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PLANTS AND HERBS IN TRADITIONAL  
SERBIAN CULTURE  
Handbook of folk botany



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## A GRAVE IN THE WOODS

### Intertwining of spatial and plant encoding in the epics<sup>1</sup>

SUMMARY: In traditional culture of the Balkan Slavs *gora* (woods, forest, mountain) is the place with the greatest possible number of negative connotations: it is always wild and alien, therefore dangerous ([gora] *nikad nije pusta / bez vukovah ali hajdukova*: this land is never waste / without either wolfs or brigands), with distinctive chthonic characteristics (in *gora*, there is an entrance to the netherworld - through a cave or a hole; the impure forces are banned into it as into their natural space; in *gora/woods/forest* the penitentiary god's miracles happen) etc. In consequence, when transferred to the epics, *gora/woods/forest* becomes a spatial image of the peak of all active plot-lines of the poem, which is simply the point of no return, from which the action can go only towards a tragic end. By *tragic* meaning – of course - the premature, unavoidable, and violent death of the protagonist(s). What is more, whoever dies in the woods – stays in the woods too, because it is forbidden (in traditional culture at least) to bury the impure dead in the holy land of graveyard. As those dead are usually loved and honoured ones without any personal blame, their graves are equipped with running water, benches and flowers or fruits to mark the spot of their departure and to figure as an offering to their souls.

KEY WORDS: forest/woods/mountain, death, grave, fruit, flowers, water

In the traditional culture of the Balkan Slavs *gora* (woods, forest, mountain)<sup>2</sup> is the place with the greatest possible number of negative connotations: it is always wild and alien, therefore dangerous ([gora] *nikad nije pusta / bez vukovah ali hajdukova*: this land is never waste / without either wolfs or brigands), with distinctive chthonic characteristics (in *gora*, there is an entrance to the nether-

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<sup>2</sup> In Serbian *gora* is an archaism for the contemporary mountain or forest (in the mountain). *Gora* encompasses all those meanings.

world<sup>3</sup> - through a cave or a hole; the impure forces are banned into it as into their natural space; in gora/woods/forest the penitentiary god's miracles happen)<sup>4</sup>, etc [Cajkanovic 1994/1; Radenkovic 1986]. In consequence, when transferred to the epics, gora/woods/forest becomes a spatial image of the peak of all active plot-lines of the poem, which is simply the point of no return, from which the action can go only towards a tragic end. By *tragic* meaning – of course - the premature, unavoidable, and violent death of the protagonist(s).

A death in the epic woods might be silent and bloodless one when it is caused by a *vis maior* (charm, curse, god “the old slaughterer”, fairy), or it is violent and brutal if the killers are men. For the benefit of epic poetics, it is rather important to mark that the death by the “higher forces” has its own stable formulas, which means that it is usually announced and described by regular, generally accepted linguistic means which must be rooted in a very deep antiquity:

„Nek me spuste na zelenu travu;

„**Ljuto me je zaboljela glava,**

„Jarko mi je omrznulo sunce,

„A crna mi zemlja omiljela,

„Bog bi dao, te bi dobro bilo!”

[Vuk III, 78:159-163]

**A mene je zabojele glava,**

*A od srca preboleti ne ću.*

*To izusti, pa dušicu pusti.*

[Vuk II, 7:138-140]

*Skide Marko zelenu dolamu,*

*Prostrije je pod jelom po travi,*

*Prekrsti se, sjede na dolamu,*

*Samur-kalpak nad oči namače,*

**Dolje leže, gore ne ustade.**

[Vuk II, 74:117-121]

Let them put me down, to the green grass;

I have a bitter headache,

I hate the bright sun,

But the black earth is so dear to me,

By god, let it all be for good!

But I have a bitter headache,

And I fear I will not get through it.

Thus said, she parted with her soul.

Marko took off the green dolama<sup>5</sup>,

Stretched it on the grass under the fir tree,

Crossed his heart, sit down on dolama,

With samur-kalpak<sup>6</sup> he covered his eyes,

Down he lied, and never got up.

