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KOSOVA BEFORE AND DURING THE OTTOMAN PERIOD OF XVth AND XVIth CENTURIES

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Abstract: In this article, without going into details, because the topic itself includes a long period, first we have made an introduction, a short observation about Kosova's socio-political situation, geo-political position, territorial and ethnographic expansion before the Ottoman Period. In the second part of this paper, in fragmentary manner we have spoken about Kosova territory under medieval Bulgarian and Serbian rule.

In the third part, about Kosova battle between myth-legend and reality, which based on all possibilities it did not occur at all, apart from one conspiratorial plot and an armed conflict for authority governance that happened between two opposed sides, and about the versions of Sultan Murat -the first assassination which was never brought to light, not even the assassins fate- based on archival documents.

In the last fourth part, we have offered briefly, the data from early Ottoman recordings about the settlement of domination, Ottoman administration and the formation of many Sançaks and nahiyes in the vast territory of Kosova, wider than it is today.

Kewywords: Kosova territory. Roman-Byzantine conquest, Bulgarian-Serbian conquest, Kosova battle, Ottoman administration and rule in Kosova.

XV. ve XVI. YÜZYILLARDA OSMANLI HÂKİMİYETİ ÖNCESİ VE SIRASINDA KOSOVA

Özet: Bu çalışmada konu uzun bir dönemi kapsadığı için ayrıntılara girmeden ilk önce bir giriş yaptık, Kosova'nın sosyopolitik durumu, jeostratejik durumu, Osmanlı döneminden önce bölgesel ve etnografik yayılması hakkında kısa gözlemler. Bu çalışmanın ikinci kısmında parça parça olarak Kosova topraklarını, ortaçağ, Bulgar ve Sırp hâkimiyetleri olarak ele alıyoruz. Üçüncü kısımda gerçekleşme ihtimali az olan tüm ihtimallere dayanarak mit-efsane ve gerçek arasındaki Kosova savaşı arşiv belgelerine dayalı olarak ele alınacak. İki rakip taraf arasında meydana gelmiş suikast komplosu ve silahlı hâkimiyet mücadelesinin yanı sıra, Sultan Murat'ın versiyonu-asla aydınlatılmamış ilk suikast, suikastçıların kaderi-

Dördüncü kısımda, kısaca Osmanlı yönetimi ve yerleşimi, bu gün olduğundan daha geniş olan birçok sancak ve nahiyenin oluşumu ile ilgili erken dönem Osmanlı kayıtlarından alınan veriler sunulacaktır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Kosova bölgesi, Roma-Bizans fetihleri, Bulgar-Sırp Fetihleri, Kosova Savaşı, Kosova'da Osmanlı yönetimi ve hâkimiyeti.

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Introduction

In this article, without going into details, because the topic itself includes a long period, so first we will introduce a short observation about Kosova's socio-political situation, geo-political position, territorial and ethnographical expansion before the Ottoman Period. In the second part of this paper, in fragmentary manner we will speak about Kosova territory under medieval, Bulgarian and Serbian rule.

In the third part, about Kosova battle between myth-legend and reality, which based on all possibilities it did not occur at all apart from one conspiratorial complot and an armed conflict for authority governance that happened between two opposed sides, and about the versions of Sultan Murat the first assassination which it was never brought to light, not even the assassinator's fate based on archival documents.

In the last fourth part, we will briefly offer the data from early Ottoman recordings about the settlement of domination and Ottoman administration and the formation of many sancaks in the vast territory of Kosova, wider than it is today.

The Kosova territory during XV-XVIth centuries, was a part of 'vilayets' and "sancaks" which were created by Ottoman administration; Vilciter, Prizren, Scupi-Uskup, Dukagjin and Shkodra. At the end of XIXth century, during 1868-1878, first it was a part of vilayet of Prizren, and after that during 1878-1912 all its territory was included in vilayet of Kosova (with its headquarters in Prishtina, from 1888 in Scupi-Uskup) as an administrative, juridical and territorial unit was the largest vilayet belonging to the Ottoman Empire which possessed geographical surface area of 52.000 km².

In Kosova Vilayet, there were six sancaks: Prishtina, Scupi-Uskup, Prizren, Peja-Ipek, Yeni Pazar and Taslica (Pljevlja) sancak, inhabited mostly by Muslim populations: Albanians, Turks, Bosnians, and minorities like Vlachs, Bulgarians, Serbians and etc. But, after the years of 1912-13 Serbia with the help of some European countries and Russia managed to conquer the territory of this vilayet which they fragmented in pieces thus creating some "banovina" (Serbian administrative units) and started to take administrative measures in order of changing their ethnic structures and resettling the majority of Muslim population in Turkey. This resettlement continued until the Second World War after the year 1945 where some parts of Kosova Vilayet inhabited mostly by Albanian population were given without any ethnic and demographical rights to the Republic of Macedonia and the Republic of Montenegro, whereas the largest part of Kosova filled with mines of precious metals was kept by Serbia under her occupation until 1970.

In 1972 under the Tito's directives and based on the new Constitution of Yugoslav Federative Assembly, Kosova gains the full status of autonomy and at the same time becomes a federative unit of Federal Yugoslavia having the same rights on votes as Vojvodina and six other Republics. Twenty years after, former Yugoslavia began breaking apart and the fight for breaking off, of this artificial, multilingual and multinational state, Kosova again was invaded by Serbia losing its autonomy during 1989-1999, which used terror, violence and terrible genocide towards civil Albanian population aiming to make ethnic cleansing and changing the ethnic structure thus succeeded in deporting of one million Albanian residents from Kosova

with the help of police, military and paramilitary forces. With the great military help of the USA, European Union, Turkey and the attack of organized forces of KLA (Kosova Liberation Army) coordinated with the NATO aerial Forces after 78 days of bombardment against Serbian military bases succeeded in liberating Kosova from the terror and genocide of Serbian state completely on 21 June 1999.

The Kosova Territory before the Roman Conquest

Today's Kosova's territory in its historical past, first in antiquity during IVth-Ist centuries B.C. was a part of a state called the Kingdom of Dardania. After the defeat of this state from the side of Roman Empire, its territory remained for centuries underneath of foreign invasions for 1600 years; Roman, Byzantine, Bulgarian and the last one Slav-Serbian. According to the antique resources and medieval geographical charts the Kosova Territory and a part of northwest Macedonia of these days in antiquity period was included in the state of Dardania with Scupi-Uskup as its capital established in IV-Ist B.C from the Dardans tribe of Illyrian origin predecessors of medieval Albanians. This state had its own territorial, political, administrative organization, army, monetary value and borders which expanded from Nishi (Naissus) in north to Shtip (Astibos in south). These two geographical areas (Kosova and Northwest Macedonia) until the Kosova battle were called with one name Dardania, a notion that according to Austrian scholar Johan Georg Von Hahn and other scholars, only in *protoarberian* (old Albanian language) means "The Place of Pears".

Whereas the territory of the antique Macedonia and its state with Thessaloniki as its capital, whose border started from the antique cities of Shtip (Astibos) and Veles (Bilazora) heading towards south included some parts of Thrakia, Gevgeelia, Pelagonia and the entire area of northern Greece. The largest part of today's Northwest Macedonia as we have mentioned above in the administrative, political, territorial and geographical aspects in the antique period was a part of Dardania state and there are no geographical charts or documents which testify that there was a state entity or Ottoman vilayet as a territorial administrative unit called Macedonia on the north-western part of today's Macedonia, with Scupi-Uskup as centre until the Second World War. Because of the non-reaching of an agreement and balance between former Yugoslavia, Bulgaria, Albania and Greece for dividing the territory of today's Macedonia, inhabited by many different ethnic groups: Slavic-Macedonians, Albanians, Bulgarians, Turks, Vlachs, Greeks, Torbeshs, Gypsies etc; only after the Second World War in 1945, the Republic of Macedonia and Macedonian nationality was established belonging to the Federative Yugoslavia. Whereas for Kosova during the Second World War even though an agreement for joining Albania was reached, it was suppressed at the end of war by the Yugoslav side with the help of military forces thus causing massacres and many victims and it was annexed by force to the Republic of Serbia belonging to the Federative Yugoslavia. Today's Kosova and Macedonia are internationally recognized as two independent states.

The territory of antique Dardania, respectively Kosova's and North-western Macedonia's territory, according to many antique authors, archaeological findings and historical resources, 2000 years before Slav permeability and invasion in Balkans, was populated by Illyrian tribes, predecessors of medieval Albanians and Albanians of our time.

After many hundred years wars which occurred in Dardans, Desarts, Peonets, Penests and

other Illyrian tribes against Romans at the end their state untangles and in 68 B.C. falls under the domination of Roman Empire, thus remaining until the end of IVth century, A.C (year 395). Precisely, after the death of the great emperor Theodos, this empire was divided into two parts, western and eastern.

