

The Geographic Extent and Chronological Coordinates of South Slavic Moslem Oral Epic

Đenana Buturović

The roots of that segment of South Slavic Moslem oral epic recorded from the beginning of the eighteenth century up to modern times are to be found in the cultural-historical events of the late Middle Ages and the early period of Ottoman rule. Little attention has been focused on the nature of early folk traditions in the South Slavic regions of the Ottoman Empire, particularly on their distinctive features that, from the very beginning, have provided a basis for their separation into different national traditions. These folk traditions, including the epic of that period, are, above all, determined by region and chronology. They belong to broader territorial divisions and have vigorous epic plots and other traditional epic features, in which earlier names are frequently replaced by more recent ones.

In different epochs and decades various ethnic impulses contributed to the formation of individual epic traditions. In the past certain historical events such as the battle of Kosovo of 1389, even at this early juncture in the oral tradition, stimulated talented storytellers, singers, and chroniclers in perpetuating the thoughts and aspirations current at the time among their own and other peoples. In its early stages, however, a tradition generally tends to be associated with the real events and personages of the region in which it originates and only later takes on the specific features of other regional groups. The early South Slavic oral tradition about the battle of Kosovo of 1389 has its origins in Raška, Zeta, early Hum, and other parts of the medieval Bosnian state. As early as the end of the fifteenth century and the beginning of the sixteenth, we find echoes of the Kosovo tradition in the works of the Turkish historians Mehmed Neshri and Idris Bidlisi.¹ The presence of the Serbian tradition about the Kosovo battle in Neshri's description served as the basis for the hypothesis that the Serbian and Turkish folk traditions were in part acquired and formed in Bursa (Brusa) around Murad's grave, and that both of these traditions about Kosovo underwent mutual influence (Ljubinković 1961). The early

¹ For Neshri, see Olesnicki 1935, Elezović 1940, and Ređep 1976; for Bidlisi, see Trako 1969.

Serbian tradition, which certainly had a Serbian-Turkish phase, attests to the penetration of regional and national features during the process of its formation.

All the early traditions of the South Slavic regions, which evolved in the course of the stormy Christian-Islamic conflict between South Slavic peoples and a goodly number of European states on the one hand and the Ottoman Empire on the other, are marked by specific directions in the development of their thematic-ideological nuclei. Their principal characteristics are warrior themes and their own interpretation of events, ranging from the realistic to the hyperbolic. One of these early traditions is the Moslem Bosnian tradition—or that of the South Slavic Moslems—understood in a broad sense. The early folk tradition of Bosnia in the Turkish period, viewed in the light of information about epic song in European Turkey, and the effect of the Bosnian tradition on Turkish writers and chroniclers—Suzi Čelebi, Ibn Kemal, Mesihî, Ibrahim Pečevi, Evliya Čelebi—support the conclusion that the early formative period of the South Slavic Moslem Bosnian tradition was coeval with the stage during which epic traditions were being shaped around events essential to the Rumelian tradition, that is, individual national traditions that helped to form the complex of European Turkish traditions.² These factors in the genesis of the Moslem epic are crucial to an understanding of its distinctive features.

Oral verse traditions from the very beginning display a more pronounced national orientation than oral prose legends. From the abundant testimony of the above-mentioned chroniclers on the Rumelian oral tradition of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, it is possible to deduce information, in order of importance, on epic cores and bearers of epic legend and song. In the first place, we can single out the *krajišnik* as the bearer of a tradition, by which is meant, judging from all the facts, primarily Bosnian and other Slavic Moslems as well as the Christian Slavic population in the service of the Turks. However, it is also possible to include Moslem Albanians in this group. In the sultan's campaigns they fought alongside the Bosnian and other South Slavic *krajišnici*. Both during and after these battles, there were numerous possibilities for the creation of traditional epic legends and songs by the representatives of various ethnic groups, who glorified the same exploits and individuals. In this way, in the same period there arose songs of the earliest layer of the Moslem tradition about Gürz Iljas-Đerzelez, or Đerđ Elez-Alija and the South Slavic Bosnian-Moslem and Albanian songs about European heroes in the service of Turkey, which appeared somewhat later. As a rule, these songs were different from the very beginning. As a figure of the Moslem

² Olesnicki 1934; 1933:19-20; Buturović 1975.

krajišnik of the seventeenth century, the Albanian follower of Mohammed could be included in the connection between the Moslem South Slavic and Albanian epic. The second important core in which songs of war were sung consisted of the Christian population as a whole, while the third—that of the veterans of the Buda military frontier—was made up of the Bosnian-Herzegovinian Moslem population. All these categories of bearers of the epic tradition in the broader territory of European Turkey also apply to the bearers of the epic tradition in Bosnia over the centuries. The Bosnian Moslem tradition as a concept covers most of the South Slavic Moslem tradition. The Moslem tradition in regions outside of Bosnia and Herzegovina, which for centuries were either always or occasionally parts of the Bosnian *pashalik* (the Sanjak [*Sandžak*], Plav, Gusinje) when this tradition sprang up, fills out the circle of this thematic whole.³

Changes in the border of the Bosnian *pashalik*, that is, of Bosnia during the Ottoman period, were instrumental in enriching its oral traditional repertoire. At the time of the Ottoman conquest, Bosnia had been a battleground for almost half a century; its subjugation was to last for more than a century and a half (Aličić 1982). In addition to the early conquests of the fifteenth century—when Bosnia had as its borders the territory of Isha-beg and later the Bosnian sanjak, and was a component of the Rumelian ayalet—new conquests from the beginning of the sixteenth century until the taking of Bihać in 1592 and conquests lasting until the end of the seventeenth century rounded out the borders of the Bosnian *pashalik* into eight territorial units, or sanjaks (those of Bosnia, Herzegovina, Zvornik, Klis, Požega [in Slavonia], Krk or the Lika, Pakrac or Cernik, and Bihać) and gave their stamp to the subject matter and characters of the most vital layers of Moslem epic songs about the borderland heroic bands of widespread Bosnian Moslem epic songs, among which are also those about the so-called *undžurski* [Hungarian] Moslem heroes.