<sup>3</sup> This netherworld is not comparable with the ecclesiastic and standard understanding of the “other world”, the abode of the dead. Within the South Slavs tradition, netherworld is simply a parallel world with three suns, with green meadows in bloom, and with young and beautiful people dancing on them (cf. the fairytale “Kravaric Marko” (Marko, the cow’s son) [Cajkanovic 1927, no. 10].

<sup>4</sup> Eg. in the poem “Kumovanje Grcica Manojla” (Godfathering of Manojlo the Greek) Vuk II, 6 where the protagonist is punished for perjury by cannibalism (without knowing it, he eats his own son who turned into a black lamb and ran into him on the road through the woods). The possible punishing force here is more probably st John the Baptist, patron of godfathering, than the God himself.

<p><i>Tu je malo postanulo vrime,</i>  <b>Teško Marka zabolila glava.</b>  <i>Trećim mu je putem besidila:</i>  <i>“Stani, kurbo, Kraljeviću Marko!</i>  <i>Neka tvoju ja odsičem glavu,</i>  <i>Ne ćeš doći bilem dvoru svome.”</i>  <i>Još je vila u tom riči bila,</i>  <b>Mrtav Marko pod konjica pade</b>  <i>I umire, pokojna mu duša!</i>                  [MH II, 72:40-48]</p>	<p>When a morsel of time passed,                  Marko had a bitter headache.                  For the third time she [the fairy] spoke to                  him:                  “Halt, you slut, Marko the Prince!                  Let me cut off your head,                  You will never reach your white castle.”                  While she was still speaking,                  The dead Marko fell under his horse                  And thus he died, God bless his soul!</p>
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On the contrary, descriptions of the violent death from a human hand have their origin in historical, relatively recent times. Actually, they are very similar to the reports of direct experience, so the stable formulas for this kind of action have not yet been formed by the time when poems were recorded:

<p><i>Od sebe ga mačem ošinuo,</i>  <i>Na dvije ga pole prekinuo,</i>  <i>Pa se vrati, ode uz planinu.</i>  <i>A kad dođe Stevo u planinu,</i>  <i>Đe su šnjima kavgu zametnuli,</i>  <i>Krvavo je po drumu kamenje,</i>  <i>Krvave su vite omorike;</i>  <i>Po kamenju i po krvci crnoj</i>  <i>Gazi junak harambaša Limo</i> [Vuk                  III,42:355-363].</p>	<p>He stroke him with his sword,                  In two halves he cut him,                  And then he returned, going up the mountain.                  And when Stevo came to the mountain,                  On the spot where the clash had started,                  There on the road all the stones are deep in blood,                  All the slender spurs are covered with blood;                  On the stones and on the black blood                  There steps the hero, Limo the brigand chief.</p>
<p><i>Ufatiše Kovčića Osmanagu</i>  <i>i od njega velje muke grade -</i>  <i>kidaju mu i noge i ruke,</i>  <i>ostaviše nasred drumu puta</i>  <i>da ga miču tpice svakojake</i>                  [SANU III, 66:132-136]</p>	<p>They got him, the Kovcic Osmanaga,                  And they put him to the bitter torments –                  They tore apart both his legs and arms,                  And then they left him in the road                  To be consumed by birds of many kinds</p>

The point mutual to both kinds of dying in the forest is the burial of the dead, of whom none reaches the consecrated space of cemetery. They all stay in the spot where the death caught them: in the mountain/forest/woods, on the road, or at the crossing of the roads through the woods. The only exception of this rule – where the ideological needs of the culture overcome the needs of epic poetics – appears in the small number of poems about the death of a ruler. Although at first buried in the woods (or abandoned in the battlefield - which is the locus of similar connota-

<sup>5</sup> A kind of luxurious cape or jacket, usually a rank-marker for gentry and alike.