After this time the territories of former antique Dardania, respectively of today's Kosova and Macedonia are included under the administration of Eastern Empire, later known as the Byzantine Empire. Even though politically these territories and their population were connected with the Byzantine administration, in religious viewpoint until the VIIIth century were connected to the western Roman-Latin Church. And after this time, the influence of the eastern Constantinople's church (today's Istanbul) begins and continues until the final division of Christian religion in two rites, the catholic and the orthodox one, that definitively happened in 1054.

Now, a more severe antagonism in political and religious aspects between these two churches begins for supremacy on the territories dominated mostly by Albanian population thus spreading the influence of their religious and political culture.

The Kosova Territory under the Bulgarian Conquest

The Kosova territory at the second half of the IXth century was invaded by Bulgarians and during all Xth century until the second decade of XI century, precisely from 850-1018, remains under Bulgarian invasion. During all this period of Bulgarian rule, the native Christian Albanian and Vlach population gradually falls under the influence of the culture of religious Bulgarian institutions, because it was involved also in dioceses of Bulgarian Orthodox Church. Unfortunately there are very little resources about social and political situation in medieval Kosova during the early Medieval Age of Byzantine and Bulgarian rule. During this time, the works of Cyril and Methodius, two orthodox priests who propagandized spreading of eastern orthodox rite among Slav population were spread. The Slav population had their liturgy and religious books written mostly in Slav language in most cases in Cyrillic alphabets and less in Glagolitic.

In the city of Ohri, the Ohri Archdiocese had become a big centre of orthodox religious culture, and in the last years of King Samuel reign, this archdiocese under its administrative jurisdiction included the dioceses of Scupi, Ulpiana, and Prizren.

The Orthodoxy during the Xth century was spread very fast, not only in Kosova and Macedonia, but in a part of central Albania, through Durres Patriarchate which was under Bulgarian rule and connected to the Patriarchate of Constantinople like Ohri's.

These bishoprics made possible that through their religious, cultural activities spreading orthodoxy and Slav language, which influenced as well the gradual Slavism a part of native Albanian and Vlach population. During Bulgarian rule the administration and Bulgarian Orthodox Church made changes in all life spheres of Albanian population in material and religious aspect as well as in the sphere of settlements' toponomy inhabited by Albanian population.

According to famous historian Konstantin Jirecek's opinion and some other scholars, especially French Byzantinolog Allain Ducelier (Alen Dysile), the first layer of Slav toponomy,

in places inhabited by native Albanian population, started during Bulgarian rule and then, continued with higher intensity along medieval Serbian invasion.

Many pre-Slavic Albanian toponymy became Slavic since the Bulgarian rule. Because there is not enough time nor place to expand further, we will mention only some archival testimonies which enlighten the fact that the toponymy which did become totally Slavic took only the suffixes of the Slav-Bulgarian languages: Bard-evo near Shtip, Bard-ofci in Scupi, Bard-ina in Prizren, Bardon-ic in Gjakova, Muzac-evo in Prokuplje, Arbanash-ki Potok-ju in Kosova, Arbanash-ka in Kumanova, Arbin-ovo in Ohri, Arbanas-inec in Kercova, Arbin-ko in Prilep, Arbanash-ica in Vranje, Arbanashi-ka in Kurshumlia. A part of this toponymy is written as well in Slavic resources, during the years 1254-1296-1355-1438, and some of them in Ottoman cadastral records, during the years 1451/53, 1455-1497-1499, 1525-1571.

These toponomastical evidences are marked in Ottoman official land registries as villages inhabited by Christian population. But this toponymy also testifies that these settlements of Kosova and Macedonia were populated by Albanian Christian population before the settlement of Bulgarian and Serbian administration. There are only few archival resources about the time of Bulgarian domination in Kosova, and less it is known about the many political, social and economical circumstances and other events apart from Bulgarian dioceses which have played a great role in spreading the eastern orthodox Christianity. After 150 years of Bulgarian rule in Kosova (Serbian historiography never and nowhere mentions that Kosova was longer under the Bulgarian dominance than under medieval Serbian dominance), in 1018 Basil the Byzantine emperor also called as Basil, the Bulgarian killer managed to conquer Kosova again and submit it under the Byzantine governance until the second half of the 13th century.

The restoration of Byzantine Empire in 1261, after the draw-back of the attacks and interfering of dominance of Latin states in Constantinople as its administrative headquarters, Byzantine managed to repossess the territory of Macedonia and central Kosova and share borders again with Serbian state of Rashka. Therefore, the major part of Kosova remains under Byzantine governance until the years 1261-1280.

Only some western and north-eastern parts of Kosova during 1196-1219 were temporarily conquered by Nemanja and his 'crowned' son Stefan the first. As it was mentioned above, these parts of Kosova were returned to the Byzantium again. Another fact that testifies this is: Neither one of two biggest churches or monasteries in Kosova, Gracanica monastery 1316, and then Decan monastery, Peja-Pec Patriarchate, Prizren Archangel church, mainly established on the foundations of Roman and Byzantine basilicas, neither of which was rebuilt before the XIVth century. According to well-known English historian Noel Malcolm in medieval period in Serbian literature, very frequently Kosova is mentioned as (Serbian cradle), but the reality is quite different. Other scholars as well admit that Serbians had their first cradle in the steppes of Russian Carpathians, and after the long floods and their penetration in the Balkans in the VIIth century, their first kernel of the state was in Smedereva and later this kernel (nucleus) was developed and strengthened in the Rashka and Dokleata-Zenta's territory, far and away from Kosova territory.

The Kosova Territory under Serbian Conquest

Based on the documents of Vatican archive in Rome, the orthodoxy and Slavism were spread using violence, especially during medieval dominance of Serbian reigns Milutin and Dushan in Kosova, Macedonia, central and southern Albania and Montenegro where according to some reports of Catholic representatives from the Pope sent to Kosova, and northern Albania to observe the situation of Catholic population in these provinces, it is said that on that time the Catholic Churches were usurped and exploited from the side of these reigns, whereas the priests and Catholic population were prosecuted and tortured as heretics. These evidences were documented as well by Dom.dr. Gasper Gjini according to the documents of Vatican Archive.

At the end of the XII century and the beginning of the XIIIth century (1196-1219), when Byzantine Empire was engaged fighting with some eastern and northern states, Stefan Nemanja, of the state of Rashka, later, followed by his son grabbed the opportunity to conquer some eastern Kosovo's parts (Peja- Pec, Prizren) and some north-eastern parts along the Lab river up to Nish, that Stefan Nemanja used to name in Slavic language as Greek lands (gercke zemlje) but not the central Kosovo's territory given that until the years 1261-1280 in the cities of Ulpiana and Scupi were still the Byzantine military garrisons. Whereas Scupi, a state with old fortifications with a great strategically importance and more Byzantine and Greek architecture and culture than Slavic one barely was conquered by the Serbian reign Milutin at the end of the XIIIth century, precisely in 1290 thus being made as his main administrative center, and even took some parts of Macedonia and northern Albania. After that on charge of the Serbian state as its reign comes his son Stefan Decani, whose father Milutin attempted to blind him to prevent from inheriting the throne, but he eventually avoided that misfortune and manages to become the reign of the medieval Serbia which continues expanding his territories by invading some other Bulgarian territories in 1330.

However, his son Dushan who remained for some time governing the invaded Albanian lands in northern Albania that were conquered by his late grandfather, the king Milutin, expressed his ambitions to become a king by dethroning his father. To realize his ambitions, he left for Kosova from Shkodra, where he had his temporary headquarters, with a big army, in which there were some Albanian vassal soldiers. When he arrived at the place called Nerodimos (a Greek-Byzantine toponym) and attacked his father in surprise. In this battle Stefan Decani suffered a total defeat, by being captured as a prisoner and executed cruelly from Dushan's guardians. In this manner on the head of Serbian empire came Dushan by eliminating his father and in the year 1331, he got crowned as a king. During his rule, the medieval Serbia expanded its borders by invading the territories of southern Albania and a major part of northern Greece at the same time achieving a big economical development. In 1346, the Serbian Patriarch in Skopje as the capital of the temporary Serbian monarchy, crowned king Dushan "Emperor of Serbs, Bulgarian and Greeks". During his rule, the medieval state was expanding too much to the detriment of its neighbouring territories, since he had taken Kosovo, Albania, Macedonia, Bulgaria and parts of Northern Greece. After the death of King Dushan in 1355, this Serbian kingdom gradually began to become disintegrated and was soon dissolved. The Serbian king Urosh, heir of Dushan, (who had no children) showed weak, had no power to control

conquered territories, and at the same time during his reign, especially after his death in 1371, conflict erupted and disruption between internal Serbian knights in order to govern separately. The result of this conflict was the division of the territories of this artificial state made up of different ethnic groups and languages.

During the rule of Millutin and especially that of Dushan, according to a relation that was sent from Antivari the French archbishop Gulielm Ads in 1332 to the Pope headquarters in Rome it was observed that native population was cruelly governed and especially Albanian population and its clerics who belonged to the Catholic rite was banned as heretic population so that they will be converted violently into the Slavic-orthodox religion and at the same time condemned with execution or being pressed with a hot iron on their bodies. The native noblemen were dispossessed from their possessions; peasantry was transformed into serfdom and was exploited economically because their entire villages were given to the Serbian feuds and Serbian churches and monasteries.