Toward the end of the seventeenth century, the Turks lost Hungary, except for the Banat, and then Slavonia and Croatia up to the Una River and south of the Velebit mountains, as well as the cities and regions taken by Venice (Herceg Novi, Knin, Sinj, Vrgorac, and Gabela). As a result of these losses, the borders of Bosnia were greatly reduced and it became a

³ The epic poetry of the Moslems of Bosnia and Herzegovina is an important segment of the epic traditions of the peoples of Yugoslavia. It is most closely connected with the epic song of Serbs, Croats, and, above all, Montenegrins by a common language, Slavic and Proto-Slavic epic legacy, and lines of development with various kinds of overlapping. The distinctive features of the epic folk tradition of the Moslems is the result of the evolution of their awareness as an ethnic group and a people, which is best expressed in the basic attitudes and points of view of their epic singers and the ideological character of their songs. The Moslem epic thus reflects the complex events of political, ethnic, and cultural currents on Bosnian soil during the Ottoman period.

meeting place for refugees and those who had returned home from these regions. After the Treaty of Karlowitz (Sremski Karlovci) in 1699, its long-term border was established and included the territory from Novi Pazar to Bihać and from the Sava River to an outlet to the Adriatic. The Bosnian pashalik was reduced to five sanjaks: those of Bosnia, Herzegovina, Zvornik, Klis, and Bihać (Šabanović 1982:229).

Bosnia as the homeland represented and experienced in Moslem epic song from a regional-political standpoint exists within the borders of the Bosnian ayalet up to the Treaty of Karlowitz. In other words, by 1699 Moslem songs already glorified the deeds of heroes from those regions that Bosnia, or rather the Ottoman Empire, had lost through this treaty, and, in particular, the heroes from the regions of the Lika and Krbava, who became the bearers of entire cycles of the Moslem epic (Bosnić Mehmed-aga is from Novi, the two Musićes are from below Perušić, Kumalić Mujaga is from Raduč, the Kozlics are from Široka Kula, and so forth). The sanjak of the Lika was a Turkish frontier province facing the Christian West. Udbina, now a village in Krbava, appears continually in the Moslem epic as the center where Moslem epic warriors assembled to receive counsel on the heroic exploits of bands and of individuals and the attacks and campaigns prepared by the “enemy.” The songs have preserved the geopolitical significance of the Udbina of the Ottoman period as a center in which the Empire’s interests were defended and decisions were made with regard to raiding the vicinity of Zadar, the Croatian coast, and the northern regions across the Kupa River and in the direction of Karlovac. In the songs it is known as Turčija, by which is meant both the Bosnian borderland and the Ottoman Empire (Buturović 1976:364). In addition to Udbina, the Moslem epic preserves various names for the districts of the Krk area under the jurisdiction of a *cadi*—or Knin—from the seventeenth century (Knin, Zrmanja, Zečevo, Skradin, Vrana, Zvonigrad, Gračac, the Lika, Perušić, Novi, and Bunić). The unidentified Bilić of the songs is probably a name for the district of Bilaj. Cetina, Vrlika, Gospić, Lički Novi, Perušić, and Ribnik are, in both the songs and the history of the period about which they sing, the places inhabited by the Moslem Slavic population, that is, the towns in Turkish hands. Brinje, Brlog, Otočac, Korlat, and Novi at the foot of the Velebit mountains were free from Turkish control. The regions constituting military borders at Sinj and Otočac left traces in the Moslem epic as the starting points of attacks. Songs recorded in the nineteenth century in the Krajina, the military march between Austria-Hungary and Turkey, preserved the tradition about seventeenth-century events, so that, in the view of the epic hero Durutagić Ibro, the border of the Moslem world of Bosnia is the seventeenth-century frontier between the sanjak of the Lika and the Krajina:

“A moj Lika, direk od Udbine,
 ja sam skoro uzjahô dorata,
 protjerô ga preko Velebita,
 pa od Zadra do Herceg-Novoga [Novi ispod Velebita],
 i od Brinja do vlaškog Lenđera,
 od Zrmanje pa do Zvonigrada,
 od Otočca do vode Gaščice.
 Tud’ sam, tada, beže sve vodô dorata,
 tražeć, beže, jadnih nevoljnika,
 našô n’jesam, Lički Mustaj-beže.
 Pa sam otle otiskô dorata,
 na Kunaru u ćesarovinu,
 pa sam plaćuć došô do Karlovca,
 u Karlovac utjerô dorata.”

(Hörmann 1888-89:324)

[“O my Lika, mainstay of Udbina,
 I mounted my bay horse not long ago,
 I drove him across the Velebit mountains,
 and then from Zadar up to Herceg-Novi [Novi at the foot of the
 Velebit Mountains],
 and from Brinje up to Christian Lenđer,
 from the Zrmanja and up to Zvonigrad,
 from Otočac up to the Gaščica.
 I, the beg, guided my bay horse all around there then,
 as I, the beg, looked for miserable wretches,
 I, Mustaj-beg of the Lika, found none.
 And so I spurred my bay horse away from there,
 to Mount Kunara into the Christian empire,
 and weeping, I reached Karlovac,
 I drove my bay horse into Karlovac.”]

It is interesting that certain Moslem singers whose places of origin were farther removed from western Bosnia—areas to or within which the Moslem population of the Lika migrated—refer to some of the localities of the Lika mentioned that were at that time settled by Moslems as free from Turkish dominion (Bunić, Skradin). In such cases places are not linked with specific Moslem figures and Christian heroes are unnamed bans [governors].

In the history of the development of the Moslem epic tradition, one can rightfully ask whether the Lika was one of its more vital centers. Alois Schmaus (1953:97) sees that region as the home of the “Krajina epic,” providing we view it in a broader sense as comprising both the Krajina and parts of former Turkish Dalmatia. In my opinion, the Lika sanjak was the spawning ground of a new phase in the history of the Moslem epic’s development, but really only one of its especially more vital centers.

