

Albanian Songs of The Battle of Fushë Kosovë (1389)

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Abstract

The corresponding song received this name because the fighting between the forces of the Balkan coalition and the invading Ottoman army took place in this space, near today's Pristina, the capital of the Republic of Kosovo. The Albanian variants of this theme convey in an original and special way the general picture of the Kosovo War. In this sense, we would say that the songs about the Kosovo War, 1389, among the Albanians, although in different variants, with significant differences, come as a specific creativity of the Albanians, distinct from the other variants of the peoples who sang them this major event in the history of the Balkans. The true purpose of the creators and the circulating media of the songs about the Kosovo War has been the reflection of a concrete historical event, with real characters, historically documented, in addition to created figures, which is a completely legitimate phenomenon for folkloric artistic creations in generally.

Keywords: *Historical Epic, Balkan Forces, Ottoman Army, Milosh Kopiliki*

INTRODUCTION

The songs of the historical epic among Albanians constitute one of the rich types of Albanian folklore. The historical song has been dominant in the Albanian folklore circulation, conditioned by the conditions that the Albanian people have gone through. Therefore, every phenomenon must be seen in the historical context and can find an explanation precisely in this context. This type of songs has been practiced in certain moments of traditional life, mainly in men's environments, becoming an integral part of parties with a general popular or family character, such as in men's assemblies, through the odes of friends, through weddings, naming, welcoming friends, etc. The historical song has as its basic feature the artistic treatment of events and real historical characters.

Based on such consideration, we found it reasonable to undertake to examine the historical song of the Albanians about the Battle of Kosovo (1389) in a special plan, generally not treated until today: the examination of the historical song about the Battle of Kosovo (1389) at the level of the poetics of this song. In this paper I will treat the poetics of this song in terms of morphological, typological and artistic construction, relying only on the poetic texts of historical epic songs.

Historical songs are folkloric creations, they share the fact that they are about events, characters, concrete places and specific times, of a historical nature. In short, we can say that the creations of the historical epic convey a form of reflection of truths through artistic clothing, historically identified realities. It is understandable that the songs about the Battle of Kosovo (1389) come as creations on the threshold of the transition from legendary to historical epic. Being the only experience for epic creations, there was no way that the new historical song that was being born did not use the tools of the epic technique, did not take certain elements, among which are the presence of typical phenomena of the legendary epic, the way of musical accompaniment, the relatively large length of the sung verses, etc. These elements are typical and characterize more clearly and openly this first model of the new historical Albanian song. It comes to us as a type of transition from one folkloric type to another.

It is now known to everyone, as a literal historical fact, the great clash of 1389 between the Ottoman forces, which were trying to conquer the Balkan spaces, and the army formed by the troops of some of these countries of the peninsula (consisting of Serbs, Bosniaks, Croats, Vlachs, Albanians) to protect themselves from

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invaders³. The conquering aims of the Ottoman Empire, headed by Sultan Murat I, were opposed by a Balkan army under the leadership of the Serbian prince Lazar. This fight in the vicinity of Pristina has entered and is reflected in the popular tradition of several Balkan countries. Various legends and songs have been created about this real historical event, which from time to time have been passed down from generation to generation, conveying certain changes. As F. Arapi says, "*Historical data about that "coalition" (we are talking about the Balkan coalition), as well as about the events and true course of the battle, are as few and contradictory as the Battle of Kosovo of 1389 it was more covered by the legend and symbolic character of the "Balkan disaster", which it received through legends and popular songs sung later about it*"⁴.

Among other people, the Albanians also created, and much later even recorded, songs dedicated to that period and the great clash, regardless of the place the Albanians themselves occupied in the battle. It is an undeniable fact that a number of Albanian nobles or rulers took part in this war, along with their armies⁵. If the Albanians were not active participants in this war, then there would not be so much folklore creativity, which would convey in an original and special way the general picture of the Battle of Kosovo. Ultimately, the historical framework of

the time conveys convincing evidence that Albanians not only participated in the fighting, but also gave their help with folkloric creativity.

Of course, the viewpoints about this event, the ways of reflecting it, the specific artistic tools used, the structure of the songs that express them are different in different people that reflect this historical moment. The same historical event has been treated in different ways by folklore creations, not only among different people, but also within the same people. In this case, we are dealing with the typical example of expressive, but also real, relationships between history and folklore artistic treatment by certain communities or communities and how they have been passed down from generation to generation, until the time of their recording.