These political circumstances during the disintegration of the Serbian medieval state, partially were used by the Albanian noblemen (but, the part of Kosova plain having mines remained under the governance of Serbian nobles) that began to strengthen in political and economical aspects. The Balsha, Kastrioti and Dukagjini managed to restore their dominance in northern Albania and Montenegro with only in one part Prizren and Peja-Pec with their surroundings. Whereas, the major part of central and north-eastern Kosova up to the neighbourhood of Yeni Pazar and Kurshumlia, heading south towards Scupi-Uskup the administrative governance was first settled by Branko, and then continued with the help of his son the noble Vuk Brankovic as the main rival to Lazar claiming the dominance for Serbian Despotate.

The Serbian prince Lazar Hrebelanovic settled his political administrative governance into the Morava region, Nish and central Serbia with Krushevac as capital.

Therefore, the major part of Kosova was not under the governance of Lazar the prince of Serbia, apart from a strip of land of eastern Kosova including Novaberdo with its mines surrounding it and Leskofc.

In south-eastern Macedonia the noblemen Vukashin Uglesha, and brothers Konstantin Dejanovic started their rule, whereas in western Macedonia the Albanian noblemen Andre and Zaharie Gropaj expanded their governance in the region of Ohri and noblemen Gjin Zenenbishi, in the valley of Polog in Tetova. The medieval Serbian state started disintegrating after the death of king Dushan and was totally wrecked after the Marica battle in 1371, where Slav and Serbian forces suffered a severe defeat from Ottoman army, by which the road for conquering other Balkan countries was opened.

The Serbian thesis which states that after the Kosova battle in 1389, the medieval Serbian state was devastated is false, because the territory of Serbian state was disintegrated 30 years before the battle into several separate provinces which were governed by different above mentioned noblemen. Kosova at this time was governed independently by the nobleman Vuk Brankovic and his dynasty even though it was populated with the majority of Christian Albanians, Vlachs and a Serbian minority originating from central Serbia that governed with administration and Orthodox Church in Slavic language.

After the battle of Marica, the major part of the territory of today's Macedonia fell under the governance of Ottoman administration, whereas the Serbian nobility who governed with its eastern part and the Albanian nobility which governed the western part of Macedonia became the permanent vassals of the Ottoman state. It is stated in some resources that Dejanovic brothers and king Marko, Vukashin's son as vassals of Sultan Murat the first took part in the battle of Kosova in 1389, and maybe some Albanian nobility of Zenebishi, or Gropaj who expanded their land possessions up to western Macedonia took part in this battle as Sultan's vassals after the death of Serbian king Dushan, but it is not verified precisely.

The Kosova Battle between Myth and Reality

It is supposed that the battle of Kosova came into being according to narrative Ottoman chronicles in 27 of August 1389, whereas according to the Slavic and western chronicles, this event happened in 15-20 June 1389 in the place called Gazimestan in the northwest of Prishtina. Since the beginning it is noticed that the two versions do not match about the time and place of the exact event and neither the versions of the precise number of the factual military forces and enemy coalitions do match, but the exaggerated and presumed number of 100.000-200.000 participants in this battle was presented. This thing makes one doubt that the chronics of one side and the other side support the legends of tradition and folk epic, fact that neither party could have the aforementioned military capacity for that.

This time we will concentrate only around the assumptions whether this battle really happened and in representing the versions about the Sultan's assassination and the representing of the versions about the killer's assassination. In this battle, if it really happened, because it was not verified in any official documents, and neither on the base of archaeological findings of bones, corpses, and weapons of that time, but always this battle is presented first based on the legends, folk songs, folk tradition and the chronics of the later chroniclers having in mind that none of them was participant of that battle.

It is said in the narrative chronicles that the Ottoman coalition with the Anatoly ally and its Christian vassals from Balkans lead by Sultan Murat the first came up victorious, whereas the Christian coalition army consisted from Christian divisions like; Serbian, Albanian, Vlachs, Bosnian, Hungarian, Bulgarian, and Venetian lead by prince Lazar suffered a total defeat. The military forces of two rival sides came to the battle of Kosova, but I suppose that there was not a significant battle development between them but just a conspiracy complot and an armed conflict between to opposing sides. Therefore if we assume that this battle has occurred only between Serbian and Turkish forces as it was described almost in all Serbian historical books and the people of Balkans and Europe, which is not at all scientific and historical truth. According to the popular epics and narrative chronicles about the assassin of sultan Murat in the Slavic, Balkans, and European historical books it is said that the assassin was a Serbian, which is not at all the historical truth, because it's true ethnic identity was not identified in any official document. It was said in some of early Ottoman chronicles that the assassin was an heretical soldier, or an Christian without providing the name, but we are stunned by the fact that in the modern Turkish historiography (beside, Ottoman chronicles), very often in some publicist writings is said that the Sultan's killer was a Serbian, which is not true at all, because in the battle took part thousands of soldiers from seven other ethnic groups of Balkan

people, therefore in this case at any chance the identity of no name Christian assassin could be narrowed only by Serbian killer, because at that time the Vlachs, Bulgarians and even the Orthodox Albanians had Slavic names. This affirmation in scientific and methodological aspect is wrong, not reliable, even a forgery.

At that time the nations were not formed yet, and the other case is that on the base of religion, and name, the ethnical or national identity of a person in multiethnic places can not be defined. In Serbian historiography it is said that based on the epics of popular tradition assuming that the Sultan's murderer was a Serbian because of his Slavic name Milosh, whereas Kosova at that time was under the dominance of Serbian feuds, and according to the forged Serbian history in the middle period, in this province Albanians did not live. But based on archival documents discovered in the central Ottoman Archive in Istanbul and Ankara, as well in the State Archive of Raguza in Croatia, the very hypotheses of Serbian historiography have been completely revealed. The English historian Noel Malcolm, based on one Catalonian chronicle, supposes that the sultan's assassin could be of Hungarian origin named Miclosh or maybe distorted into Serbian form Milosh, because a Hungarian division took part in this battle. Even though he bring out a completely new version based on the Catalonian chronicle about the Hungarian assassin, a suggestion which is worth considering and analyzing. If it is supposed that the murderer could be from the Hungarian division, then how in the Hungarian chronicles of that time there is no single evidence, even from Hungarian popular epics about the Sultan's assassin of Hungarian origin. Malcolm as it seems didn't manage to analyze in details the affirmations of two Ottoman chroniclers Oruc and Ashik Pashazade, who give a totally different version from Slavic and western ones. They beside stating that Sultan was murdered by a soldier with a spire, not with knife, at the same time they say, that they acted towards prince Jakup in the same manner as with his father, supposing that Sultan was murdered by Bayezid's servants. It is very interesting pointing out other evidence given by an Ottoman chronicle named alias as Abdel-al Mevla Qelebi in the second half of the XVIth century, who at the same time served as a secretary in the office of the governor of the vilayet of Bosnia, was well informed about the events that happened before. He is the only one who says that even before the news for the Sultan's death was spread, The vizier Hayredin Pasha with his suite called Jakup Qelebi saying; You've been asked by your father that he was sent into one empty tent and killed (secretly), whereas the Sultan's throne was handed to prince Bayezid. Therefore how it is possible that before the Sultan's death, Jakup has been murdered and Bayezid becomes the Sultan.

Even this evidence of this Ottoman chronicler alludes that the Sultan has been killed by Bayezid's men in a very mysterious and secret way. The Albanian historiography considers the assassin of Albanian origin because Milosh had the name in Albanian form Milesh, deformed in Milosh and the surname having the name of the village Kopiliq, of the Drenica region populated since the Middle Ages with Albanian population. In the Ottoman cadastral register (defter) for the vilayet of Vuk Brankovic in 1455, has been registered some Christian head of the families of Albanian origin named as Milosh Berisha, and Milosh the son of Arbanas in the Lapla Sela village, Milosh the son of Ljuljic, from the Slatina village, Milosh, son of Prenk in the village Stublla-Viti etc. With the name Milosh in the Middle Ages were named the Christian Albanians, Vlachs, Bulgarians, not only Serbians. Some of scholars think that

Milosh had Vlach-Aroman origin because his surname was Kopilic that in the Aromanian language means an illegitimate child whose father is not known, and many other versions which are given based on some assumptions but neither hypothesis is documented until now for the murderer's true identity.

The name of this killer could be easily a mythologized epic fiction under the deep influence of folk songs and later popular epic tradition; because in the first Ottoman chronicles it is said that the Sultan's killer was a heretical soldier whose ethnic identity is not known up to today. Only later, 30-50 years after, even after 100 years, the chroniclers influenced by the popular epic songs and oral legends of Balkan people put his name in these chronicles, assuming that a person, named Milosh Kopilic was the real Sultan's killer. Much later, the Serbian historiography, during the XVIIIth century forged his surname in existent Serbian form Obilic thus by putting it into scientific and scholar literature, and the Serbian people even the Serbian history take this as true. The forged historiography did this forgery on purpose as a pride before the world that supposedly a Serbian hero killed the Sultan of the Ottoman Empire, which is not true at all, because the historical science has not managed to document his true killer until today.