The almost desolate Lika of the first half of the sixteenth century

welcomed Turkish control. Islamized natives of the Lika, early Moslem immigrants to it from the Unac, Pset, Sana, Livno, and Grahovo regions, and the numerous Christian population in the service of the Turks originally from the Ibar, Lim, Piva, Tara, and Morača regions (who were fond of epic songs) all contributed from the repertoire of their traditional legacy to the new center of life and culture that for the next 170 years stimulated the creation of epic poetry with its new subject matter and heroes. The later Moslem immigrants of the seventeenth century from western Bosnian areas contributed new strata to this tradition from their narrower homeland and from the broader territories with which they were in contact in northeastern and central Bosnia. The protracted influence of the *martolozi*—usually Christian garrisons in the Turkish service—who very frequently were singers and transmitters of these songs, is attested to in the powerful layers of the Moslem epic in those regions of Dalmatia and the Dalmatian islands over which the Turks never had dominion and in which there were no Moslems, but which had been settled by *martolozi* from the end of the seventeenth century. The earliest stratum of recorded Moslem epic songs in the Erlangen manuscript (hereafter *ER*) corroborates the phase of *martolož* influence in the historical development of Moslem epic (*ER* 1925; Schmaus 1974:59-60).

Moslem epic song and its heroes are also known in the northwestern regions of Croatia, which were at war with the Ottoman province of Bosnia. Evliya Čelebi provides information from the year 1660 about songs that were sung in the Zrinski dukedom (Čakovec) about the glorious exploits of a captain from Bihać. There can be no doubt that Čelebi's account refers to Mustaj-beg Hasumović, Bihać captain from 1642 to 1676.⁴

The Christian element fought alongside of the *bešlije*, members of the paid cavalry, and Moslem epic song from the western regions of Bosnia preserved the memory of the contribution and importance of these layers in the borderland and broader Turkish military campaigns (e.g., the son of Prince Vukašin, Nikola, informs Mustaj-beg of the Lika of the threat to Udbina occasioned by the Karlovac ban and frontier). Mustaj-beg of the Lika relied on the strength of Stipan Maljković and the Christian *rayah* (non-Moslem subjects of the Turks) under his command in periods of unrest and other crises. Meho Kolaković's song *Lički Mustaj-beg brani Udbinu* [*Mustaj-beg of the Lika Defends Udbina*] is eloquent testimony to this relationship:

Begu opet suze udariše,
a povika dvi paše careve:

⁴ See Čelebi 1967:241-56 and Buturović 1980b:201-4; 1986.

“Čujete li, dvi paše careve,
 ko zametnu kavgu u planini?
 Ono je naša raja ispod kraja,
 i prid njima Maljković Stipane.
 Dočekô je bana u planini,
 on je s njime kavge zametnuo.
 Leže naša raja u planini,
 poginut će Maljković Stipane,
 od’ mi krilo od široke Like!”

(Marjanović 1898-99:216-17)

[The beg burst into tears again,
 and shouting, he called two of the sultan’s pashas:
 “Do you hear, two of the sultan’s pashas,
 who started the quarrel in the mountain?
 That’s our rayah at the border’s edge,
 and at its head is Maljković Stipan.
 He awaited the ban in the mountain,
 he started the quarrel with him.
 Our rayah lay down in the mountain,
 Maljković Stipan shall be killed,
 come, my flank, from the broad Lika!”]

The same song tells of the exemption from taxes enjoyed by Maljković and the rayah led by him as a reward for their military service. The song thus calls to mind the ways in which these Christian warriors earned privileged status. The *uskok* [raider or guerrilla] Radovan is one of the trusted Christians in the service of Mustaj-beg of the Lika, who withdraws from the Lika after Mustaj-beg’s death and goes off to Glamoč (Marjanović 1898-99:220-28).

The basis for the rise and continuity of the Moslem epic in the Lika and the Bosnian borderland lies in the ethnic, geographic, and political links between these regions. All the events took place within narrow geographic confines. Those who returned to the Bosnian borderland from the Lika recalled through oral tradition the arrival of their ancestors in the Lika from neighboring regions. After all, when the Moslem population withdrew from the Lika, the songs they sang already existed outside of that region (having versions in central and eastern Bosnia) and were the same as those of the Bosnian borderland. The situation was similar in the case of the Moslem epic that during the course of a whole century was brought by Montenegrin Moslem immigrants to Herzegovina, where it too had already existed under similar conditions.

The epic of the Bosnian Moslems in Hungary, however, whose origins and subject matter are linked to the period of Ottoman rule in Slavonia and Hungary, had, according to my research up to this point, a different sort of influence on the content of the Bosnian Moslem epic tradition as a whole. Its subject matter, scope, and especially some of its

stylistic features indicate primarily late influence on the entire Bosnian Moslem epic tradition. From the material available to me and from my own field investigations, I have concluded that the Moslems from Hungary who came to Bosnia from Serbia in the second stage of their return influenced epic folk creation in central and eastern Bosnia in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. In a similar way, Moslem refugees from regions of the coast and of continental Dalmatia (Risan, Novi, Sinj), which were taken from the Turks by the Venetians, exerted their influence on Bosnian Moslem epic poetry. They were already fleeing to Herzegovina from the end of the seventeenth century, and they added new characters and events to the epic stock in that area. This, of course, does not mean that earlier influence did not exist in the case of these two traditions in the primary phase of creation in the homeland epic areas. I posit such influence on the poetry of western Bosnia and believe that it resulted in the so-called *krajiško-undurske* songs. The foregoing remarks provide an overview of the geographic genesis of Moslem epic with regard to the contributions of the regional traditions outside of Bosnia and Herzegovina.