Here we would see the uniqueness of the creative abilities, the expressive individuality of each person. In this context, we would say that the Albanian songs dedicated to the Battle of Kosovo in 1389 reflect exactly the talent, creative artistic abilities of the Albanian people, in addition to the original perspective of the event itself and its artistic behavior. Despite the fact that in different populations the same historical event is sung, the means of expression, the way of conceiving, experiencing the event, emphasizing or not emphasizing different moments and figures, creative artistic fantasy differ not only from one population to another, but also within each population. In this sense, we would say that the songs about the battle, 1389, among the Albanians, although in different variants, even with significant differences, come as a specific creativity of the Albanians, distinct from the other variants of the people who sang them. By right Sh. Pllana states that "*In elaborating on the theme of the Battle of Kosovo, the Albanian folk songs show, in comparison to the Serbian, Croatian, Macedonian and Bulgarian folk songs, in most of them, an original independence, but in some places they elaborate some motives in a similar way*"⁶. E. Mehmeti adheres to this opinion when he asserts that "*Albanian songs that elaborate on this event are dozens and compared to Serbian, Croatian, Bulgarian and Montenegrin songs, they are independent and original creations even though countries treat any motif in a similar way*"⁷.

Of course, in order to be more clear about what these songs represent, we believe that here it is necessary to briefly express the theme that binds them to the Albanians. It must be said that generally these songs function as a treatment in two parts or in two aspects of the important moments of the historical event itself. The first part talks about the gathering of the Ottoman army and their war march to Pristina, showing various events,

³ Shih Sh. Pllana, *Epika popullore shqiptare mbi Luftën e Kosovës*, "Studime në fushë të folklorit", Universiteti i Prishtinës, Fakulteti i Filologjisë, Prishtinë, 2004, f. 231.

⁴ F. Arapi, *Kënga popullore shqiptare mbi Luftën e Kosovës 1389*, "Çështje të folklorit shqiptar" 2, Akademia e Shkencave e Shqipërisë, Instituti i Kulturës Popullore, Tiranë, 1986, f. 179.

⁵ Shih më gjerë citimet e sjella, po aty, f. 179 – 190.

⁶ Po aty, f. 233.

⁷ E. Mehmeti, Veçori tipologjike të këngëve historike, SNGJLKSH, nr. 26/2, Prishtinë, 2007, F. 655-661.

such as the dream that the sultan sees and its interpretation by their interpreters; mustering the army; crossing the sea by the sultan striking it with a stick; the occupation of Thessaloniki and Skopje, the obstacle in Kačanik and its overcoming. While the second part conveys the moments that are directly related to the Battle of Kosovo, such as: the request of the sultan; trials with chicks, to obey the Ottoman threat; the premonition of killing the sultan; Milosh Kopiliki's promise and keeping his word to kill the sultan; the visit of the heads of the coalition to the sultan; the killing of Miloš and the flight of the severed head, the curse on the two witches and, finally, his occupation.

From all that we have said, it is understood that the historical event is at the epicenter of these songs, but this is actually the starting point of the songs themselves. But there is a basic feature of the Albanian song. The historical event as such would have been forgotten or there would have been no artistic realization among the Albanians simply as such. We believe that the phenomenon that makes the song acceptable and preserved for Albanians has to do with the fact that the second part of the song is mainly related to the figure of Milosh Kopiliki⁸. We are of the opinion that precisely to highlight the selflessness of an Albanian representative of the coalition, these songs were created by the Albanians, and they have survived for a long time.

Regardless of the many discussions about the origin or the national affiliation of Kopiliq, for the Albanians he stands worthy as their representative, as an expression of bravery and self-sacrifice, in contrast to the songs of the Slavs where this figure is not so important. Moreover, even for a well-known researcher of the Slavic world, M. Kopilici is "*a central personality in the Albanian epic*"⁹. With a lot of sniffing, F. Arapi knew how to discover interesting statements from the Serbian folk song. Among other things, this researcher asserts that "*That Milosh Kopilici is Albanian, the Serbian folk singer himself somehow leaves this to us to imply*"¹⁰. And in support of his assertion, this researcher brings lines from a Serbian song. It also contains the following verses:

"...Upfront leader Miloš,/

And next to him are two Serbian leaders,/

One is Ivan Kosančić,/

The other is Toplica Milani"¹¹.

And the judgment of the Albanian researcher in this case seems to us very far-fetched, when he asks the question that does not require an answer: "*Why does the popular singer emphasize that there are two Serbian soldiers standing next to Miloš?*" "*Why, isn't Miloš himself a Serb*"¹²? Another, very significant fact has not escaped the attention of researchers in this regard. He has found how the translator of the Serbian epic into Russian, feeling the inner thought of the popular singer, deleted the word "Serb" in these verses, bringing them in this form:

"Infront of the leader

Next to him sitting two equal"¹³.

We believe that and from what was said, we can reach an acceptance of the opinion that Milosh Kopilici for Albanians represents their identity. This is exactly the reason that in the respective songs this somewhat legendary figure occupies the main place, when it is known that historically the leader of the coalition was Prince Lazari. But in reality, this historical figure in Albanian songs is absent or plays an episodic role¹⁴. But the relationships that actually exist between the historical fact and the folkloric artistic treatment are those that are determined by the creative and circulating communities, so they best explain this difference between the

⁸ Shih më gjerë, po aty, f. 242 – 243.