Whereas it was appropriate for the Ottoman chroniclers the version of the Sultan's assassination by a Christian rather than his son to try and hide the black stain from the Ottoman Dynasty. This battle was never glorified and celebrated by the Turkish state quarters considering this battle as a very dark and undocumented based on some archival documents. Whereas on the other side, Serbians with their allies even though they suffered a defeat in this battle on the other side they celebrate and glorify their defeat raising it in a national myth, because supposedly they killed the great Sultan, at the same time they sacrificed prince Lazar whom they declared as a saint, by shedding his blood protecting "the Serbian cradle" of Kosova, which at that time was not under his dominance. But the manifestation of this lost battle (if it really happened) which now has become traditional and got transformed into a Serbian national myth has its political background and contains a message of aggression toward Kosova. It should be known that Milosh Kopilic is not mentioned as a historical figure neither as nobleman in the documents of that time, apart from folk songs and popular epics, like it was the noble Vuk Brankovic who at that time ruled the Kosova and in the battle of Kosova took part with his military units consisted of native Christian Albanians, Vlachs and Serbians. As far as the manner of the Sultan's assassination and the assassin's true identity are concerned, it won't be known until some documents belonging to that time are revealed. But closer to the reality related to the deaths of the sultan Murat and Jakup Qelebi, I suppose as it was mentioned earlier, most reliable would be the version that two Ottoman chroniclers, Oruç and Ashik Pashazade give. The latest chronicler, at the end of 1437, lived in the Ishak Bey's court in Shkup-Uskup and had in formations about the events which were developed at this time in Balkans, whereas in the year 1448 he took part in the second battle of Kosova against Hungarians lead by Janosh Huniadi who experienced a total defeat. These two chroniclers are not believed to have imagined the assassination of Sultan from the Bayezid's guards in their chronicles in order of staining the Ottoman dynasty, because they were Ottoman themselves, but to tell that the murder was not done by the side of some heretic soldier, a fact which would prove the weakness of the Ottoman army and its military leaders who were unable to protect

the Sultan from the rival side. Both these chroniclers say and suppose that prince Bayezid's men killed the prince Jakup Celebi by inviting him in the tent and saying; "Come, your father is calling for you", as soon as he got into the tent they struggled him like they did with his father.

Whereas the other Ottoman chronicler of Persian origin, Ardashira Astrabadi, while interpreting the Sultan Ahmet's dream among others says: "those days Sultan Murat went to the battle against the heretics and was killed as a martyr (*shahid*), but some people in Istanbul with a self-determination have whispered affirming that his son (*Bajazit*) during the battle has ordered some of his servants to kill the Sultan, whereas how the assassination has truly happened only God knows" finishes this chronicler. Even the interpretation of this chronicler eludes the killing of the Sultan by the side of Bayezid's followers. This imaginary opinion from the earlier battles which happened really during history, seem to enforce Oruci's affirmation and especially Ashikpasha Zade, that the Bayezid's men acted with Jakup in the same manner with his father (the Sultan) is not far from reality. These types of murderers for governance have happened very often to the eastern and western people, especially to the Slavic-Serbians. According to the chronicler Astrabadi, after the murder of Jakup Celebi, some Rumelian 'beyler' started contradicting Bayezid and in a part of Ottoman army an entanglement (an armed conflict) was created which turned the back on him by disrespecting his rules. But, although after some persuasions and advices given by the side of high councillors, the army submitted to Bayezid's orders. After the battle he writes a letter and a secret edict to the Bursa's judge ('kadi') and the governor of this city Sulejman bey, explaining that in the war they killed his father and brother and sent the corpses to be buried in Bursa with great honour.

Inasmuch, he requested and begged that the events about their deaths be kept in secrecy and finally he informed them that he was declared Sultan in the land of Kosova. But according to some later scholars it is thought that the letter and edict of the XVIth century are not written by Bayezid and they are forgeries. This letter and the edict are proven to be forgeries by Feridun Bey, an official of Ottoman high administration in his work; "Munsheatu-s-Selatin". Feridun Bey as well seems to be inspired from the chroniclers of Oruc and Ashik Pashazade, and a conviction is presented that the truth which has been kept in secrecy by sultan Bayezid was coming into stage. The case about the reasons of the high official of the Ottoman administration for forging the document remained enigmatic.

Whereas to the first Ottoman chronicler Osman Ahmedi, who until 1402 stayed in the Bayezid's court the news that sultan Murat was killed in the battle from a heretical soldier has been transmitted. He (Ottoman Ahmedi) on the evidence of this news wrote a short poetry with religious and panegyric character, where he presents the Sultan as legendary hero, who was ready to sacrifice his life for the victory: "With the God's will, the happy Sultan became a martyr (*Shahid*) But nothing more, the circumstances how the Sultan got killed are not further described.

While the Bayezid was alive, he didn't want to tell the mystery related to the Sultan's assassination. He was the only person who knew it because the Sultan's murder was done in a very perfidy and secret way, and took this truth to his grave. It is very interesting to pointing out that why nowhere is mentioned decisively for what motives Jakup Celebi was killed,

because it is considered as political murder therefore he according to some rules as his oldest son ought to inherit the sultan's throne. And this was the reason that he got eliminated. But the Sultan Murat's assassination remains hypothetical and mysterious.

Lazar's murder as well remains hypothetical, by whom and in what manner was killed, even though some other chroniclers state that he was captured altogether with some other noblemen among them Milosh Kopilic (undocumented figure) and the Albanian noble man Teodor Muzaka, and some other nobility whose names are not mentioned, whose graves and bones were never revealed. Then how it became that Vuk Brankovic and his allies Vlatko Vukovic from Bosnia, the nobleman Gjon Kastrioti, the father of Skenderbey and other nobleman Dhimiter Jonima from central Albania took part (according to some narrative chronicles) in this battle got saved and not captured by Ottoman military forces who were in supremacy to eliminate these alive rivals who returned to freely govern their country after the war.

A conspiracy complot probably could have happened in which Sultan Murat and his son Jakup were murdered, whose corpses were sent for Bursa and at the other side, the corpse of prince Lazar with the permission of Bayezid in the presence of princess Milica and Vuk Brankovic temporarily was buried in Prishtina and after one year, his corpse was taken from the grave and sent to Ravanica in Serbia where he was reburied. And nothing more has been documented about this battle. This conspiracy complot with the chroniclers' description who did not take part on this battle, takes another character of a movie episode that gets exaggerated and imagined while describing it in their chronicles as a bloody battle, in which a couple of thousand soldiers from both sides were killed.

To document the description and the supposed imagination of the battle of Kosova event from the chroniclers of that time, that the battle precisely occurred in that way as it has been described in their chronicles, until now a single document was not revealed neither any archaeological findings of cemeteries or human bones, animals, horses, camels, and cold armoury like (swords, topazes, spires, irons, arches, and arrows) of that time (not even a single exemplar) in the place called Gazimestan where it was supposed that this battle has occurred, apart from a stone which is assumed to have marked the place where sultan Murat got wounded to death and later on that place a temple (*turbe*) was built which testifies that his enigmatic death had happened but the battle could not be verified that had occurred and developed in a way in which is described from narrative chronicles and the tradition of popular epics. Since no material findings are found about this battle, in which Sultan Murat and prince Lazar were killed, from which as evidence were considered only the corpses whereas about the nobility and other soldiers of two opposing sides no signs were found. It is a fact that according to the chronicles an armed conflict between two opposing sides had occurred. Before the battle started, a split between Lazar and Vuk had happened. Since the later withdraw from the battle whereas Bayezid was facing a conflict with some of the nobility who opposed Jakup's assassination.

Closest to the historical logic would be the assumption that before the beginning of the battle a conspiracy complot organized by the side of Bayezid and Vuk Brankovic a compromise for eliminating the Christian nobility who did not accept to surrender with Lazar as a leader took the advantage that in mysterious way kill his father and brother and declare himself a sultan,

whereas Vuk Brankovic as aspirant for the throne of Serbian domain governed by a despot, according to the secret agreement he does not take part in the battle, in this armed conflict, but makes possible for Bayezid and his guard to kill Prince Lazar and his nobles.

The question of "how it is possible that Vuk Brankovic and other nobility survived since Ottoman forces were in superiority and they could have been eliminated as the others were, is posed. Let's suppose that the killings of sultan and Lazar were political and killings not done by a soldier (not even by the mystified Milosh Kopilic) during or after the battle which is doubtful to have happened at all between the two opposing sides, apart from an armed conspiracy conflict which happened as we described above. This conspiracy conflict, where two leaders of the opposing armies in a mysterious way, of course there were some Christian nobility that did not admit to surrender to the Ottoman army, which it was present another tragic epilogue who took enormous dimensions while exaggerating in a bloody and terrible battle, mostly imagined based on mythological legends, folk songs and epical tradition later on stylized and mystified in popular poetry and literature.