<sup>6</sup> A kind of helmet, trimmed with sable fur.

tions), the ruler at the end is given an ecclesiastical burial and the apotheosis of holiness. One of such examples is “Smrt cara Urosa” (Death of the emperor Uros, Vuk VI, 14) where king Vukasin takes the young emperor to the woods in order to murder him there:

<p><i>Urou jede љeba bijeloga, Uroš jede, ujko ga ne jede, Već on oda po gori zelenoj, Pa prebira otrovana bilja, Da oturje dijete Uroša. Otrova ga i sarani mlada Pod najvišom i najgranatijom U gorici a brsnatom jelom, Gdi sjedoše jesti ljeba b'jela. [25-33]</i></p> <p>.....</p> <p><i>I onde se Uroš posvetio, Te se samo posvećeno t'jelo Nazidanu manastiru šeće, Onde leglo sanak boraviti, Boraviti i bolne cjeliti, Da je slava Bogu velikome, I Urošu ugodniku svome. [82-88]</i></p>	<p>Uros is eating his white bread, Uros is eating, his uncle is not, But he strolls in the green forest, And he goes through the poisonous plants, With which to poison the child Uros. He poisoned him and buried the youngster Under the tallest and most branching fir tree, The one with the mightiest treetop, Under the same tree where they ate their bread.</p> <p>.....</p> <p>And Uros was there sanctified, And the very sanctified body of his By itself went to the monastery, And lied there to fall into slumber, To stay there and heal the sick, All in glory to the mighty God And to Uros, to his favourite.</p>
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Another of the exempla is the epic fate of both the head and the body of duke Lazar after the Battle of Kosovo in 1389 [Vuk II, 53]. Separated from the body by decapitation, the duke's head was hidden at the bottom of a well, but the body was abandoned in the battlefield, unburied:

<p><i>Stajala je glava u kladencu Lepo vreme četrdeset leta, A ubavo na Kosovo telo, Ni ga jedu orli ni gavrani, Ni ga gaze konji ni junaci. [17-21]</i></p> <p>.....</p> <p><i>Pa zagazi u vodu kladenca, Te izvadi iz kladenca glavu Svetitelja Srpskoga Lazara, Pa je meće na zelenu travu, I zaiti vode u kondiru. Dok se žedni vodom obrediše, Kad su crnoj zemlji pogledali, Nesta glave sa zelene trave, Ode glava preko polja sama, Sveta glava do svetoga tela, Pripoji se kako što j' i bila. [44-54]</i></p>	<p>The head was lying down in the well For a pretty long time – for the forty years, And the beautiful body in the field of Kosovo, Nobody touched it – neither eagles nor ravens, Nobody steps on it – nether horses nor the heroes</p> <p>.....</p> <p>So he steps into the water in the well, And from that well he brought the head Of the Holy Lazar of Serbia, And he put it on the green grass, And he fetch some water in the cup. After they all drank from the cup, When they looked at the black dirth, The head disappeared from the green grass. The head went over the field by itself, The holy head to the holy body, And those two became one as they were before.</p>
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<p>.....  <i>Ne će svetac zadužbini tuđoj,          Već on oće svojoj zadužbini,          A u svoju krasnu Ravanicu          Pod visokom pod Kučaj-planinom.          Što je Laza sagradio crkvu          Za života jošte za svojega,          Sagradio sebi zadužbinu          O svom lebu i o svome blagu          A bez suza bez sirotinjskije. [79-87]</i></p>	<p>The saint is not willing to endowment of others,          But he's going to his own endowment,          To his beautiful Ravanica          Under the high Kučaj mountain.          This church Laza had built          While he still was alive,          Had his endowment built to himself,          For his own money          And without oppressing anyone.</p>
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Here, the ideological interventions in the epic model are clear and – by all means – of very recent origin. They, actually, have no influence on the older layers of epic singing and on the general division of the burials in the woods. The same indifference the burial-in-the-woods pattern also shows towards the scarce poems where a dying hero asks his friends to bury him in some specific place (in a salt field near the sea, on the crossing of twelve roads, near the ferry post, and similar – cf. ER 64, 89, 94) because not even then the word is about a true, ecclesiastical rite.

In the context of an epic song perception, the strangeness of this situation for an amateur reader (or for one belonging to a different type of culture) is growing even bigger as in the largest number of cases the dead left in the woods are actually the dearest ones: brides, grooms, brothers, blood brothers, good friends. The logical question here is: what is the motivation for such a severe and (from the point of view of the cult of the dead) extremely dangerous decision, having in mind that each culture – let alone the traditional one – takes a very good care about the relations between the dead and the living. Epics itself by no means can act in this matter against, or in opposition to, the belonging cultural norm. On the contrary, it honours its standpoint with great attention and consistency. At the first site, it could be a paradox because the actions in the woods appear at the same time as both a respect of tradition and an impingement of it. This can only be solved from the position within the traditional culture whose strict rules for handling the impure dead are, actually, the main (if not the only one) reason for leaving them in the woods.