The recording of South Slavic folk songs, including those of the Moslem tradition, was begun relatively late. Moslem epic songs recorded toward the end of the seventeenth century and during the first decades of the eighteenth are few in number (Buturović 1972-73). The Moslem epic was recorded in the nineteenth century from the time of Vuk Karadžić to that of Kosta Hörmann and Luka Marjanović, and was sparsely published until the appearance of the fundamental collections of Hörmann (1888-89) and Marjanović (1898-99) toward the end of the nineteenth century. This situation was prejudicial to its investigation. It was neglected, identified with the Serbo-Croatian-language Christian epic, reduced to a single peripheral cycle, and so on. In addition to the rich collections of Moslem epic recorded in the nineteenth century, a tradition that still exists today principally in manuscript form, the songs recorded in the twentieth century right up to our own time are also significant in an evaluation of the Moslem epic tradition as a whole. It is possible to speak of such a tradition properly only from a comprehensive understanding of the existing published and unpublished texts. The published collections, particularly that of Marjanović, which was published primarily as a literary source of representative songs of the Moslem epic genre known as the *krajišnica* (restricted to western Bosnia), do not provide opportunities for an understanding of the Moslem epic in its geographical and typological diversity. Thus, Marjanović's collection does not contain even one example of the Montenegrin-Herzegovinian type, and, generally, only a few of these have been published to date. There are, of course, no studies of this type, and probably that is why this rich epic tradition has been neglected in the overall context of poetry from the Montenegrin-Herzegovinian region in

Boris Putilov's investigation of the Montenegrin oral epic (1982). Limitations of space prohibit my citing other examples of serious omission in casual treatments of Moslem epic. The fragmentary state of text publication has been a serious obstacle to the formulation of general and definitive conclusions about this tradition.⁵

The earliest recorded stratum of Moslem epic songs, that of *ER* (1925), as mentioned earlier, attests to the chronology, but, unfortunately, not the geographic extent of the Moslem epic from the end of the seventeenth century and beginning of the eighteenth. In this regard, it is necessary to keep in mind that they are, like the rest of the songs in *ER*, shortened versions of the songs sung by excellent, mediocre, and poor singers. We owe such abbreviated versions to their recorder, that is, to the conditions of their recording. The Moslem songs of this collection, against the background of the total repertoire of Moslem epic songs of the first half of the nineteenth century, constitute a modest number of those preserved from an isolated, specific repertoire: twelve songs in all (*ER* 1925: Nos. 61, 74, 77, 83, 88, 91, 120, 126, 138, 161, 172, and 187). The choice of these songs and not others could have been due as much to the inclinations of the singers or the audience toward particular subject matter as to their being typical of the period in which they were collected. We can be certain, however, of one fact: the subject matter of the Moslem repertoire was also typical of its Christian Serbian and Croatian counterpart. In other words, like most other songs from this collection, these songs have as their central interest the conflicts and destinies of the borderland warriors who were their bearers. They leave no doubt that historical themes were the primary subject of eighteenth-century Moslem epic. That the Moslem epic songs of *ER* were generally typical of the repertoire of Moslem singers is corroborated by the early information available to us about Moslem epic as well as by the songs recorded in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. The well-developed plots of the *ER* songs, as typified by *ER* No. 88, show that they are abbreviated versions of songs that were repeatedly sung. We find support for this view in the valuable information about songs of this period in the chronicle of Mustafa Mula Ševki Bašeskija (1968). In contrast to the compressed recordings of the epic songs in *ER*, the songs about the borderland heroes described by Bašeskija provide evidence of a highly developed form of epic poetry (268, 429). The songs to which he refers were sung during the period in which the unknown collector of *ER* recorded his poetry. According to Bašeskija's information on two singers who lived toward the middle and

⁵ Without having at his disposal in any way nearly enough songs of the Montenegrin-Herzegovinian type, that is, of the so-called southern type, Schmaus (1953) assumes without documentation that the southern type evolved into the *krajišnica*.

second half of the eighteenth century, there was a tradition of itinerant Moslem singers at that time.

Two *ER* songs in particular, Nos. 88 and 61 (as well as some others from that collection)—the earliest sultan-vizier song and the earliest song about the Bosnian representative of the sultan⁶—offer persuasive arguments through their integral and well-developed plots about the diversity of epic layers (from the end of the seventeenth century, beginning of the eighteenth, and during the nineteenth) of songs linked with definite historical events (this is not intended, of course, to deny stratification—the age of plots and forms—in epic songs recorded in the nineteenth century). A comparison of these two songs with their corresponding variants or types recorded in the nineteenth century makes it possible to establish the stratification of views and concepts and, in general, the layers resulting from entire events of successive centuries.

The general historical conditions of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, important for the Ottoman province of Bosnia, characterize the entire epic atmosphere of song No. 88. In no other songs, except in this earliest of traditions typical of the Bosnian-Herzegovinian Moslems, is the pasha of Banja Luka the representative of the local interests of Bosnia. In its own way, this song recalls the Ottoman conquests in western Bosnia, but, at the same time, it is a real, poetic conception of the history created by that segment of the Bosnian-Herzegovinian population that took part in those conquests and that in the course of its embroiled history developed and preserved its identity. The central figure in this song is the captain of Bihać, leader, warrior, and defender of Ottoman Bosnia and its local interests, around whom new songs were created. He protects Bosnia from the *kauri* [infidels], but also collaborates with them.

Similarly, song No. 61 emphasizes the role played by the Ljubović family in events taking place in the Bosnian pashalik. The actual roles of the army of *spahis* and the feudal lord Ljubović as their representative at that time are depicted through the actions of the Ljubović band. It is clear that the epic singer in *ER* in his description of characters and events does not depart from Bosnia and its hero in his statement of a basic idea. Hörmann's variant of this song, recorded in the nineteenth century, preserved the *ER* epic singer's view of the events about the battle of Szigetvár, but, in the later variant, the event is viewed with some temporal distance, a perspective that led later singers to have a sense of the opposing side and to devote considerable attention to it, which the *ER* singer did not do. In the nineteenth-century song (about the battle of Szigetvár), the Bosnian epic hero is no longer an outstanding feudal lord but rather a common standard-bearer, Kajtaz from Mostar (Hörmann 1888-89:126). In

⁶ Already examined in considerable detail (Buturović 1972-73:40-41;1980b).

order to provide their own view of key historical events, singers would dwell on secondary episodes, which were only a small part of the historical event. This is a general rule for the shaping of feats in an epic tradition and is a feature both of the *ER* songs and of those recorded in the nineteenth century.

