to elaborate and enrich it, though not always successfully. According to De Rada’s aesthetics thought, poetry should not only precisely indicate plastic forms of things, but should also use musical voice, onomatopoeic rhythm in order to express something deeper, the inner essence of things.

The content and the form of the poem merge into a harmonious whole, which embody these aesthetic principles. All the phenomena of reality are provided in the poem like painted by a painter; and simultaneously the musicality of the verse is high, although it lacks the rhymes. The work is well-known for its originality, for the expression of thoughts and images, for the presentation and the description of deep hidden feelings of human spirit, for simplicity, freshness and naivety, the sweetness and the reverberation of the lines, for the pure slight breeze blowing at all songs written by De Rada.

The poet had a high sense of poetic art. According to him the poetry is creation, feeling, inspiration, etc. It does not need simulation and rhetoric. Poem is distinguished by the nuances of subtle nuance, fluidity, beautiful metaphorical epithets, rich artistic images, artistic intuition of the poet, delicate lyricism, concise style, rhythmic poetry, purity and sincerity, frugal and prudent language. But, one of the main merits of De Rada is the fact that he raised the spoken language of his countryside in the standing of the standard language. In his poem, the word is skewed by the brevity and declarative expressions. It usually is elliptical, with frequent disappearance of the verb "to be", etc. It makes the poetry, as R. Elsie states, dense, deep and presented in a much smaller volume. De Rada wrote his poem in Arbëresh dialect, which appears to be a separated form, which is not completely the same as any of the dialects of Albanian in the Balkan lands; many researcher considered it as a third dialect of Albanian language. The structural and basic phonetic elements of Arbëresh spoken language are similar to southern tosk dialect; matching more strongly with some conservative occurrences of the Labwri and Çam discourse. (Gjovalin Shkurtaj Arbëresh discourses). But no matter how strange it seems, the dialects of Arbëresh people who live in Italy, match at some point with the northern Gheg

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6 Ibid.
8 Ibid, pg. 58.
9 See: Shtyllat e kombit, Jeronim De Rada, Këngë të Milosaos, Tiranë 2010, pg. 10.
10 Ibid.
11 Shih:Jup Kastrati, Klara Kodra, Vepra letrare 1, Jeronim De Rada, Tiranë, 1987, pg. 6
dialect, while for some particular occurrence developments converge with the dialect of Central Albania. The status of discourses of Arbëresh people who live in Italy, is presented pretty diverse, which has brought the problem of not being complete classified.\(^\text{13}\)

Shaban Demiraj admits that the Arbëresh discourses appear as small linguistic islands with few contacts between them. Although they differ from Albanian language dialects, they are part of Albanian language; their grammatical structure is that of the Albanian language; their vocabulary although it is pretty affected of the Italian and Greek language, it has preserved the fund of the old words Albanian\(^\text{14}\).

During many centuries in Italy, Arbëresh people have formed their own physiognomy in the field of culture and art, especially in the field of linguistics and literature\(^\text{15}\). From this diaspora have emerged many poets and scholars of European dimensions as Girolamo De Rada, Vincenz Dorset, Zef Skiroi etc., who remain major mental, political and cultural figures of Albanian Renaissance\(^\text{16}\).

These distinguished Italo – Albanian men, deserve to be mentioned about their contribution in the study of dialects, folklore and Arbëresh creativity; they highlighted the linguistic values that are carried through their dialect\(^\text{17}\).

Relevant documentation, especially the one found in the local archives of Italy (which have recently begun explored by Albanian scholars and by Arbëresh people himself) add a new light that will clear the path of studying the features of Arbëresh dialects. We can say that the similarities and differences that Arbëresh discourse have, if compared with the Albanian language or the Albanian dialects, or even with an internal comparison of the Arbëresh discourses between each-other, present us a historical process, which should be the basic criterion of studying\(^\text{18}\).

We agree with Çabeji when he states that in order to have a relatively clear presentation of linguistic situation of Arbëresh discourses is necessary to consider not only the differences between the dialects of each other, but also some fluctuations which came from different influences from the surrounding environment. Romantic Arbëresh, in the last decade of the XIX century realized that their works will remain very limited due to the archaic Arbëresh dialect in which was written; so one of them, Leonardo de Martino, wrote in literary varieties of northern Albanian dialect, Zef Skiroi softened more his Arbëresh dialect, approaching it to the language of his motherland, Zef Serembe collected words from different Albanian regions and used them in his works\(^\text{19}\).