Therefore the battle of Kosova further remains more as a battle between myth and reality, because it is a fact that for the previous battles different evidences, original exemplars of cold guns are found, whereas for the imaginary battle of Kosova not even a sign apart from popular epics and some non-realistic paintings of later dates inspired from the myth created about the battle of Kosova represented in the art world from Serbian painters and including them in school books which intentionally meant to rejuvenate the nationalistic spirit in the Serbian people and not the inspiration of historical remembrance.

The revival of this aggressive myth was transformed into a Serbian nationalistic ideology, which lives in our days and intensified especially at the end of 19th century when Serbia (1882) won its independence with the intention of invading the vilayet of Kosova even though it de-facto and de-jure was inhabited mostly by a native Albanian population, naturally with Turkish and Serbian minority. The well-known Serbian geographer and demographer, affirmed in his works that at the end of 19th century in Kosova were only 5% of Serbian-Vlach population. In reality, after the drawback of Ottoman army at the end of 1912, Serbia with the help of czarist Russia managed to invade the vilayet of Kosova, since these two states had declared their expansionist pretensions that throughout the lands inhabited by Albanian population get to the Adriatic Sea.

In order to keep alive the Serbian myth about the battle of Kosova, The Serbian government of communist period after 550 years of this battle, recalled to make aware the Albanian population of Kosova who always was fighting for the independence of Kosova from Serbia, which claimed that Kosova is a Serbian land, and for this land it had shed blood. For this very purpose, the government of Serbia in order to declare the place where the battle of Kosova occurred as "a holy place" which would be visited once a year with the pretext to honour the Serbian soldiers, for the first time in 1951 erected a big false Serbian monument (which has nothing to do with the historical reality) at the place Gazimestan, dedicated to "Milosh Obilic and other false Serbian heroes" that supposedly were killed in this battle, who are not documented all that existed at that time"

The real historical monument should have symbolized and included the names of the

participants of all the other military divisions of the Christian coalition: Serbian, Albanian, Bosnian-Croatian, Vlach, Hungarian, Bulgarian, Venetian etc, who took part on this battle and not the Serbian only.

Therefore, this monument is a falsified political non historical monument, monument of lies and Serbian national propagandistically chauvinistic one, and not the real monument, since for its motto it has the aim of the permanent aggression toward the territory of Kosova as it acted 20 years ago, the Serbian nationalist and chauvinist, Slobodan Miloshevic, at the place called Gazimestan, precisely in front of this false Serbian political monument, to celebrate the 600 anniversary of the lost battle, on June 1989, he assembled 1 million Serbs, and his message at this big pan Slavic manifestation with iconographies and nationalistic paroles with warmonger contents " We will burn the land of Kosova and we will free it from Albanian separatists". And in reality, it did not last a long time and the war between the Albanians of Kosova and Serbians of Serbia began, as well as the war of Bosnians and Croats to defend from the Serbian aggression, a war which lasted some years and caused a hundreds and thousands of victims and big material damages in the areas where bloody, military actions took part. This false political monument does not represent a real historical monument because it was raised after 550 years, in fact it doesn't represent nothing apart from the message to cause hate and interethnic conflicts and to evoke Serbian nationalistic feelings in Kosova, where every year Serbian nationalists from Serbia with religious leaders of pre-Slavic at the head together with high leaders of Serbian government come to Kosova supposedly to pay respect and make religious ceremonies and at the same time to celebrate the lost battle, but in fact they come to Kosova with quite other purposes; to provoke the native population and to politically destabilize Kosova. At the same time, they transform this religious manifestation into a political one, in which they display territorial pretensions while repeating and articulating the slogan that Kosova is "The Serbian cradle", "Kosova is the Serbian land", and other similar paroles.

For this purpose the myth and monument of Kosova battle, a mystified and glorified battle serves to Serbian people, since there are no facts or archival evidences that the battle did really occur. Together with International mission and NATO's intervention in Kosova, the Serbian Institute for the protection of historical monuments, earlier imposed to the Kosova's one in a perfidy manner had put this false political monument of the battle of Kosova in the protection list, supposedly saying that this monuments belongs to the end of 14th century by writing false brochures in English and Serbian language which they gave to the NATO's soldiers who are supposed to protect this monument like other medieval monuments, which it has nothing to do with the reality of his building, since this false political monument does not belong to medieval historical monuments like Sultan Murat's monument, built in the end of the 14th century.

Whereas the Serbian monument, as we mentioned above, was built in the year 1951 in order of serving the politics of Serbian aggressors against Kosova. Therefore this false monument of political background and aggressive connotation should not exist at all and even less be protected. If really someone would be able to document and verify that this battle had really happened and that the Sultan's murderer was Milosh Kopilic (of unknown ethnic identity) and not the assassin from the prince Bayezid's guards, according to the official, archival documents of that time, then a real monument which would represent the historical truth and not the false

political monument based on folk epics, should've been raised.

A question "Why the Serbians did not erect a monument for noble Vukashin and his brother Uglesha that were killed in the battle of Marica in 1371, who fought against Ottoman-Turkish army to protect the medieval Serbian country, which at that time included the territory of today's Macedonia" is posed.

There is no doubt that the monument which was built in 1951, supposedly dedicated to "the Serbian soldiers" who were killed in the battle of Kosova, a battle which according to us did not occur at all, represents a false political monument, and not at all a real, historical monument.

The mystification of this battle had started to spread and exaggerate from the popular Serbian legends, especially after the withdraw of Ottoman army and before the Serbian invasion of Kosova from Serbia in 1912, that it started to seem believable that in the place where this battle happened, on Spring red flowers of the colour of blood start to bloom, but to reject the Serbian myth, the biologists verified that on Spring in two other places of Kosova blood colored flowers flourish, and not only in Gazimestan where supposedly this battle happened.

The French well known Byzantolog affirms that the last invaders of the medieval Kosova were the Serbs, and before them in these geographic areas lived Dardans and other Illyrian tribes the predecessors of medieval Albanians, since they were not assimilated during the Roman invasion.

Therefore it is the last time that the Serbian politics and historiography to detach and free themselves from nationalistic ideology that Serbian people are divine and their neighbours are of second hand, that Kosova is "The Serbian cradle" and other similar myths, to detach from mythological narrative books and mystified, glorified, historical literature and to write a real objective historiography, not only based on medieval Serbian Hrisovules, which as Russian palaeographer Vladimir Moshin says that neither of them are original and reliable, because they are interpolated and described many times, but to write mainly based on archival documents of western archives, and especially Ottoman-Turkish ones and scientific literature verified by the international historiography, which in reality would enlighten many dark events like the undocumented battle of Kosova, mainly imaginary, in reality such historiography would change and improve the relationship with all its neighbours and not only Albanians.

Naturally that Vuk had admitted the Ottoman vassalage, even though some researchers are suspicious, since he couldn't have managed to continue the governance like before in Kosova until 1393-94, without the conditions, (like the teenager Stefan Lazarevic) first his mother Milica were obliged under the circumstances to hand Olivera's hand in marriage to Bayezid to govern the Serbian Despotate. However, it is said later that, even though he was a vassal, he refused to take part in other battles lead by Ottoman army, as it was the case when he didn't participate in the battle of Rovin in 1393/34. Apart from this, during these years he was revealed that was exporting an enormous quantity of silver in Raguza for himself from the mines of Kosova and was not respecting the Ottoman vassals.

For these reasons in the years 1394/95, he was forced out of his possessions and jailed from the Ottoman authorities, and as it seems after a year he dies in a Ottoman prison.

From what it is said above, it can be seen that the Ottoman government unit in these years had under total governance the Vuk's region, because if the Ottomans had not it, they could not manage to expel him from his possessions. At the same time, the part of the territory of Kosova that was still under his governance, was given to the other loyal vassal Stefan Lazararevic, as despot of Serbia, but this possessions of Vuk, after some years returned to the Vuk's son, Gjergj Brankovic who admitted Ottoman vassals, and after Lazarevic he becomes the despot of Serbia, so even when the part of central Kosova remains yet in Serbia until the years 1454/55, where the Ottoman government totally settled their administration.

Kosova during the Early Ottoman Period

The Settlement of Ottoman Administration and the Forming of Some Sancaks in Territory of Kosova

According to well known English historian Noel Malcolm, and to his book "Kosovo a Short History", he described the Ottoman rule in Balkans in this manner: In most Balkan countries, the popular view of Ottoman rule is almost entirely negative. The Ottomans are depicted as Asiatic barbarians who destroyed, in each of their possessions a flourishing national culture. They imposed an utterly alien system of rule; they cynically suppressed all sense of national identity, they colonized large areas of the Balkans with Turkic settlers; they reduced the Christian peasantry to a condition of helpless serfdom; they introduced barbaric practices such as slavery; torture and mutilation; they put intolerable pressures on the local Christian Churches and forced people to convert to Islam; and they showed a fanatical devotion to the principles of the *shariat*, the Islamic sacred law. Or so we are told. All these claims are at best misleading and at worst completely false. It is also true that in the last two centuries of Ottoman power there were many cases of arbitrary rule, violence and oppression. But to project the conditions of that final period further into the past, and to characterize the Ottoman system from its earliest stages as chaotic and tyrannical, is to commit a crude anachronism. The Ottoman government of the Balkans in its early years, until the end of the sixteenth century was a well regulated system of rule, and the conditions of life it produced compared favourably in many ways with those of the rest Europe.

