

ON THE FOLK LITERATURE OF GORANIES*

The present subject has been chosen because the oral or popular literature of Goranias bore for centuries the major part of their internal life, preserving the older forms of the Serbian language better than it was done in any other part of Serbia. Another reason is that the creation of the oral literary forms in Gora is still active not only in the sense of their preservation and cherishing but also of modern-day creation. Relying on their language, oral culture and tradition as the most important means for preservation of their nationality, Goranias as members of an ethnically older Serbian community were placed in jeopardy, especially after Albanization of the neighboring Opolje District of Gora, and accordingly had to live in isolation for fear of the nearby Albanian tribes. Only after World War I the first four-year primary schools in their native, Serbian language were opened and after World War II the eight-year primary, and four-year secondary schools. Education became available to an ever-growing number of Goranias who also managed to complete the high schools. The new social relations after World War II had a destructive influence both on oral folk tradition, and oral literature in general, because the new culture pushed its way to the homes of Goranias as well. Harun Hasani, the leading gatherer of the folk songs of Goranias, described the position of the folk songs in Gora of the past and present time:

"Regrettably, one their part is slowly disappearing, dying out, similarly to older generations, which are also dying out"⁵³.

Written literature was initiated a decade or two ago and is now being quickly developed. Coming of age for poetry the young Gorany poets published their first books of poetry, which revealed that they found springs to quench their thirst for creation and that oral folk songs served as models of their inspiration. How would the relation between oral and written poetry of Goranias look like and how would it further develop is not yet known but it supposedly could follow the preferences in other parts of our country, which undoubtedly would depend on political and other events and their consequences. I am however convinced that Goranias would remain loyal to their country of origin

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⁵³ Хасани Х. (1987), **Горанске народне песме** (*Folk Songs of Goranias*), Приштина, стр. 8-9

and their name, as they have always been, and that they would pursue their predilections as one of the first border stones of Serbia and Yugoslavia.

It is not difficult to follow up recording of the folk literature of Goranians in Gora because the process has begun later than usual. The delay is great and seemingly without a good reason. Miodrag Vasiljević published in 1950 the first collection of folk songs in Gora, which contains forty-one songs⁵⁴. Then a foreigner, musicologist like M. Vasiljević, published nine Gorany folk songs⁵⁵ and after her Blaže Ristovski, associate of the Institute of Macedonian Language, published hundred and thirty Gorany songs⁵⁶. The reasons of Ristovski were estimated as non-well intentioned.

The first great collection of Gorany folk songs, gathered in Gora by a Gorany, is the collection of Harun Hasani⁵⁷, well known to scientists. It contains 410 folk songs selected from a multitude recorded by "more than thousand pupils of senior classes of the primary schools in Gora and more than twenty teachers and professors"⁵⁸. The songs were taken down from 161 singers. The Hasani's collection demonstrated the immense wealth, splendour and antiquity of the Gorany folk songs created, cherished and preserved by Goranians as a gift bestowed by the Gorany cultural heritage on our epoch. All major kinds of the lyric and a great deal of the epic folk poetry are represented in the collection. Hasani's collection denied some earlier, roughly considered opinions that Goranians do not have folk epics. On the contrary, they actually do have them even in the most archaic form of long verses known as "bugarštice" – a kind of Serbian folk epics, which disappeared already in the 18th century in other Serbian regions. The verses of the epic No. 368 about Jana and Jankula illustrate it in the best way:

Несом Туркина мила бе маје, току сам каурка, За тиа сом, мила бе маје, ноћа путуало...	Am no Turk, dear mom, noMoslem believer, so must journey, dear mom, as girl by night* .
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Narrative songs and among them most remarkable and frequent ballads are preserved better than heroic. Several authentic motives emerged from the harsh reality of the Gorany daily life and in the ballads were decorated with the finest ornaments ever met in oral poetry. The Gorany epic drew substance from two sources: prior to Islamic oral poetry and everyday, authentic and brutal experiences of migrant workers.

⁵⁴ Васиљевић М. (1950), **Југословенски музички фолклор** (*Yugoslav Folk Music*), I, Београд.

⁵⁵ Бирта Треруп, **Народна музика Призренске Горе** (*The folk music of Prizrenska Gora*), Зборник радова саXIV конгреса фолклориста Југославије, Београд, 1974, стр. 214-220.

⁵⁶ Блаже Ристовски, **Горански народни песни** (*Yugoslav folk songs*), Македонски фолклор, 1969, бр. 3-4, стр. 429-493.

⁵⁷ Харун Х., op. cit.

⁵⁸ *Ibidem*, стр. 7-8.

* translated by Smiljana Naumović

Two other literary genres of the Gorany oral literature, folk tales and word plays (proverbs, sayings, riddles etc.) are similarly rich in contents and means of expression. However they remained less known to broader cultural circles than folk songs. Their recording, at least as a kind of the narrative material, began earlier than recording of songs but the notes taken down were incomplete, casual and often accidentally made. Panta Srećković first wrote down the folk tales told by Sima Igumanov and published them in 1865⁵⁹. The Russian Consul in Prizren Ivan Stepanovich Yastrebov was also taking down folk tales in the 1870s and 80s⁶⁰. After World War II Milisav Lutovac⁶¹ wrote down and published a part of the narrative wealth. Students of the Department of Serbian Literature and Language of the Faculty of Philology in Priština Mufeta Kaykush and Sehat Misini⁶² wrote down in the 1970s and 80s the purest kinds of folk tales known to me. They did their job in agreement with the customary obligations for recorders with the aim to get as authentic as possible narration models from storytellers. From the recording they made, as well as from earlier and later recordings and one's own personal view into the Goranics' narration, it could be said that in terms of artistic qualities it does not lag behind other forms of Serbian folk poetry.

Oral folk forms, and especially proverbs, sayings and riddles in Gora are well developed. These highlanders cherished them with special interest and inclination. One gets the impression that there is no phenomenon in life and in the world, which does not have its echo in a folk tale, especially proverbs, sayings and riddles.

The oral or popular literature of Goranics is similar to that part of the Serbian folk heritage, which was developed by the older generations of Serbs on the southern and northern sides of Šar Mountain, and particularly by the residents of Sredska in the near-by Šar Mountain District bordering on Prizren. Comparative researchers will have to prove or deny that observation bearing in mind the common origin of the named variations.

⁵⁹ Срећковић П. (1865), **Синан паша** (*Sinan Pasha*), Београд, стр. 74-76.

⁶⁰ Јастребов И.С. (1904), **Стара Србија и Албанија** (*Old Serbia and Albania*), Београд, стр. 134, 138, 139.

⁶¹ Лутовац М. (1955), **Гора и Опoље** (*Gora and Opolje*), Београд.

⁶² Besides Mufeta Kaykush and Sehat Misini Gorany folk songs were also taken down by Nurka Shole and Zuhra Veliyu.