

## Abstract

The aim of this work is to outline the origins of the famous play of William Shakespeare Romeo and Juliet. Almost everybody knows this play. They saw it in the theatre, read it in a book, saw it on television or in the cinema, but only few of them know, that William Shakespeare was only a skilful interpreter of the earlier stories of Romeo and Juliet written in verses or in prose.

We will try to arrive to the roots of this story, that does not begin where the names of our two protagonists appear but it starts in the ancient times with the topos of the forbidden love. With the topos of the common grave or at least the desire to be together after the death. From these stories, that begin in the times when the man did not know to write we will move to the era where people started to write down the stories inherited and narrated for centuries in numerous variations until we arrive to the Humanism and Renaissance, that was very fruitful in all artistic experimentation and it was in this period, where our story will be first written with the characters that we know very well. We will stop for a longer time in Italy as the Italians wrote for the first time the story of Romeo and Juliet and we will try to describe the background of the single writers and the differences between the stories of our lovers. Then we will follow the story further until we arrive to our well-known drama of William Shakespeare.

In the end, we will demur to some foreign variations of our story, following the authors of the Italian Renaissance and we will try to mark out and compare some differences in their work and we will try to evaluate the efficiency and the truthfulness of the single works.