⁹ V. Çajkanović, *Motivi prve arnautske pesme e boju na Kosovu*, "Arhiv za arbanasku starinu, jezik i etnologiju", libri I, vëll. 1-2, Beograd, 1923, f. 68.

¹⁰ F. Arapi, punim i cituar, f. 190.

¹¹ Po aty, f. 191.

¹² Po aty.

¹³ Po aty.

¹⁴ V. Çajkanović, punim i cituar, f. 243.

historical fact and the way of folkloric treatment among Albanians, distinct from analogous creations of other peoples.

However, this is not the occasion to dwell on the features, characteristics and commonalities of different folklore creations in different peoples, which have been addressed by a considerable number of researchers, among them Albanian researchers¹⁵. We are interested in seeing the relevant Albanian songs as a special type of this song in general. Therefore, we will further dwell on the features of these songs, which are related to the composition, the development of the fable in epic width, the epic narration, the formulations, the epic repetitions, the retardations, as well as their filling with epic historical-mythological subjects. We believe that through all these perspectives of the songs about the Battle of Kosovo in 1389, they will be able to convincingly argue that they constitute a special type of Albanian historical epic song.

To date, Albanians have recorded a number of songs that have this war at their center. They, although they were recorded only starting from 1918, that is, relatively late, recognizing L. Nosi's realization as the first recording, so not at the best time of their folkloric circulation, represent the Albanian folk creativity for the most important event early in our national history, known to this day. Even just as such, they have a special importance in the entirety of the songs of the Albanian historical epic. But their importance is much greater, if we were to keep in mind another fact, which has to do with their formation of a special type in the entirety of the Albanian historical epic. They come as a transition from the legendary epic to the historical epic, so we believe that they are of great interest to see how this transition was made concretely. In this context, we will treat these songs, to see their main features and characteristics, which lead us to this distinction, as a special type of Albanian historical song in general.

COMPOSITION OF SONGS

The interpretation of the lyrics of the songs about the Battle of Kosovo, the linguistic and meaning structure, the way of the epic narrative, the structure of the artistic message are some of the directions that shed light on the main characteristics of these songs, as well as expressing, in addition to many elements others, which we have dealt with or will deal with below, the specifics in defining this special type of Albanian historical epic. But all these, at the same time, serve to illuminate the composition of the songs we are analyzing. We can say that through such examinations, which reveal the composition, which basically has to do not only with the text, but also with the way of singing, the latter being often the determining factor, a whole wealth is revealed, brought through a special composition. This is explained by the fact that the beginnings of the historical epic could not ignore the creative poetic experience of the preceding epic, such as the legendary epic. Here we find exactly that special composition of songs about the Battle of Kosovo, in relation to other songs of the historical epic.

It has already been affirmed by Albanian folklorists that in terms of compositional structure, historical songs have their own characteristics. "First of all, it is a narrative song with a special narrative strategy. Her scene develops in a linear way, passing through certain stages, from the exposition to the conclusion"¹⁶. Such a characterization means that the historical song conveys the theme it has captured only in one line, from the beginning to the end, without excessive entrances and exits, without interweaving of two or more motifs, without branching of points. But in the songs about the Battle of Kosovo, unusual phenomena of historical songs, related to their composition, are noticed. These songs generally consist of two parts, at a time when if we were dealing with a real historical song we would have only one of them redundant. On the other hand, in some of the songs we have the transition from a space or from some characters to a space or to some other characters, which is not typical for genuine historical songs. The latter start their process and end it within the same time and place coordinate.

The songs of the Battle of Kosovo do not "respect" this request of the folkloric type that they actually belong to, but have borrowed the dominant creative experience at the time of their creation, which was the song of

¹⁵ Midis tyre do të veçonim emra të tillë, si: Sh. Pllana, Q. Haxhihasani, F. Arapi etj, të cilët kanë hedhur dritë në raportet përkatëse të këngëve të shqiptarët dhe te popuj të tjerë të Ballkanit.

¹⁶ E. Mehmeti, vepër e cituar, f. 153.

the legendary epic. It is here that we see the source or the reason that these songs have such a large numerical length of verses, which is obviously not typical for historical songs, even in relation to those that have more verses. In the songs that we are examining, we have plenty of them, the narration passing from one situation to another, although here too we are dealing with a continuity, with an uninterrupted or clearly unbranched linear line. But if we were dealing with a genuine historical song, then each of the moments brought by these songs would constitute a separate song.

To support our assertion, we would say that only the incident in Skopje, where a soldier of the Sultan takes an apple from the bag of a local, considered haram (forbidden), and because of this the Sultan's army cannot advance in its battles, will be able to constitute a separate song in the true historical epic, of course, in case it constituted a fact of a historical nature.