Usually mostly of articles of Balkans authors, about Ottoman system rule in past time had a subjective and tendentious content and very few were a real and objective nature.

After the battle of Marica (1371) the Serbian nobles who governed in south-eastern Macedonia and some Christian Albanian nobles who governed in western Macedonia had accepted Ottoman vassalage. After the battle of Kosova in 1392, Ottomans took the city of Shkupi-Uskup with its surroundings that was still under the governance of Vuk Brankovic and immediately they set their administration rule, while establishing it as the centre of main military bordering zone. Now they began to initiate all the military actions and other invasions from Shkup-Uskup heading towards other Kosova territories, Albania, Serbia and Bosnia. After some time, they invade the upper side of the river Vardar and Tetova-Kalkandelen with its surrounding and some mountainous zones of the territories between Prizren and Kukes. In the north side of Shkup-Uskup through the valley of the Lepenc river and Kacanik gorge Ottoman penetrate into the antique city Ulpiana-Lypjan. Then during the year 1396 they managed to conquer the castle of Zvecan, Trepcja, Yelec, Gluhavica-Timurci Hisar, Zhezhna

and Rogoza, Sjenica up to the neighborhood of Yeni Pazar and Raska the valley of Lim up to Moraca in Montenegro.

Since the year 1416, they had a temporary military camp in Vrh Bosna and from the year 1448 a permanent military base. In all these places rich with mines of precious metals after their invasion small military bases were created in which Ottoman government units were settled to control the exploitation of these mines and to secure the strategic points of the main arteries of the road communications which lead to the medieval fortified place Hodidjed, in the top of Bosnian mountains in the east of Sarajevo. Since the year 1396 in two strategic places in the north of Kosova in the castle of Zvečan stood the military garrison with the Ottoman ruler Feriz Beu, and in the mine Timurci Hisarn – (Gluhavic) near Yeni Pazar stood Ottoman judge (*kadi*), who prevented the tradesmen of Ragusa to export the silver. Since the year 1410 in the mine of Trepca and in Prishtina, apart from employees of the Serbian despot were the *kadi* and Ottoman customs officer (*sclavus-turchorum*). In this way all those military zones, or places where the Ottoman government units were the parallel government began functioning. Even according to the *Maliye defteri* No 12 of the years 1451-53, which include a little territory of Rumelia, where it can be seen the registration of the hass (feuds) of the late Sultan Murat the second, which included the vilayet of Zvečan, the mine of Rezhana and the Murgula village and the mine in Prustina village with two other villages that were in the vilayet of Nikshic. The hass (feuds) of the Rumelia's beylerbey included the mine Timurci Hisari (Gluhavica) with six villages in the vilayet Yelec, then ten villages of the vilayet Vlk (geographically they belonged to Yelec, near Yeni Pazar) The hass (feuds) of beylerbey of Rumelia also included 82 villages in these regions Gura (Gora), Rudina and Radona in the Arvanit vilayet with another name, the vilayet of Bistrica, mostly with small mountainous centers of habitations, which approximately had 5 to 15 houses in mountainous zones that were situated in the south-western side of Prizren. For these 82 villages in this defter is said that: "Those are the hass of beylerbey of Rumelia and are registered according to the earlier situation (*ber karar-i sahib*)". These regions were registered either in the second part of *Defter-i Sancak-i Arvanit* of 1431/32, which has been lost, or in any detailed defter for the timars of Prizren, when this city for the first time was invaded in the year 1425 and 1427 and according to all possibilities, Ottomans had Prizren under its control until August of 1444. And other note says that these regions were registered even earlier, because again in this defter is said: "These villages that belong to the vilayet-i Vlk: Lypjani, Glagofci, and Robovci (Rabofci. I. R.) were given to the has of Isa Bey, in substitution for the mine which was discovered in Prustina Village." From the data of this defter it is understood clearly that Pirrustina-Prostina? Village even before it became a mine with two other villages of the district of Nikshic were registered earlier in the hass of Isa Bey, but during this registration of the years 1451/53, they were taken and given to the hass of Sultan. There is no doubt that these military bordering zones are registered between the years 1427-1444, until the military units of Ottoman government have kept these places under their control. About Prizren unfortunately until now a single defter of the 15th century has not been found, apart from this fragment which was registered in the defter of Rumelia of the years 1451-1453 titled vilayet-i Arvanit with that of Bistrica's vilayet mentioned above. This fragment of this defter was published by Iljaz Rexha, in the book titled; *Onomastika Mesjetare Albane ne Arealin e Dardanise, Prishtina, 2005.*) About Krushevc of Serbia, there

is a timar and Holy grounds (vakıf defteri) numbered No 0117 of the year 1444 of the time of Sultan Murat the second, where registered some Albanian settlements, precisely 10 years before the definitive invasion of Kosova from the side of Ottomans army are mentioned.

We can find more transparent archival evidences in the detailed defters of XV-XVI century of the sancak Alaca Hisar (Krushefca), in which some settlements with popular Albanian ethnic names in original with the form Arbanas-Arbanashka and some other of settlements with original names with forms of old Albanian language, which testify in convincing manner that not only in Kosova but in the region of Kurshumlia as well, Prokup (Urkup) up to Nish since the Medieval Age before the Ottoman invasion, a native Orthodox and Chatholic Albanian population lived.

The feuds (hass) of Isa Bey the son of Ishak bey who was entitled by the sultan as the main military administrative organ with its centre in Shkup-Uskup for military bordering zone of Shkup-Uskup, Tetova-Kalkandela with its surroundings apart from three above mentioned villages of south Kosova, according to the defter of 1451/53, they included the region of Kacanik with 13 villages, from which were abandoned (viran), afterwards some other villages surrounding Shkup. The largest number of villages which belonged to the vilayet of Shkup-Uskup and vilayet of Tetova -Kalkandelen, (vilayets which still had military administrative character) were included as well in the feuds of Isa Bey, spahis (military horse back riders) and his servants. In his feuds the city of Shkup-Uskup was not involved and neither was the city of Tetova.

Shkup-Uskup was the feud of Ali bey Cokadar with 23 residential quarters with 434 houses with 72 individuals with no families and with 8 Christian quarters. Whereas according to the later register, only after 18 years in the years 1467/68, the Muslim population of Shkup-Uskup was grown into 33 Muslim town quarters with 637 houses whereas the Christian one was grown into 11 quarters with 277 houses. The city of Shkup-Uskup in the second half of the 16th century, according to the defter of the years 1568/69 was grown into 57 Muslim quarters, whereas the Christian population had only 9 town quarters. From this demographic data that are registered in the fore mention defter, it is seen that the Muslim population of Shkup-Uskup was nearly tripled during one century, whereas the Christian one diminished for two quarters, because during that time they converted into Islam. In the last register, there were no demographic data about the number of houses, apart for the names of persons who were the head of the families. In the Shkup-Uskup town quarters that were populated with Muslim as well as with Christian population, were also registered permanent inhabitants or head of families of Albanian origin that testifies that Christian Albanians were autochthon, and not deriving from central Albania as some Slavic pseudo-scientist want them to be thus declaring the native Albanians as those derived from central Albania in their books and thus creating not necessary interethnic tensions in Macedonia. In addition we will present only some evidences related to the existence of Christian Albanians in Middle Ages in the city of Shkup-Uskup and Tetova-Kalkandelen, since our topic is limited and does not allow expanding in this thematic, for what it would take an entire new topic.

According to the Ottoman cadastral defters of the years 1451/53 and 1467/68, in the all urban and rural settlements of north-western Macedonia are registered Christian head of

families, naturally in most cases in symbiosis with imposed Slavic Christian orthodox names by the pre-Slavic church and administration in the Middle Ages. Albanians who had typical Slavic imposed names in the anosmatic aspect they seem as Slavic but in the ethnical and linguistic aspect they were not Slavic, but Albanians. As during the Ottoman rule, Albanians and Bosnians had typical Arabic-Turkish name, they were not Turkish, what's more they were not considered as Turkish according to the ethnical aspect by the official Ottoman administration but they were called Arnauts and Boshnyaks.

The system of Ottoman administration did not recognize any nationalistic category, but only the religious one. In demographic statistics of population, the non-Turk people of Islam religion got registered on religious aspect as Muslims, as well as the Turkish population who got registered on religious bases as Muslims and not in ethnic bases as Turkish. Since the feudal system of the Ottoman Empire, with its ideological politics, did not have any programmed concept for the assimilation of non-Turk population, in administrative manner as the medieval Serbian state did who with violence imposed the Slavic language culture and religion to the non-Slavic population.