The songs in *ER* and those of later periods all have the homeland as a constant theme. Affiliation with the broader homeland of Bosnia as well as with smaller localities was vigorously expressed in the Moslem epic at a time when frontiers shifted regularly. Bosnia as homeland, region, and political whole was the vision toward which the Moslems as a religious-cultural group, ethnic unit, and people were striving in accordance with the rules of troubled times by means of sword, duel, and bloody skirmishes when the South Slavs were divided (Buturović 1980a).

In contrast to the songs of the oldest stratum (*ER*), the entire corpus of Moslem epic songs recorded in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries offers abundant information about the geography of Moslem epic, whereas the problem of the chronological origins of individual songs, cycles, plot-thematic wholes, and the like, continues to be the subject of scholarly debate. It is unfortunate that Moslem epic has not been the object of investigation by the majority of scholars, but it is fortunate that the texts have been massively collected, with the lesser part of them having been published, as mentioned above.⁷ The essential factors that exerted influence on Yugoslav folk poetry—namely, the Ottoman conquests of Yugoslav national territories and the existence of a flourishing tradition of diverse ethnographic and social epic centers in Yugoslavia, with its abundance of archaic but vital features—were also the basis for the subject matter of the Moslem epic as a whole. The Turkish conquests, without a doubt, had the greatest influence on the Moslem epic. The conditions for the shaping of that tradition were created when a significant portion of the population in Bosnia and Herzegovina accepted Islam. By this action they affiliated themselves with the Islamic Ottoman state and, in part, with Islamic civilization, so that the stage was set for political and religious confrontation with the Christian population whose ethnic background they shared. Islamization led to the preservation of some epic features which

⁷ The fundamental archival materials of Moslem epic song are housed in several centers: the Etnološki Zavod Istraživačkog Centra Jugoslavenske Akademije Znanosti i Umjetnosti (Arhiv Rukopisa Odbora za Narodni Život i Običaje) [Ethnological Institute of the Research Center of the Yugoslav Academy of Sciences and Arts (Manuscript Archives of the Committee for Folk Life and Customs)] in Zagreb, the Arhiv Srpske Akademije Nauka i Umetnosti (Etnografska Zbirka) [Archives of the Serbian Academy of Sciences and Arts (Ethnographic Collection)] and the Arhiv Srbije [Archives of Serbia] in Belgrade, the Folklorni Arhiv Zemaljskog Muzeja Bosne i Hercegovine [Folklore Archives of the Territorial Museum of Bosnia and Herzegovina] in Sarajevo, and in the Milman Parry Collection at Harvard University.

existed prior to the Turkish period, since the Islamized population, especially the villagers of the herding regions, were less inclined to migrate and so preserved the traditional culture that they had inherited. In Moslem herding communities, such as, for example, Drežnica near Mostar, we find the most persistent oases of the epic tradition, which have survived right up to the present (Buturović 1982).

My investigations of Moslem epic to date point to the existence of numerous important elements especially characteristic of epic creation in individual regions made up of smaller ethnographic entities (Buturović 1976:92-152). The influence of specific social milieus was particularly instrumental in producing greater variety. However, the boundaries of epic zones were never strictly defined by type or subtype. The Montenegrin-Herzegovinian type can be singled out because of its special form and content, whereas the rest of Moslem poetry shows a broad spectrum of variations so that, generally speaking, it can be described as a "wide-ranging" type of epic song. It is represented in Hörmann's collection and, for the most part, in existing manuscript collections, including that of the Matica Hrvatska, which we owe to Luka Marjanović's efforts. Schmaus referred to songs of this type as the "mixed type," or songs that represent incomplete "performances." In the entire corpus of Moslem epic poetry, Schmaus, furthermore, singled out as a special group the most highly developed forms of epic song taken from Marjanović's informants and, to a lesser extent, from Hörmann's collection. By identifying tendencies in the development of this so-called Krajina type with the development of Moslem epic song as a whole, Schmaus excluded other tendencies in the evolution of the Moslem epic and, even more broadly, in Serbo-Croatian-language epic in general. Even those examples designated by him as belonging to the "Krajina type" are often characterized by heterogeneous formal features (1953).

The "mixed type" is not always marked by the special features of one definitive form. Judging from most texts recorded in the second half of the nineteenth century, I believe that it is the result of vigorous epic contact throughout almost all of Bosnia and Herzegovina over the course of several centuries. Taken as a whole, this type can be defined in terms of its themes, subject matter, form, length, and so forth. In this group we can classify songs that reflect more markedly definite historical events, those about heroes from the Bosnian borderland of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries characterized by the age of their tradition, songs about warriors from the Venetian and Austrian borders, those about well-known border fighters who often are outstanding soldiers from all the regions of the Bosnian pashalik, as well as songs about the Moslem heroes from Hungary, the so-called *undžurske* songs. These songs show that length is not a formal feature but rather a descriptive category, since longer and shorter epic

songs exist as parallel forms of this type. The phenomenon is especially characteristic of songs with a historical basis and those about the borderland heroes of the seventeenth century. Among songs of this type, we can single out, in particular, a central Bosnian variant of the Moslem epic with representative examples recorded in Sarajevo, Zenica, and Travnik. The most numerous and most interesting are the songs from Sarajevo, which represent the Moslem epic tradition of a wider geographic area that merged in Sarajevo and is part of a tradition of wide-ranging epic forms with multiple variations. It is interesting that the highly developed epic songs of Sarajevo about Bosnian Moslem heroes, warrior bands, and epic borderland fighters of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, in a series of interesting variants, are representative of the Moslem epic song in general.