Even the structuring of the treatment of the songs about the Battle of Kosovo goes through several moments, which are characteristic of the songs of the Kreshniks. In addition to a cliché introduction, as in the songs of the Kreshniks, in these songs comes their exposition, having then the elaboration of a fable in a breadth of epic nature in general. It reaches a climax, after the conflict has reached real proportions, which in the songs we are examining is related to the moment of the murder of the Sultan by Millosh Kopiliki. In this way, the resolution of the conflict is realized, to move to the closing of each song. The end of the Kosovar hero, in most of the variants, also marks the end of all the songs we are dealing with. But there is also a variant that realizes the conclusion of the song with Sultan Murat, also through the use of the typical formulas of the Albanian epic of the Kreshniks. Apparently, even from what we mentioned here, it is clearly understood that the songs about the Battle of Kosovo, to a certain extent, have used the compositional methods that are typical for the songs of the Kreshniks.

These arguments that we brought are indicative of the connections between the songs about the Battle of Kosovo and the songs of the Kreshniks, in terms of their structure. The very number of verses proves convincingly that the songs of the battle of 1389 are closer in their structure to the songs of the Kreshniks than to other songs of the Albanian historical epic in general. This means that the very structure of these songs, apart from others, defines them as a special type of Albanian historical song.

Talking about these connections of the songs of the Battle of Kosovo with the old epic songs, one can create the impression that the relationships between them are so close that they can belong to the same group. In fact, we are dealing, in terms of the structure of the songs, with visible connections only from the stable elements of the epic construction or from the stable epic parameters¹⁷. While we have obvious differences in the epic subject that these two types of folklore deal with, in the filling of each type with special elements of an epic nature. We emphasize that, while for the songs of the Battle of Kosovo we have a characteristic phenomenon of elaborating on a subject that is presented of a historical-mythological nature, for the old epic songs it is characteristic of the treatment of fabulous, oral spectacles.

But it is known that in the overall structural construction of a folklore creation, in the process and in the formation of constituent units, the most defining element is its problematic thematic character. And in this aspect, it should be emphasized that in the songs about the Battle of Kosovo, 1389, the main thematic problem that the relevant Albanian folkloric creativity wanted to convey is precisely the historical event. This predisposition conditions the topic, ideas, goals, which are powerful organizing and disciplining elements. On the other hand, the broad content that is reflected in these songs, which goes beyond the literal bed of historical songs, has flexibility in the coordination of possibilities and means of expression. It is here that we believe that all the distinguishing features of the songs of the Battle of Kosovo have their artistic basis, even as a vacant type of the Albanian historical epic¹⁸.

THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE PLOT IN EPIC BREADTH

¹⁷ Shih më gjerësisht E. Mehmeti, *kumtesë e cituar*, f. 2.

¹⁸ Shih më gjerësisht R. Brahim, *Vëçori tipologjike e strukturore të epicit të kreshnikëve*, "Çështje të folklorit shqiptar" 2, Akademia e Shkencave e Shqipërisë, Instituti i Kulturës popullore, Tiranë, 1986, f. 128.

The songs of the Battle of Kosovo are presented with a multitude of verses, characteristic of the old epic. The very fable of these creations is conveyed in an extension of an epic nature. We must affirm at the beginning of this treatment the fact that generally the songs about the Battle of Kosovo, 1389, have a relatively long number of verses, sometimes going up to nearly 600 verses¹⁹. This gives the songs a prolixity that is rare for epic narration. There are detailed descriptions, detailed descriptions of events or processes through which the song goes. All of these are delivered with a sublime calmness, without boasting and efforts, quite freely, all with a source in the internal and natural forces of the main character of these songs, which is Milosh Kopiliki. To illustrate this statement, we are bringing here some of the dimensions with which different songs come, also to support the opinion that the fable of the songs of the Battle of Kosovo unfolds on an epic scale.

The variant registered in Miroslalë - Ferizaj counts 459 verses²⁰. As in all Albanian songs, here in the first part it is sung about the War of the Ottoman forces, under the direction of Sultan Murat, his exit to the Balkan lands, up to Pristina. While the second part is about the war itself, when Milosh Kopiliki kills the sultan and is himself killed by the Turks. But to convey both these moments or parts, in which the fable of creation itself is woven, there is a breadth of treatments and elaborations, which really have the dimensions of the epic narrative in general. Thus, the sultan's dream book contains 43 verses, among which 12 correspond to the dream he saw, while the other verses give its explanation or meaning.

The other songs published so far are more or less of the same nature. The song recorded in Polac i Drenica has 265 verses²¹. In it, the dream occupies 14 verses, while its explanation only 3 verses. While the variant marked in Shala e Bajgora - Vllahi conveys two dreams²². First, the dream that Krajlica sees is given, which is narrated in 20 verses, and its explanation lasts 25 verses, while then the dream of the Sultan is given in a really large number of verses, 32. This way of treating the dream itself is so protracted, going on to represent the sultan's great concern and inability to learn anything from him from any of the leaders of the state, until his mother dares to question him and get an answer. Presenting the exposition of the song itself at such length is indeed a literal occurrence of epic narrative. On the contrary, the explanation of the first dream by the sultan himself is given only through two lines:

"Dear Mother, a dream I have seen

To conquer Kosovo, the sign has come"

But it must be said that there are also song variants in which we have the giving and interpretation of the dream in only a few verses. Thus, the song recorded in Rahovec - Drini, with 212 lines²³, begins directly with the Sultan's dream, but it does so with only two lines each for the dream and for its explanation. The same phenomenon is also found in the song recorded in Karačevë - Kamenica²⁴, where the dream itself is given in a few lines:

"Oh, a dream the Sultan has seen,

/ Very worried the Sultas has become.