The most striking phenomenon of Arbëresh discourses, which constitutes one of the most obvious differences of these discourses from standard Albanian and Albanian dialects, is the penetration of foreign words from the surrounding environment, i.e. the Italian words from standard language or dialect of Calabria, Sicilia or Molisana, which have increasingly entered recently, especially for the sake of increasing the mass communication. Thus we conclude that the possibility to understand if you encounter an Albanian with an Arbëresh of Italy depends on vocabulary changes rather than phonetic and morphological- syntax changes. Understanding or realization of the agreement between them is based on a common basis of Albanian words that even after so many centuries that have passed since Arbëresh people exiled in Italy, continue to be the same in the Albanian dialects and in the Arbëresh discourse.\(^\text{20}\)

\(^\text{13}\) See: Gjovalin Shkurtaj, Ligjërimet arbëreshe, Tiranë, 2006, pg. 5.
\(^\text{14}\) See: Gjovalin Shkurtaj, Dialektologia, Tiranë, 2003, pg. 310.
\(^\text{15}\) During the recent years are realized visits, documentaries, trials which represent Arbëresh life and traditions.
\(^\text{16}\) See: Gjovalin Shkurtaj, Ligjërimet arbëreshe, Tiranë, 2006, pg. 6.
\(^\text{17}\) See: Gjovalin Shkurtaj, Dialektologia, Tiranë, 2003, pg. 292.
\(^\text{18}\) Ibid, pg. 285-286.
\(^\text{19}\) See: Eqerem Çabeji, Histori gjuhësore dhe strukturë dialektore e arbërishtes së Italisë, në St. fil. 1975, pg. 53.
As it mentioned, in most cases Arbëresh dialects mostly correspond to southern Tosk dialect. The main features are exactly those which make the difference between Tosk and Gegh dialect: lack of nasal phoneme, lack of labio-dental phoneme, the maintenance of the clean phoneme pronunciation of: th, f, d, xh, q, k, a, ng, nd, tj, dj, the occurrence of rotacism. From the field of morphology, it may also be mentioned: Past participle adjectives, defining forms of masculine names, personal pronoun of the second form plural you, lack of self-reflexive pronoun (himself, herself), the lack of demonstrative pronouns with deictic prefixes, verb ending with -mi ending at Present Simple (you say - thomi), etc. Other similar morphological features between Arbëresh and Tosk dialect are the lack of forms of past perfect of the verbs that show movement, using the verb to have and not to be; -ur endings of past participle verbs, reflexive conjugation of verbal forms; many syntactic occurrences and lexicon-phraseological similarities.

The discourses of Arbëresh of Italy have felt the pressure of Italian language, not only in the lexicon, but also at the specific elements of the morphological and syntactic structure, obtaining a good number of compound words in accordance with Italian language. Obviously such a process has not been the same everywhere, somewhere has been deeper and more expansive, yet it continues to be somewhat easier, which has its linguistics and non-linguistics reasons. This influence is being associated with more stable compound words in Italian, latter it will affect the whole structure of language. Their origin is found in Italian sustainable compound words, which are spread widely.

Below are listed the phraseological units dredged in the poem above, which highlight the idea that the entire analysis of phraseological units need a deep attachment of theoretical level, which will be the object of another detailed study.

Rronej temp e moçëme 23
S’e përgjaku akulli 24
Si gareja çë del për sish 25
Nji gare m’u rrodh te kurmi 26
Sqepet dielli 27
Me të trembur një gare 28
Mbajën vec garenë e tyre 29
Ata duheshin e s’e thoshin 30
Nd’ëmbëlj aqë të puthurit 31
E zëgjohen e garepsun se u zëgjova 32
Si ajo çë duhet me fat të bardhë 33
Zbardhëtin anizit 34
Çë të vend ndë dejtit, /noerit zëmëra ime 35
Nata e zez 36

21 Ibid., pg. 283. (For research purposes the examples are kept in the language of origin)
23 Kangjelji I- vargu 5, pg. 22.
24 Po aty- vargu 9, pg. 22.
25 Po aty- vargu 14, pg. 22.
26 Po aty- vargu 31, pg. 22.
27 Kangjelji II- vargu 6, pg. 24.
28 Po aty- vargu 9, pg.24.
30 Kangjelji IV- vargu 8, pg. 28.
31 Po aty- vargu 22, pg. 28.
32 Vjersh i të biljes Kologres, vargu 3, pg. 30.
33 Po aty- vargu 4, pg.30.
34 Kangjelji V- vargu 3, pg. 32.
35 Po aty- vargu 12, pg.32.
Çera më i dhëzet (Kanë për t’iu ndezur faqet) 37
Të lërrën këntimëthin (me këngë në gojë) 38
Vajzën dëthinaizëmër (vajzën që më mori zemrën) 39
Gëzoit dita e kalthërëz 40
Ajo bën buzën mbë gaz 41
Kam gare te shtush ë i lumit 42
E kopiljia me hje 43
Shkonej vasha mespurtekë 44
Shuhen zjarret, derdhen ujët 45
Jeta vishet ndër rë rea 46
Zemër ljipisjare 47
Erdhe i hjeshim plot gare 48
Kush të mori sishit? 49
Gazin të përshuatur (gazin t’i përshuhet) 50
Si një marmur me llogaz (si një mermer që mendon) 51
qiellit vetëm, tundu dhes (qiellit që rrethonte dheun) 52
Duro, zemër, duro / sa duroi mali me bor. 53
Shkrepëtinë nënt djellas 54
Udhëvet mos m’u përpiq 55
Qoft i but dimërë 56
Të na vish si ka jashti / Fjaljët e të dashuret 57
Djaljërinë të bukuroi 58
Njihjen pjono gare 59
Vetëm fjit te buz’ e udhës 60
Vashës i vej buza mbë gaz 61
Shkundi borën e fushavet 62