According to the Ottoman defters of the years 1451/53 and 1467/68, in the neighbourhoods of the city of Shkup-Uskup is noticed the process of assimilation of Albanian population. In the Gjin-ko town quarter established by a member of noble Albanian family named Gjin, with a profession as an artisan, his Todor Gjini, his son, Mark Gjini, Dimitri, - the son of Prenka, Dragat, his son Malja, Jako, his son Dodan, Nikola, his son Drralla and other inhabitants of this neighbourhood had –Christian-Slavic names.

In Jandro quarter of Shkup-Uskup we find Albanian head of the families with Slavic names as; Milosh Arnauti, Petko the son of Milosh Arnauti, Petko the son of Pjaka (Pljaka). In Stanimir neighbourhood: Jandro Arnauti, Dimitri Peter Noka, Nikola, his son Mikati, Stanimir his son Mireza. In Vlaja town quarter: Jon and his son Tuna, Andi, his son Dhimitri, Bozhdar, son of Noric, Niko son of Noric. According to the defter of 1467/68, in Christian town quarter, Svetka Samarci of Shkup was registered a head of the medieval noble family named Nikolla Muzaka, who was related to other Muzaka head of family who got converted into Islam religion, 20 years ago and was enlisted in the defter of 1451/53 in Muslim quarter Ahriyan Hasan in Shkup-Uskup. Both these two head of families, one Christian and the other Muslim of Muzaka family were related to Ivan Muzaka and Radosav Muzaka belonging to the orthodox religion that at that time lived in the Ponorishte village of Tetova. Other town quarters as well had residents of Albanian population. Even more in the Muslim parts of Shkup-Uskup there were Albanian head families converted to Islam, but since Muslim names were the same for all ethnic groups, it is very difficult to define the ethnical identity if the previous surname of brotherhood or popular ethnicity which identifies the individual from other ethnic groups who belong to same religion was not preserved. In addition we will mention some such cases. In the Muslim town quarter, Kuyumci Mentesheli, we find registered there a head of the family named Hamza Arnauti who possessed a 'timar' (small fief granted for cavalry services) in Gumaleva village in Shkup. In Fakhir quarter, registered were Behadir Godosali, Hizar Saro-Sharro. In Yazici Shahin quarter, registered we find a member of noble family named Zenebishi who was converted into Islam and it is thought to be related to Hasan bey Zenebishi from 1451/53 and was entitled for the

position of 'Subash' in the vilayet of Tetova-Kalkandelen.

As we pointed out above, the city of Tetova, according to the defter of 1451/53 was not registered in the feuds of Isa Bey but in the feuds of Hasan Bey Zenebishi, which includes Tetova, Sobri, Gostivar with their markets and six big villages in the vilayet of Tetova, where in the second half of the 14th century, the predecessors of his noble family have stretched their governance in the valley of Tetova with its suburbs. In the Muslim town quarter, among 60 Muslim head families we find registered five head families of Albanian families with characteristic surnames who converted into Islam: Yusus the son of Gjon, Hamza the son of Ulko, Shahin Godeni, Hizir Ligor, Murat the son of Domjan. In the Christian town quarter of Tetova, the mostly head families were of Albanian ethnicity. In addition we will mention some head of families with characteristic names of brotherhood and popular Albanian ethnonyms: Andreja the son of Arbanas, Nikola the brother of Andre Arbanasi, Marin his brother, (Nikola Arbanasi's) his son Andreja (of Marin Arbanasi) Gjon of Arnauti, Dula the son of Arnauti, Nikola the son of Gjergji, Dimitri the son of Prenko, Ivan the son of Tana (Tanushi), Lazor the brother of Tush-ko, Danca the son of Simon, Stojko the son of Simon, Shtefan the son of Simon, Lazor the son of Tushala, Bogdan the son of Simon, Gjura, Jorgji, his son, Lazor (Lazer), the miller, Mili the son of Drralla etc.

In the medieval residence Kercova, according to the defter of 1467/68 we have an Albanian quarter, registered in Turkish model Arnaut derived from Greek Arvanit by using metathesis. In this town quarter as well populated with the majority of Albanian Christian population, where the residents' anthroponomy took Slavic elements, imposed by the side of administration and Slavic Orthodox Church. The children were baptized by orthodox priests with typical Slavic names, whereas the surnames (patronymic), some of them were still keeping the names of traditional Albanian onomastics, as it can be seen from these evidences: Bogdan, the son of Progon, Mijo, the son of Progon, Stojan, the son of Gjon, Jakim the son of Gjini, Vlkashin the son of Leshi, Stanca, the son of Dodas, Todor, the son of Dominikos, Gjura the son of Dodas, Niksha the son of Gjergji etc.

The territory of central Kosova was registered in Ottoman-Turkish language with the name: "Defter-i Mufassal-i Vilayet-i Vlk", in 1455 with its meaning; the detailed register of Vlk's vilayet (register of part of Kosova territory- I.R.). It was registered according to his name, since he was the last ruler of this territory before it was completely invaded by Ottomans. At the time when the region of Vuk was registered, it was still not declared as sancak, as bigger administrative-territorial unit compared to vilayet as smaller unit of that period, but as vilayet that presented the military-administrative zone under the command of Ilyas Bey, the son of Bahshayish-aga, military administrator (miralem) of Vlk's vilayet. In this defter were registered the feuds of Ilyas Bey, timar's of spahis (armed horse riders), since the period of war, were obliged to go in military expeditions. This vilayet included mostly the Kosova Plain and some other periphery sides and it divided into 8 regions; Vlcitern, Prishtina, Morava, Labi, Topolnica, Dolca, Kalopotniku, and Trergovishta-Rozhaja. In this registration there was not included the territory of the region of Kacanik with many villages but it was a part of vilayet-sancak of Shkup-Uskp. And in the vilayet of Vlk in 1455 was not included the territory of Dukagjin Plain of western Kosova: Istogu, Suhareka, Rahoveci, Prizren, Peja-

Ipek, Altunili, (Juniku) and Gjakova-Yakova with the suburbs, but were registered in the context of sancaks of Prizren, Dukagjini and Shkodra. These places before the settlement of the Ottoman administration, after the death of Dushan 1355 and his son Urosh in 1371, had started to be ruled by Albanian nobles: Balsha, Kastrioti and Dukagjini. This could be verified based on the anthroponomy where it can be clearly seen that the Albanian population, after this period had started gradually deserting the Slavic names and taking Christian names of Latino-Roman and Greek- Byzantine domain. Whereas in the parts of central north-eastern Kosova which remained 80 more years under the governance of Slavic nobility and Slavic church, the Albanian population kept typical Slavic names. When the sancak of Vilciterm as an administrative-political and territorial unit with sancakbey as his leader was formed, there were no precise evidences, as it seems he was formed between the years 1460-1462.

According to an Ottoman resource, Sultan Murat the second, at this time had trusted the administration to Gazi Ali Bey in the vilayet of Vlk, and later one in the newly formed sancak of Vilciterm, immediately after miralem Ilyas Bey, since the year 1455; he was entitled as military administrator of vilayet vlk, then according to this resource it is obvious that the first sancakbey of the sancak of Vilciterm was Gazi Ali Bey of Albanian origin. In another native resource since the year 1462 that the well-known Czech historian Konstantin Jirecek and historian Skender Rizaj informs us, in which it is said that sancakbey (without mentioning his name) had killed in the neighborhood of this city Mark Altomanovic and two other nobles, from this resource as well it is understood that this sancak was formed before or during this year. We don't have any records about the time that Gazi Ali bey had led the administration in this sancak. Later on according to the defters of timar of the year 1487, for sancakbey is mentioned Mehmed bey, the son of Hurem Bey. Apart from the above mentioned regions in the defter of 1455, now in the context of this sancak were included some more settlements of the regions of Bihor and Altunili. According to the defter of 1566/74, the sancak of Villciterm had 25 nahiye -regions as smaller administrative units: Novaberda with its castle and 12 villages Obishit with 7 villages, Kriva Rika with 20 villages, Glama with 10 villages, Jasenofci with 3 villages, Moqi Baba with 6 villages, Banja with 16 villages, Leshkofca with 13 villages Ostrofca with 23 villages, Treposhtica with 23 villages, Buugarina with 14 villages, Gremena with 23 villages, Dobercani with 8 villages, Topolnica with 121 villages, Stara Sella with 16 villages, Janova with 19 villages, Suteska with 27 villages, Trepeca with 10 villages, Bellasica with 35 villages, Labi with 152 villages, Gallap with 130 villages, Villciterm with 237 villages Kalapotnik with 52 villages, Morva with Prishtina with 204 villages, Kara Tonlu (Karadag's Highland) with 30 villages, in total 1093 villages. From these records of this defter, it can be seen that a century after, this sancak, in administrative viewpoint was expanded and it included a vast territory, including 1093 villages compared to the register of Vilayet vlk of the year 1455, which contained only 600 villages. The sancak of Prizren as it seems was formed between the years 1459/60, since some 'zeamet' in the sancak of Prizren and 'zeamet' of Hamza Bey in the region of Prizren, were mentioned that earlier were involved in this sancak, whereas now in the year 1485 were included in the kaza of Ipek- Peja in the context of Sancak of Shkodra.