/ "Even the moon, shines brighter in the reflection of the water,

/ Somehow the stars have fallen to the earth,

/ even the sun, the sun, the sun has stopped!"

¹⁹ Shih më gjerësisht R. Brahimi, *Veçori tipologjike e strukturore të eposit të kreshnikëve, "Çështje të folklorit shqiptar" 2*, Akademia e Shkencave e Shqipërisë, Instituti i Kulturës popullore, Tiranë, 1986, f. 128.

²⁰ "Këngë popullore historike" I, Instituti Albanologjik i Prishtinës, Prishtinë, 2007, f. 27 – 40.

²¹ Po aty, f. 41 – 48.

²² Po aty, f. 49 – 65.

²³ Po aty, f. 66 – 72.

²⁴ Po aty, f. 73 – 75.

It is different with its explanation, when this is done through 15 verses. We are not taking into consideration any other variant included in the volume that we have quoted so far, since it does not seem to us to be a genuine creation and is presented as an exception from the general presentation of all other variants of songs about the Battle of Kosovo.

We believe that the changes in the number of verses in the variants that reflect the dream and its explanation are related to a "natural" selection itself, due to the very long circulation, as well as to the degree of self-esteem by the performers, depending on the communities where they practiced, driven by various factors. Among them, perhaps the most important, have to do with the region or the environment where the song was recorded, with the influence or lack of influence of the Islamic religion, with the desire or unwillingness to deal with the biblical or Quranic elements about the dream, with the preference for to one party or the other opposing party, therefore, is closely related to what was most valuable, first for the popular creator and then for the community where the creation was practiced. With this, we want to explain the fact that why one variant presents the sultan's dream more fully, both in the first and in the explained, while another deals more with the princess's dream and does not pay so much attention to the dream of the sultan. In the first variants the Islamic influence prevails, in the second this influence is more limited.

The same epic width of the development of the fable can be said to be present for the second part of the songs about the Battle of Kosovo, related to the preferences and assessments of the popular creator, not only in the narrow sense of the term, but as a representative of a certain community, with the features or characteristics of the province, with the different gradations in the shapes and formulations of the artistic expression with an epic breadth, etc.

A more direct look at the second parts of the different versions of the songs about the Battle of Kosovo convinces you of the above statement. Thus, in the variant mentioned above recorded in Ferizaj's Mirosalë, we find Miloš's statement about the murder of the sultan, as well as the reflection of the act of murder itself, reflected in 35 verses, emphasizing that greater attention has been paid to the sultan, as an important actor in this story that is conveyed by the song:

"This Milloshi, very brave,
/ Milloshi took out the knife and attacked him,
/ He killed the Sultan;
/ The Sultan has passed away,
/ Millosh Kopilici cut him short.
/ He was beloved by the god,
/ The head under his armpits, the corpse has vanished,
/ A drop of blood fell from the sky on the ground,
/ There, they built his place for prayers.
/ His corpse, again has gone to Bursa,
/ The song for Sultan Murat has been sung;
/ Sultan Murat was like this,
/ If he hadn't been like that, then they wouldn't have said it"²⁵!

If we stop only at the last verse, we find in it that emphasis that is given to the sultan's character in this variant. And the conversation of the sultan with his own people, regarding the meeting with Miloš, together with his obviously Islamized end, are given in 26 verses. So, the ratio in verses between the two characters, Milosh and

²⁵ Po aty, f. 40.

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the Sultan, is 35 to 26, with a difference of 10 verses. While in the variant noted in Polac of Drenica, cited above, this report is much more pronounced, giving priority to the figure of Miloš, his exaltation, on the one hand, and without dealing with the Islamization of the figure at all of the sultan, on the other hand, on the contrary, the coloring of this figure leans more towards giving his negation. What we have said is best expressed artistically, for example, in the picture of the last appearance of the sultan:

"The left leg Sultan has given him. ,
with one hand, he took the leg,
/ with the other hand, he stabbed him with the knife,
/ intestines and lungs on the ground have fallen,
Twentyfour hours the Sultan has lived,
At that time, the Sultan has passed away²⁶

(It seems that in this case the expression used in the Albanian environment is confirmed, that bad things don't get away easily).