37 Ibid., - vargu 22, pg. 32.
38 Kangjelji VI- vargu 17, pg. 34.
39 Ibid., vargu 46, pg. 36.
40 Kangjelji VII- vargu 2, pg. 38.
41 Ibid., vargu 27, pg. 38.
42 Kangjelji VIII- vargu 4, pg. 40.
43 Ibid.,- vargu 11, pg.40.
44 Ibid.,- vargu 27, pg. 40.
45 Kangjelji X, valle Pashkës, vargu 4, pg. 46.
46 Ibid.,- vargu 5, pg. 46.
47 Ibid.,- vargu 6, pg. 46.
48 Ibid., vargu 11, pg. 46.
49 Ibid.,- vargu 12, pg. 46.
50 N’jan e valles- vargu 23, pg. 46.
51 Kangjelji X- vargu 24, pg. 46.
52 Ibid.,- vargu 29, pg. 46.
53 Kangjelji XI- vargjet 1-2, pg. 50.
54 Ibid., varg 3, pg. 50.
55 Kangjelji XII- vargjet 17, pg.52.
56 Kangjelji XIII- varg 7, pg. 56.
57 Ibid.,- vargjet 12-13, pg. 56.
58 Ibid.,- vargu 40, pg. 58.
59 Ibid.,- vargu 33, pg. 56
60 Kangjelji XIV- vargu 8, pg. 60.
61 Ibid., vargu 28, pg.60. (Used for the second time)
M‘i këputi gjumëthin 63
Arat të bihen shëndosha 64
Shpit të mos përlipjen (vishen në zi) 65
Garepsën dita me diell të shëndoshë e të sëmur 66
e m‘i fësin sëzit 67
shkreptën vashëza gares (Shëndrit vasha prej hareje) 68
e më shëh shumë gare 69
më shture sit 70
m‘u skotis ronia (m‘u errësua jeta) 71
si rënjkime zemërje 72
cë ljufton vëdekja 73
mbë të rar të diellit 74
ljëreu fërshëlliminj (ia lëshoi këngës) 75
ndë të rar të dimërit 76
gjumin më këputëjin 77
hënëza mb‘i dejt dhenëzej (llamburinte) 78
më zu malli katundit 79
djelli i sqepur reshit (dielli i fshehur resh) 80
llill çë zëmërat oreksën (sheh e zemrën ia ngroh) 81
si drita nd‘i qëllën 82
ai qëndroi ndër sit e mi (mbeti me sy hapur) 83
dukej jeta e ljer menatet (kish lindur dita) 84
pjono statin me gadhi 85
gjitonit u errëtine 86
bëri buzën mbë gaz 87

62 Ibid., vargu 30, pg. 60.
63 Ibid., vargu 44, pg. 62.
64 Kangjelji XV- vargu 6, pg. 64.
65 Ibid., vargu 8, pg. 64.
66 Kangjelji XVI- vargu 15, pg. 68.
67 Ibid., vargu 24, pg. 68.
68 Kangjelji XVII- vargu 18, pg. 70.
69 Ibid., vargu 7, pg. 70.
70 Vjershi të biljes Kologres, vargu 2, pg. 72.
71 Ibid.
72 Kangjelji XVIII- vargu 3, pg. 74.
73 Ibid., vargu 4, pg. 74.
74 Ibid., vargu 8, pg. 74.
75 Ibid., vargu 22, pg. 74.
76 Kangjelji XIX, vargu 1, pg. 76.
77 Ibid., vargu 15, pg. 76.
78 Ibid., vargu 18, pg. 76.
79 Ibid., Vargu 31, pg. 76.
80 Kangjelji XX- vargu 2, pg. 80.
81 Ibid., vargu 16, pg. 80.
82 Kangjelji XXII, vargu 17, pg. 86.
83 Kangjelji XXIII, vargu 23, pg. 88.
84 Kangjelji XXV, vargu 14, pg. 92.
85 Kangjelji XXVI, vargu 17, pg. 94.
86 Ibid., vargu 26, pg. 94.
87 Ibid., vargu 33, pg. 94. ( E përsëritur për të tretën herë)
gazi i të vdekure 88
nkuqëjin rëmpë diellit (rezet e diellit skuqnin) 89
ndër të bën buzën mbë gaz 90
e me ljet ju mbjuani sit (iu veshën sytë me lot) 91

References

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88 Ibid., vargu 34, pg. 94.
89 Ibid., vargu 37, pg. 96.
90 Kangjelji XXVII, vargu 16, pg. 98. (E përsëritur për të katërtën herë)
91 Kangjelji XXVIII, vargu 15, pg. 100.