According to the defter of 1490, the sancak of Prizren was expanded, since apart from the territories with suburbs of Prizren, included the vilayets of Yeni Pazar, Tergovishta, Bihor, Vlach of the highlands of Prizren, Dragash, Guri (Gora) and Opoja. But unfortunately as we

have mentioned above, until now a single defter of the 15th century about the sancak of Prizren has not been found, therefore it is not known who Sancakbey was and which administrative units this sancak included. According to the detailed Prizren's defter of the first half of the 16th century, the year 1530, this sancak included a vast territory with 12 territorial units: Prizren with its city as capital of the sancakbey, Hoca, Guri (gora), Opoja, Dibri, Rudina, Domeshta, Pashtriku, Hase(feuds) of *kaza* Arvanit (Arbanon) Radona, Tergovishta (Rozhaja), and Bihori. In this register first the sultan's feuds which included three villages of the district of Prizren: Aydorani (Idvorani), the upper Vraniq, and Bibajani? Where still were some mineral mines, then Zhexhna mine with 18 villages surrounding, this mine that geographically belonged to the region of Tergovishte and Bihor. The timars of sancakbey of the sancak of Prizren included the city of Prizren, 4 major Muslim quarters, 320 houses and 10 smaller Christian quarters with 162 houses and 48 villages. The timars of great vezir Rustem Pasha included 41 villages. Zeamet of Elbasanli Hasan bey included 30 villages. Zeamet of Ajas Bey (The relative of Ahmed Bey Dukagjini).

In this register timar of Mehmed the son of Ahmed Dukagjini was registered, which included the old residence Capla-Cayla? as a trade place with 200 houses and 51 single-individuals. In this register 3 vakıfs as spiritual human institutions were registered : The vakıf of the late Ahmed Bey Dukagjini of Ayas Bey Dukagjini and that of classical poet Suzi Prizreni, all of Albanian origin. The sancak of Dukagjin, according to the opinion of Hazim Shabanovic, this sancak was formed between the years 1455 and 1476, but this evidence is a little imprecise since until the year 1462 this territory was still under the governance of nobles of Dukagjini as sultan's vassals. Whereas according to the evidences that the historian Skender Rizaj brings from salname of vilayet of Kosova of 1896/97, this sancak was formed after the invasion of Peja-Ipek by the Sultan Mehmet II, at the end of 1462 or in the beginning of the year 1463. The fore mentioned sancak took the name according to the late ruler of this province of Leka III Dukagjini, before the Ottoman invasion of this province, whereas the capital of sancakbey of this sancak was either Peja or Lezha.

But to verify the real time of the establishment of this sancak is non reliable, since according to Selami Pulaha a older defter (Defter-i sabik) that has to do with the registration of Peja-Ipek before it was a *kaza* (district) in the context of sancak of Shkodra -Iskenderiye of the year 1485 is missing.

From this evidence it is understood that Peja-Ipek with its surroundings was registered in the context of sancak of Dukagjin established before the establishment of the sancak of Shkodra. But, which territorial units the sancak of Dukagjin had included remains unrevealed. According to Muhimme defteri of 1578, the region of Peja-Ipek at the end of this year was still included in the sancak of Dukagjin, whereas at the second half of the year 1582, we find this region included in the sancak of Shkodra-Iskodra.

The *kaza* of Novobrda, with Novobrda as its capital, a well known medieval mine was registered in a detailed defter of 1525 in the context of sancak of Vilcitem, but we think that earlier it had the status of *kaza* (district) since in the middle of registration of 1497/98, when for the first time Novoberda was registered and of year 1525 another registration of this region formed in administrative, juridical and territorial aspect had existed even before this year.

Based on the defter of the year 1497/98, it is seen that the city of Novobrda with 38 town quarters was the feud of Sultan and it included 18 smaller regions (nahiyeler) with 258 villages.

Since the introduction and the first page is missing, it is not known whether in the beginning of the introduction had contained the full name of Defter of kaza of Novoberda, but we suppose that Novobrda since that year could've had the status of kaza (district) that only in the context of kaza and sancak are registered the nahiyeler- regions as smaller territorial units of the 16th century. Based on the records of these Ottoman registers, it can be clearly seen that after the settlement of Osman administration the vast territory of Kosova vast included in the context of some administrative-juridical territorial units an Ottoman sancaks: Vilciterrn, Shkup (Uskup), Prizren, Dukagjin and Shkodra (Iskedriye- Iskodra) in the context of vilayet of Rumeli.

Ottoman cadastral records show that the majority of the *Albanian* population who lived in today's regions of Kosova and Macedonia, were during the medieval Slavic rule violently converted into the orthodox religion of the *pravoslav* rite by the Slavic administration. Therefore, it is an undeniable historical fact that the Ottoman penetration in the Balkans and the establishment of its administration gradually interrupted the process of the assimilation of the *Albanian* population who in the Middle Ages lived in the areas of Kosova and Macedonia, and the Hellenisation of this population in the south of the medieval *Albania*.

The Ottoman penetration into Balkan by the end of the 14th century and beginning of the 15th century has faced the Albanian population in total disintegration divided in the ethno-cultural, religious and territorial aspects. According to the 15th century register it is obvious that at the beginning timars, zeamets, feuds, (large properties), in most cases were held by the Islamic foreigner spahis from Anatolia and North Rumelia, but there were few Christian Albanians from Kosova and western Macedonia who had their minor timars. After the first half of the 16th century, most of the timars-feuds were possessed by local Christians who had Albanian origin and who were converted into Islam. But, unlike Kosova and North-western Macedonia the developing process of Ottoman timar struck against the interests of a part of the big Albanian princes and nobles, who ruled independently over central Albania, a variety that refused to lose political power, and their properties, therefore they rose in rebellion and at last with Skanderbeg on top, against the establishment of Ottoman power and timar system in central Albania which lasted for about a quarter of a century. These rebellions were followed by the serious consequences, causing havoc and extensive damage as well as numerous human victims. Finally, seeing the superiority of the Ottoman army, another part of these nobles gradually began to join (in the beginning as Christians, then as Muslims) in the Ottoman military timar system, reaching high positions in the Ottoman administration to the rank of ministers and prime ministers, and some other nobles emigrated to Italy and Spain.

Based on medieval documents, it can be said that central Albania has been occupied in the classic sense from the Ottoman Empire, since it had managed to become independent from Byzantium, although a part of it was held under the rule of Venetia, while medieval Kosova, has been liberated from centuries of Slavic-Serbian conquest by the Ottoman army in the years 1454/55, in which even military spahis with Albanian origin from Macedonia who had been converted to Islam in the late 14th century and beginning of the 15th century were involved in the Ottoman timar system participated.

The religious structure of population that in the part of the territory of Dukagjini plain or western Kosova and south-eastern part beginning from Prizren, Sharr's mountains including Kacanik and the region of Karadak's highlands with some parts of little Morava belonged to the both Christian rites with a considerable supremacy of Latin-catholic rite, and less of that orthodox. Whereas the population of Kosova plain, with its north-western sides towards Mitrovica-Trepca, Zvecan and Yeni Pazar and the northeaster part heading towards Lab, Kurshumia, Prokuje-Urkup up to Nish the majority population belonged to the eastern Orthodox rite, and less to the Catholic rite. From the second half of 16th century, the majority of the cities and urban residences of Kosova belonged to the Islam religion, apart from city Novoberda and Janova that belonged to the Catholic religion.

Up to the last decades of 16th century, the Kosova population in the rural residences the majority belonged to the Christian religion of both rites, and less to the Islam religion. Whereas during the first century of the 17th century in the rural residences the majority belonged to the Islam religion, and less to Christian religion.

At the end of the 17th century, the majority of the population of Kosova, belonged to the Islamic religion, whereas the other minority belonged to the both rites of Christian one.

Based on the analysis of anthroponomy and patronymic testifies, and of the kin-related relations and the linguistic elements of Albanian forms of names of the head of families kept from the onomastics of Latin-Roman-Catholic sphere and Greek-Byzantine- Orthodox sphere and that of typical Slavic ones more and more in symbiotic relations to the characteristic traditional patronymic of the sphere of Christian Albanians, it can be verified that the majority of Kosova population belonged Albanian ethnicity. Whereas the smaller part of these population belonged to the Vlach, Bulgarian, Serbian, and Greek minorities. The affirmations of some earlier scholars: B. Hrabak, A. Handzic, N. Filipovic and H. Kaleshi etc. (I suppose that they were under the strong influence of the Serbian politics of that period) that supposedly in Kosova during the 14th century and of the beginning of 15th century, the Albanian population were in minority, are not accepted, because the anthroponomical and patronymic evidences from Ottoman cadastral registers and their studied analysis in scientific manner completely negate these non verified affirmations and methodologically are not reliable and scientifically non-based.

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Ilyas Rexha

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