Even in other variants, including those recently published in Kosovo by the Albanological Institute of Pristina, which we are analyzing, simply so as not to burden the text with many diverse quotations, this is more or less the situation. Thus, in the variant recorded in Shala e Bajgora, quoted above, less importance is given to the figure of the sultan, so much so that the singer does not even deal with his death, but simply says: "Soon the soul of the king leaves"²⁷. The opposite happens with the description of the figure of Miloš, devoting over 60 verses to him, to focus on his bravery, the exaltation of this figure, of course, very dear not only to the singer. We encounter the same phenomenon in the variant registered in Rahovec. In this song, although we have a few more verses about the death of the sultan, bringing the fact that there were funeral processions, they took on a negative tone:

"The corpse of the sultan flew,
/ Guts and blood where it drips,
/ A house for prayer , it is said that it is build"²⁸..

It is operated differently by giving the figure of Miloš, to whom again over 60 verses are dedicated in this song, which artistically convey many of his positive values.

In addition, it must be said that there are other scenes or forms in these songs, which are characterized by a very long stretch of giving the epic narrative. Let us recall here only some examples. We are considering for the present case only the prolonged treatment of how the entire Turkish army may suffer, because of a harram act, inadvertently undertaken by a soldier. The very solution of this problem occupies so much space in the song that other more important moments are obscured or take up less scope.

The very presence of numerous verses, simply in giving or reflecting different figures of the songs of the Battle of Kosovo, proves convincingly for the development of the fable in epic breadth. We make this assertion because on a mere limited plane, such as the death of the characters, we are dealing with a stretch of epic narrative so wide and detailed that we believe it to be the best evidence of epic breadth itself. of these songs we are dealing with.

But, in addition to what we said, regarding the songs of the Battle of Kosovo, it is necessary to concretely realize the way of building the songs, using the experience of the legendary heroic epic. As is known, for the latter are typical, among other things, the practice of cliché formulas, epic repetitions, as well as delays,

²⁶ Po aty, f. 48.

²⁷ Po aty, f. 63.

²⁸ Po aty, f. 70.

constituting in their entirety important elements of song construction. We will make these elements the object of our treatment in the following section, believing that we will more closely illuminate the nature of the songs dedicated to the Battle of Kosovo, 1389.

EPIC NARRATION, WORDING, EPIC REPETITIONS AND RETARDS LIKE IMPORTANT ELEMENTS OF SONG CONSTRUCTION

The epic narrative in these folklore creations is presented using the typical forms of the Kreshnika epic. The links between this song and this folkloric type have been generally explained by researchers with the fact that the songs about the Battle of Kosovo present a transitional phase from the legendary tradition to the historical one. Having made the above statement, it is necessary to see more closely how some elements of the legendary heroic epic are realized concretely from the songs of the Battle of Kosovo.

First, we would stop at the epic of songs dedicated to the Battle of Kosovo. The researcher J. Panajoti, talking about the epicism in the epic of the Kreshniks, among other things, claims that it "reflects life in the form of broad" objective" pictures. Further clarifying this "objective" definition, he further emphasizes: "...the rhapsody pretends to objectively show how the events happened, while in fact it takes a certain position, even if it is implied"²⁹. We can say that the same phenomenon occurs in the songs about the Battle of Kosovo. We really have an epic breadth in these songs, where through wide pictures, given in a multitude of verses, it is implied that the true purpose of the Albanian rhapsodes was giving the self-sacrificing act of Milosh Kopiliki, the glorification of his heroic attitude and action.

Secondly, we would dwell on the heroic spirit of the songs dedicated to the Battle of Kosovo, 1389. Although the predominant type of poetic thought on the basis of which these songs were created is the historical one, a very large role is also played by the type of legendary poetic thought. So specifically in these songs we find a spirit of epic heroic proportions, as we would mention here Milosh Kopiliki's awareness of the extreme self-sacrifice he performed, in the name of endurance and coping with the situation in which he was. This heroic spirit does not come simply as a boast, but is embodied in the very way of thinking and acting of this representative of the Albanians. All that we have said internally connects this type of song with the songs of the Kreshniks³⁰.

Third, we would mark the operation and by means of elements of a legendary nature. In the songs about the Battle of Kosovo, we find quite a few elements of a legendary nature, such as: seeing the dream and its foretelling; the opening of the road through the sea, with the fall with a stick from the side of the sultan; flying and speaking of severed head etc. All these moments are very important in these songs, so much so that they could not be understood without the operation with such elements of mythological origin.

In addition to what we have said, regarding the epic narrative in the songs about the Battle of Kosovo, there are other elements in common between this type of historical song and the songs of the epic of the Kreshniks, which, after all, are the use of the artistic tools of this particular epic, not to mention even more widely from Albanian folklore. Thus, among the typical elements of the legendary heroic epic among the Albanians, the practice of cliché formulas or more general formulations, of repetitions of different natures, has been considered.

²⁹ J. Panajoti, *Eposi shqiptar i kreshnikëve*, "Gjurmime albanologjike – Folklor dhe etnografi" 33-34, 2003 – 2004, Instituti Albanologjik i Prishtinës, Prishtinë, 2005, f. 33.

³⁰ Shih më gjerë, po aty, f. 34 – 35.