The phenomenon of the epic singer in the South Slavic tradition has not been explained satisfactorily in terms of the recorded epic repertoire. This observation, of course, applies to Moslem epic also. However, precisely in songs from this epic area, we catch sight of the singer-transmitter of definite categories of songs that are strikingly original. Thus, among the songs of Mehmed Kalabić's narrators (Hörmann's associates), which fall into the category of the type just mentioned, we find a highly developed epic song with the theme of the warrior band (Mustaj-beg of the Lika setting his brother free), in which the heroic company resembles medieval knights-errant traveling from one land to another (Hörmann 1888-89:355). In its romantic subject matter, Avdo Pivo's song *Mustaj-beg Lički oženi Kumalić Nuhana* [*Mustaj-beg of the Lika Marries Off Kumalić Nuhan*] (from the group of another associate of Hörmann) is reminiscent of a short novel (Hörmann 1888-89:395). Both of these songs, as well as some others, preserve the thread of the medieval epic tradition of the courts that most likely was rich in the epic plots of medieval stories and that surely, to a significant extent, became part of the Serbo-Croatian-language epic tradition.⁸

The most characteristic examples of the epic tradition of central Bosnia are songs with a historical background (*Gazi Husrev-beg vodi svatove u Stambol* [*Gazi (Hero) Husrev-beg Leads Wedding Guests to Stambol*], *Ibrahim-beg Ljubović*, *Car Sulejman uzimlje Budim* [*Sultan Suleiman Takes Buda*], *Filip Madžarin i gojeni Halil* [*Filip the Hungarian and the Powerful Halil*], *Filip general osvaja Zvornik* [*Filip the General Conquers Zvornik*], *Osman-beg Osječki i Pavičević Luka* [*Osman-beg of*

⁸This aspect of the epic has not been studied although the manuscript collections offer ample material for such investigation; these features of the epic tradition of the Bosnian-Herzegovinian Serbs recorded at the same time as the Moslem epic in question have been simplistically characterized in casual discussions as falsifications.

Osijek and Pavičević Luka]), a significant number of which were created in that area (Hörmann 1888-89:3, 155, 139, 451; 1966:123). Their historical foundation is rooted in the important events of the Bosnian Turkish period. Their themes and ideas reflect the many problems in the lives of Islamized Bosnians, such as their search for a *modus vivendi* from the fulfilling of obligations to defending the rights they inherited or acquired otherwise. These songs underscore the importance of Bosnia to the Ottoman Empire and show that positions attained and historical gains were the direct results of that significant role. Comparing the song about Osman-beg and Pavičević Luka from Hörmann's collection with its variant *Pavišić Luka i Hajser general* from western Bosnia (Marjanović 1898-99:555), we find Beg Ljubović and the traitorous vizier of Buda absent in the latter, while in the central Bosnian song both contribute in a significant way to enhancing the reputation of Bosnians (Buturović 1976:100-01). The poetry of central Bosnia is also important in the history of the epic tradition because a significant number of songs from this region clearly show that the Moslem epic tradition was created and preserved by Moslem urban society: businessmen, soldiers, tradesmen, and those in similar callings, who, like the members of village communities, incorporated heterogeneous cultural-ethnic layers in their songs (it is possible to suggest that *Car Sulejman uzimlje Budim* arose in a military dervish milieu [Buturović 1976:103]).

Within the framework of the entire Moslem epic tradition, it is possible to speak about a group of songs from western and northwestern Bosnia that are in fact representative of the western Bosnian variant. Their subject matter deals with the attacks of heroic bands in the Krajina, and they are linked principally to the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Compared to songs with similar subject matter recorded in central and eastern Bosnia, these songs are more realistic in their portrayal of life in the Krajina. The borderland fighters led by Mustaj-beg of the Lika, the heroes of these western Bosnian songs, have concrete tasks in the course of warfare and plundering, and are depicted as an important military force. One of the central characters in these songs is Mustaj-beg himself. Unlike the central Bosnian songs, these do not emphasize the special status of Bosnia. In the songs of singers transmitting poems that, to judge from the norm, were western Bosnian epics, the notion of the sultan as protector of the Krajina warriors is absent; the sultan in fact drives them into conflict with the enemy.

In a layer of songs by Mehmed Kolaković, we see powerfully reflected those tendencies in epic song that evolved after 1737, that is, after the Banja Luka battle and later, and that are the result of the accumulation of views formed in the eighteenth century during the period of open Bosnian antagonism to the central government. Kolaković the singer is tightly bound to the Krajina and its set of historical problems, with the

result that he “turns” even so-called *undžurske* songs into Krajina songs. His songs are characterized by epic realism. There is no idealization here, but rather misfortune, and life as it was for the warrior who had no other destiny; battles, duels, and skirmishes were his inevitable lot. This is why his heroes take no pride in their courage. Kolaković’s special gift was his ability to convey the essential messages of the tradition on which the epic songs of western Bosnia were based. He thus sings of the life of Moslem borderland fighters but also of the life of their fellow-countrymen of different faiths. He relates more eloquently than other singers the part played by the Krajina Moslem border warriors in the service of the Ottoman Empire, those stalwarts who defended its frontiers from Austria and Venice, and, on the opposite side, the role of the haiduks and *uskoci*, who were in the pay of Austria and Venice (Desnica 1950-51; Kleut 1987). The turbulent and uncertain life of the border fighter ran its course in a forced confrontation of Christians and Moslems of the same Slavic stock. Reality in an ethical sense was overshadowed by heroic excellence. That empires did not completely divide fellow-countrymen of the same language but of different faiths and political convictions is clearly brought out in these songs, which provide numerous examples of friendships and sworn brotherhood and sisterhood, attested to in extant documents and the testimony of contemporaries (Miscelanea I 1949; Čelebi 1967:146-47).⁹

⁹ As a typical example of the friendly relations between warriors of opposing sides, I cite below the letter of Mustafaga, Captain of Udbina and the Lika (the epic hero Mustaj-beg of the Lika) to Petar Smiljanić (father of the well-known epic hero Ilija Smiljanić), written before July of 1648:

Od nas gospodina Mustaf-age, kapetana udvinskoga i ličkoga, harambaši Petru Smilaniću poklon i vele drago i lubeznivo podravlejne kako bratu i prijatelju našem.

Čudimo se vašemu gospodstvu da nam nigdir list ne dodjo od vas, budući s našim ocem prijatel. Toliko li mlite da mi nismo ništa posli oca vrini[?]? Molimo vaše gospodstvo, ako ne bude koje oprave, ča smo vam bili pisali da opravite pri gospodinu djeneralu, molimo vašu milost, ako ča vidite da ne bude mira, dajt[e] nam na glas po priatelsku skrovito, molimo vašu milost. I pozdravlaše vas naša mati i molaše vas za jednu tursku robinicu, a ča bude pravo, hoćemo vam uslati. Molimo vašu milost, pozdravite nam od naše strane sina vašega harambašu Iliju. Čuli smo da je junak na toj Kraini. Bog znade da nam je drago, jere je naš. I eto mu uslasmo jedno pero sokolovo, zač je za nj. Hoće ga nositi prid junaci. I molimo ga za jednu signu karabinu, ča znate, da tribuje. Vira moja, hoćemo mu je pošteno jizpraviti. I bog vas veseli. I molimo vas harambaša Ilija da nam ušalete jednu bocu rakije, ča ćemo se napiti. I da ste veseli Amin.

(Miscelanea I 1949)

[From us Lord Mustaf-age, Captain of Udbina and the Lika, to the Haiduk Captain Petar Smiljanić, a bow and very warm and cordial greetings as to our brother and friend.

We are surprised at your lordship that no letter from you has reached us anywhere, since you were a friend of our father. Do you think that we are nothing to each

This is the tradition fostered and developed by these songs from the very moment that the event they reflect took place. That tradition was the driving force of their subject matter and form (indeed, the many topographic references in these songs, which are identifiable, point to a singer who knew the regions in which the events mentioned in the songs took place).

The songs about the heroes of the Krajina, who lived and fought in that marchland, sprang up, in my opinion, in the same period in different epic zones of the Bosnian pashalik and had the distinctive features of the tradition of their narrower homeland, while other epic subject matter and forms were fashioned over the course of time. From Bašeskija's account (1968) we know that highly developed epic songs about Krajina heroes existed in Sarajevo in the eighteenth century, and so we can assume that such forms existed in the western regions. Epic songs about Krajina heroes in eastern Bosnia appear in longer and shorter forms, that is, as two completely different forms. In my view, the shorter variety represents the type that is characteristic of the eastern region and the longer type is the result of normal, continual contact with central Bosnia and other regions. After investigating the shorter type characterized by compressed action and frequent dialogue, I reached the conclusion that it was diffused over an area broader than eastern Bosnia, that is, the area of Prozor-Jablanica-Konjic, of which it is typical. Examples of epic songs of this type in Hörmann's collection show that it is well preserved in the mountainous areas of the Foča region, a sign of the great age of this tradition, a fact confirmed by my fieldwork in that region in the seventies. It is interesting to note here that in my investigation of the eastern Bosnian type in general, I ascertained that the basic characteristics of these songs are linked with the older epic tradition of these areas. I was especially struck by possible parallels in these songs with the Albanian song cycles about Mujo and Halil (song length, stereotyped form of recorded versions, dehistoricizing of border and band warriors, especially of Mujo and Halil, and presence of mythological elements). The parallel existence of this type alongside the

other after our father's passing(?)? We entreat your lordship to carry out what we had written you to do regarding the lord general if there is no order to the contrary; we entreat your grace, if you see that there will be unrest, send us a message secretly as a friend, we entreat your grace. Our mother sends you her greetings and requests a Turkish slave girl of you, and we intend to send you what is fair in exchange. We entreat your grace, give our greetings to your son, the Haiduk Captain Ilija. We have heard that he is a hero in that Krajina. God knows that we are pleased, because he is ours. And so we have sent him a falcon's feather, for he deserves it. He will wish to wear it in the presence of heroes. And we request of him a black carbine, which, you know, he needs. Upon my faith, we shall set it in perfect working order for him. And may God give you joy. And we request that you, Haiduk Captain Ilija, send us a bottle of rakia, so we can drink our fill. And may you be joyful, Amen.]

poetry of the longer type, which was clearly influenced by the former, points to a layer of songs which “endured” in the epic tradition. Consequently, it cannot be said that the shorter songs are poorer versions of songs from central and western Bosnia. In this way, it seems to me, we can also understand the genesis of Albanian songs about Mujo, Halil, Udbina, and the like.

Moslem epic songs of the so-called southern, or Montenegrin-Herzegovinian, type are closest to the Christian epic. These Moslem songs, as well as those of the Montenegrins and Herzegovinian Serbs, arose in the particular circumstances of the herdsman’s way of life in Montenegro and Herzegovina from the fall of the South Slavic medieval states until the end of the nineteenth century. They are rooted in the patriarchal culture characterized by early Balkan and Slavic elements. Their basic themes are tribal conflicts caused by blood feuds, the desire for grazing lands, sheep- stealing, and so on. They also deal with raids by warrior bands both small and large in scale that are prompted by political conflicts. This corpus of poetry can only be studied from archival sources. Most of these songs show that their principal bearers were Moslem herders who were themselves burdened by the *filûri* [florin]—a tax levied by the Turks on all herdsmen, whether Moslem or Christian—and whose situation was scarcely different from that of their Christian counterparts.

This type of poetry was closely bound to Montenegrin-Herzegovinian soil. It was “spread” in the sense of being transmitted to a different religious and social milieu. Its influence is certainly conceivable, but, on the whole, this results in a different kind of song. There are cases of exceptionally fine songs of this type about notables of the Krajina (Hörmann 1888-89:413). However, at this point in my research, I have not been able to establish that phenomenon as a spatial and chronological coordinate of Moslem epic song. It appears to be the individual creation of master singers of Moslem epic. I therefore believe that this type did not evolve into a widespread Moslem epic song about the Krajina and Hungarian Moslem heroes.

The Moslem epic is a stratified phenomenon of a broad geographical area determined by cultural-historical, ethnic, and social impulses. In addition to the recognizable geography in its layers, it is also determined by chronology. It is one example of an epic tradition that shows the extent to which regional characteristics are present in artistic creation, and so it cannot be bypassed in the study of epic tradition.