These are characteristic not only for the beginnings and endings of songs in general, but also in the body of their texts.

The same phenomenon occurs in the songs about the Battle of Kosovo. We would mention as more typical, initially, the dreams that the sultan sees and their explanation, as a prelude to the Battle of Kosovo, which will take place not too far in time. Such clichéd introductions, of this nature, are not typical of genuine historical epic songs. In fact, dreams in the creations we are considering play a very important role, since, serving as the exposition of each song, they orient the entire song in the development of their plot in epic breadth. In fact, we are dealing with the same way of proceeding as in the songs of the Kreshniks, where dreams foretell what will happen, serving as an artistic tool for the further development of the action³¹. As for the practical support of the opinion we expressed above, we are only stopping at one case from the songs of the kreshniks, when the dream foretells what has happened:

"Arise, Halil but don't rise the head!
/ 'I dream of blackness, Halil, I have seen it,
/ "The big lava from the mountains has fallen,
/ Our both horses have been eaten.
/ The homes, alone we have left,
/ Maybe, I fear the ruler burned them" ³².

And, indeed, after that, we have the development of the fable exactly on this line that the dream foretells.

The epic narrative in the songs about the Battle of Kosovo is realized through the use of a number of tools taken or borrowed from traditional folk poetry. In addition to the practice of clichés, among them, we would emphasize the role played by: different repetitions (of the nature of anaphora, epanalepsis, epanastrophe or dichotomy), antitheses. Any of them, such as repetition, a stylistic figure related to the practice of the same word or sentence in a row or at a short distance, are practiced as prefabs, when there is repetition of certain situations, states in the song. Besides a kind of swelling of the narrative, these usages also bring about an obvious effect of an emotional nature.

Looking at all the elements of the composition of the songs of the Battle of Kosovo, we can conclude that they, using and including in their practice The poetic experience of heresy songs and beyond, of Albanian folklore in general, have come up with a new type of creations that have a new experience of creative experience. historical. It is precisely in this interweaving that we find all the visible common and distinguishing elements for the epic of the Kreshniks and the historical epic that talks about the Battle of Kosovo, 1389. At the same time, here we find those characteristics that lead us to consider this type of song as a special type of Albanian historical epic in general. But here we cannot leave out of attention the great role played in these songs, both for their setting as a type of widow, and for their setting as a special type of song, the entanglement, the fusion of the historical subject with the mythological one. Based on the role played in these songs precisely by complications of this nature, below we are making them the broader object of our treatment.

³¹ Shih p.sh., "Folklor shqiptar II Epika legjendare", vëllimi i parë, Instituti i Folklorit, Tiranë, 1966, f. 109, 191, 553etj.; vëllimi i dytë, Tiranë, 1983, f. 39 etj.

³² Po aty, vëllimi i pare, f. 191.

FILLING THE SONGS WITH EPIC HISTORICAL - MYTHOLOGICAL SUBJECTS

The songs about the Battle of Kosovo are presented, as we have said above, as a creation that connects two types of epics, such as legendary epics and historical epics, or are they a bridge of passage. We have in these songs, practiced with different specific weights, both the characteristics of the legendary epic and the historical epic. In them we find, for example, among the elements of the legendary epic, features such as: epicism; heroic spirit and legend. While among the elements of the historical epic we would highlight, among others, such features as: the truth of the basic event, which the song is about; the historical environment in which the events take place and the operation with the historical poetic consciousness.

Since this "mix" creates a special type of Albanian historical epic in general, we believe that it is important to also see the real relations of the historical epic subject with the mythological one, characteristic of the legendary epic. Until today, various forms have been realized that have highlighted the similarities and differences between the songs of the Battle of Kosovo and the legendary songs. Thus, Lamberci called the first short swords. This means that he saw very clearly the connections between these two different types of folklore. D. Shala expresses this connection in a special way. Speaking about the evolution of songs about the Battle of Kosovo, he also says that "...those songs evolved even more, they were dressed in a legendary garment, they were removed from historical data and they reflected the Turkish invasion as a holy march to spread Mohammedanism among Christians"³³. While A. Uçi says: "...even the historical epic is not completely separated from the influence of the legendary epic. It also includes several cycles, such as that of the Battle of Kosovo, that of Skënderbeu, or like many songs of the Arbëresh people, which have mythological, legendary, fabulous elements"³⁴. Moreover, the same researcher brings his own opinion regarding the possibility or source of these mutual influences, when he says that "The coexistence of the legendary epic and the historical epic has made their mutual influences possible: elements of the historical epic have penetrated the legendary epic, but this has also influenced the historical epic. Coexistence for a long time in some cases has also brought a kind of "mixing" and has faded the "purity" of the genre, which partly makes it difficult to classify some songs, especially those from the cycle of the Battle of Kosovo or the folklore of the Arbëresh people of Italy"³⁵. E. Mehmeti, talking about the relationship between the songs of the Battle of Kosovo and the old Albanian epic, affirms: "Exactly, the stable elements of the epic construction or the stable epic parameters bring this type of historical song closer to the old epic songs"³⁶. In addition, this researcher realizes more concretely the differences or concrete changes of these two types of epic creations, emphasizing the fact that "Differences between old epic songs and this model (the researcher is talking about the songs of the Battle of Kosovo - N. Ismajli) appear more in the epic filling, in the epic subject that they elaborate than in the means of the epic technique. Thus, while the songs of the Battle of Kosovo are filled with epic historical-mythological subjects from a great historical event between the East and the West, the old epic songs, namely the Kreshnik songs, elaborate on fairy-tale spectacles, so much so that some of them can be called fairy tales in verse"³⁷.