Territorial Museum of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Sarajevo

References

- Aličić 1982 Ahmed S. Aličić. "Razdoblje turske (osmanske) vlasti." In "Bosna i Hercegovina (Socijalistička Republika Bosna i Hercegovina)." *Enciklopedija Jugoslavije*. Vol. 2. 2nd ed. Zagreb: Jugoslavenski Leksikografski Zavod, pp. 174-89.
- Bašeskija 1968 Mustafa Mula Ševki Bašeskija. *Ljetopis*. Trans., introd., and comments by Mehmed Mujezinović. Sarajevo: Svjetlost.
- Buturović 1972-73 Denana Buturović. "Epska narodna tradicija Muslimana Bosne i Hercegovine od početka 16. vijeka do pojave zbirke Koste Hörmanna." *Glasnik Zemaljskog muzeja Bosne i Hercegovine u Sarajevu*, Etnologija, n.s. 27-28:5-100.
- Buturović 1975 _____. "Gerz Iljas-Đerzelez prema historijskim izvorima iz XV, XVI i XVII vijeka." *Prilozi za književnost, jezik, istoriju i folklor*, 41:172-86.
- Buturović 1976 _____. *Studija o Hörmannovoj zbirci muslimanskih narodnih pjesama*. Sarajevo: Svjetlost.
- Buturović 1980a _____. "Les Chants épiques des Musulmans dans le contexte historique." *Balkanica*, 11:63-80.
- Buturović 1980b _____. "Najstarija sultansko-vezirska pjesma i njen povijesni okvir." *Godišnjak Odjeljenja za književnost* (Institut za jezik i književnost u Sarajevu), 9:185-206.
- Buturović 1982 _____. "Narodna poezija u Drežnici kod Mostara." *Glasnik Zemaljskog muzeja Bosne i Hercegovine u Sarajevu*, Etnologija, n.s. 37:47-136.
- Buturović 1986 _____. "Les Récits de voyages d'Evlija Čelebi comme source d'études du folklore des peuples yougoslaves." In *III. Milletlerarası türk folklor kongresi bildirileri*. Vol. 1. Ankara: Ankara Üniversitesi Basımevi, pp. 69-78.
- Čelebi 1967 Evlija Čelebi. *Putopis: Odlomci o jugoslovenskim zemljama*. Trans., introd., and comments by Hazim Šabanović. Sarajevo: Svjetlost.
- Desnica 1950-51 Boško Desnica. *Istorija kotarskih uskoka 1646-1684*. 2 vols. Belgrade: Srpska Akademija Nauka i Umetnosti.
- Elezović 1940 Gliša Elezović. "Boj na Kosovu 1389. u istoriji Mula Mehmeda Nešrija." *Brastvo*, 31:1-77.
- ER 1925 *Erlangenski rukopis starih srpskohrvatskih narodnih pesama*. Ed. by Gerhard Gezeman (Gesemann). Sr. Karlovci: Srpska Kraljevska Akademija.

- Hörmann 1888-89 Kosta Hörmann, coll. and ed. *Narodne pjesne Muhamedovaca u Bosni i Hercegovini*. 2 vols. Sarajevo: Zemaljska Štamparija.
- Hörmann 1966 _____, coll. *Narodne pjesme Muslimana u Bosni i Hercegovini: Iz rukopisne ostavštine Koste Hörmanna*. Ed. by Đenana Buturović. Sarajevo: Zemaljski Muzej Bosne i Hercegovine.
- Kleut 1987 Marija Kleut. *Ivan Senjanin u srpskohrvatskim usmenim pesmama*. Novi Sad: Matica Srpska.
- Ljubinković 1961 Nenad Ljubinković. "Opis kosovskog boja kod Mule Nešrija i naše narodne pesme." *Glasnik Muzeja Kosovo i Metohija*, 6:161-71.
- Marjanović 1898-99 Luka Marjanović, coll. and ed. *Hrvatske narodne pjesme: Junačke pjesme (muhamedovske)*. Vols. 3 and 4. Zagreb: Matica Hrvatska.
- Miscelanea I 1949 Miscelanea I. Državni arhiv Zadar: 55.
- Olesnicki 1933 Aleksej Olesnicki. "Tko je zapravo bio Đerzelez Alija." *Zbornik za narodni život i običaje Južnih Slavena*, 29:18-37.
- Olesnicki 1934 _____. "Suzi Čelebi iz Prizrena, turski pesnik-istorik XV-XVI veka." *Glasnik Skopskog naučnog društva*, 13:69-82.
- Olesnicki 1935 _____. "Turski izvori o kosovskom boju." *Glasnik Skopskog naučnog društva*, 14:59-98.
- Putilov 1982 B. N. Putilov. *Geroičeskij èpos Černogorcev*. Leningrad: "Nauka."
- Ređep 1976 Jelka Ređep. *Priča o boju kosovskom*. Zrenjanin: Filozofski Fakultet, Novi Sad, and Centar za Kulturu, Zrenjanin ("Ulaznica").
- Šabanović 1982 Hazim Šabanović. *Bosanski pašaluk: Postanak i upravna podjela*. Sarajevo: Svjetlost.
- Schmaus 1953 Alois Schmaus. *Studije o krajinskoj epici*. Rad Jugoslavenske Akademije Znanosti i Umjetnosti, 297. Zagreb: Jugoslavenska Akademija Znanosti i Umjetnosti.
- Schmaus 1974 _____. "Prilozi istraživanju južnoslovenske epike." In *Narodna književnost Srba, Hrvata, Muslimana i Crnogoraca: Izbor kritika*. Ed. by Đenana Buturović and Vlajko Palavestra. Sarajevo: Svjetlost. pp. 48-64.
- Trako 1969 Salih Trako. "Bitka na Kosovu 1389. godine u istoriji Idrisa Bitlisija." *Prilozi za orijentalnu filologiju*, 14-15:329-51.