Therefore, below, in order to more concretely highlight some of the links between the songs of the Battle of Kosovo - the songs of the Kreshniks or more broadly, with the creations of the legendary epic in general, which define this type of song as a special type within the Albanian historical epic, we will analyze exactly this combination of the main elements of the legendary epic and the historical one in the songs about the Battle of Kosovo. In addition, we will also see some elements of a literal mythological nature in the songs about the Battle of Kosovo, which present these creations as "a hybrid model of the historical song with mixed historical and legendary elements, a weaving of the type of historical and mythological poetic thought"³⁸.

³³ D. Shala, "Mbi epikën tonë popullore historike", Rilindja, Prishtinë, 1982, f. 16.

³⁴ A. Uçi, punim i cituar, f. 22 – 23.

³⁵ A. Uçi, punim i cituar, f. 22.

³⁶ E. Mehmeti, punim i cituar, f. 2.

³⁷ Po aty, f. 3.

³⁸ Po aty, f. 4.

It is important to emphasize that, although the songs about the Battle of Kosovo belong or we include them in the historical epic, in fact, the scene of the songs "is mainly developed on a mythological and legendary level"³⁹. We don't have to worry about this, since, after all, here we find the opportunity or the main basis to define a special type of Albanian historical epic. Therefore, looking at these elements of mythological and legendary nature, which are present in the songs about the Battle of Kosovo, in relation to the historical phenomenon, is important, since these songs can be argued as a special type in the entirety of Albanian historical songs. Concretely, we would say that elements of this nature are such as: the operation of the dream, the crossing of the sea by the army after falling with a stick, the flight of the severed head.

Already from all the researchers of different fields, historians, folklorists, etc. it has been proven and accepted that the so-called the Battle of Kosovo represents a real, concrete event. Of course, the distance of time has covered this historical event with a veil that is both real and fantastic. The lack of historical documents to a considerable extent has led to the fact that, in addition to historical truths, there are also a number of hyperbolized or fantastic outfits, based on certain points of view. This situation of the historical picture has caused that even more in the corresponding folklore creativity there is an entanglement of the real with the fantastic.

Among the real, historical elements in the songs about the Battle of Kosovo, we would mention the actual historical event itself, which is at the center of these folklore creations. This means that the songs talk about a real event, developed at a certain time and place, that has real, concrete protagonists, that history itself knows and accepts. But if we are dealing in this case with the historical truth, the same cannot be said for the general reflection of the historical event itself. It must be said that these creations of the historical epic have been helped or utilized by creative experiences, elements borrowed from the legendary epic, or from other folkloric creations with much earlier origins. That's why we find in the songs about the Battle of Kosovo an entanglement of the real with the unreal, of the historical with the mythological. Only in this way can the filling of these songs with epic historical-mythological subjects be explained.

CONCLUSION

The poetics of the historical epic song is a broad, complex topic that can be presented or viewed from different perspectives. Our work, based on songs about the Battle of Kosovo (1389), is one of the possible ways that creates opportunities and allows you to see this type of song from the inside. We express ourselves in this way, because through this structure that we followed, it became possible for us to have the form in terms of morphology, typology and artistic construction of the historical Albanian song in general, according to the occasion and according to the possibilities offered by the folklore subject itself into consideration.

During this paper, the creativity of the historical epic is seen as a continuation of the legendary epic, of course, taking different elements from it, but, mostly, being distinguished on the basis of the predominance of the historical poetic thought. Continuity is more present in those spaces where the songs of the Kreshniks were also practiced at the same time, while in those areas where these songs were not documented as being practiced, the continuity is also fainter or exceeded. In a natural way, light has also been shed on the relationship that this type of song has with historical fact or historical truth. During the work, we adhered to the most acceptable opinion that there is not and cannot be an identical match between the historical song and the historical fact, since the song is an artistic product, so there are a number of elements that bring viewpoints and different from the achievements in historical development plan.

With the good desire to bring a new point of view, generally not contrary to the best achievements, but taking into account and supporting them in those cases where there is agreement of opinion, this paper was undertaken by us. By this we mean to say that we are open to critical comments about the presentation presented and that remarks, analyses, expansions or narrowings of the issues addressed, or that should be addressed in the future, are welcome from our side.

³⁹ Po aty, f. 3.

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