The Church, even today, is reluctant to give to the so called “impure dead” a regular burial,<sup>7</sup> and in the prime time of epic singing traditional rules of the kind were

<sup>7</sup> An Orthodox requiem cannot be served to those who do not belong to this confession, to those who were not baptized in it, or to those who were excommunicated. An orthodox priest cannot perform this holy deed for a Christian of another confession, except in the very rare cases; nor can he do it for the people of some other religion or for the atheists. For the anabaptized children, even of the baptized parents, there cannot be a requiem. Same goes for the suicides, people killed in a duel, in some countries also for the people under the death sentence. A dead mass is also denied to people who “permanently lived in sin”, or who bore “a death sin known to others, without redemption or

even firmer than that. The right to the church burial was denied to all who did not die of natural causes (in Serb. the so called “pogibalci”), especially to drowned people, suicides, people killed by thunder, brigands and criminals, to those who were hung, to participants in a ritual cortege (wedding guests, fertilizing rites, rain invoking processions) and similar. As the victims of an unnatural death, people who died during epidemics, women who died on childbirth, stillborns, children born “on the wrong side of blanket”, anabaptized and first born children belonged to the same category, as well as members of certain ethnicities or professions (e.g. Gypsies and diggers). Besides, whoever died in gora/woods/mountain, automatically took part in this list because they were either killed by a *vis maior*, or murdered by men. Keeping in mind what kind of locus *gora* itself may be, the dead were actually very well situated indeed – at the entrance to the netherworld (and in some interpretations, in that world itself).

In direct connection with all these, as an outcome of the various taboos densely intertwined, the belief was formed that those souls, if denied a burial, cannot enter the other world but have to stay in this one and suffer. Under those circumstances, they can easily be influenced by impure forces and become either their servants, or demons dangerous for the living. So the living have every reason to take care of the people who died (or were killed) in gora/woods, which means to bury them decently, not in consecrated space of the graveyard, but on the spot of their death: beside the road, in the garden, in the orchard, even in the special graveyards far away from the human habitats.<sup>8</sup> So, whenever a person who dies in woods also gets buried in it, such a burial is both an expression of love for the dead, and the need of the living to see about the safety and peace of his/her soul.

Graves in the woods could be either single or group. Single graves are further divided in maiden’s, bachelor’s, and warrior’s, while the group graves are usually for a pair (a bride and a groom; a boy and a girl - ER 180; MH VIII, 20; two brothers - ER 132; MH I, 48; MH II, 71; SANU II, 8; a best man and a brother in law - MH V, 215), or for the whole wedding procession (ER 180; MH VIII,20; MH V, 215; KH II, 74). The collective graves in epics are relatively scarce; the single longer description of making such a grave can be found only in the poem “Maleta hajduk sahranjuje svatove, koje je pobio” (Maleta the brigand buries the wedding guests, whom he killed – MH VIII, 20). The atypical picture of that grave is made of two incompatible

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confession”. [http://www.sv-jelisaveta.org.rs/news\\_alone.php?ArticleId=%2060](http://www.sv-jelisaveta.org.rs/news_alone.php?ArticleId=%2060)

<sup>8</sup> Bibliography on this subject is enormously big. For the purpose of this article, we used mostly older sources because of the need to adjust the reconstruction of the customs and beliefs with the time of epic singing and of recording of the poems in our corpus. In more recent times, according to the results of the fieldwork, the attitude towards the burial and cult of the dead changed well enough to make the comparison with the epics ineffective. So, for the present analysis, cf. Trojanovic 1911; Zecevic 1963; Zecevic 1982; Djordjevic 1937-1940; Djordjevic 1984; Filipovic 1950; Cajkanovic 1994/1-5; Bandic 1980, 129-135.

components: the imagery (belonging to the older layers of epic singing) and thematic layers (new by origin). So the final picture of the grave looks in many details like the older, maiden and bachelor graves, which is poetically improper:

<p><i>Svaki ajduk svoga zakopava,</i>  <i>A Maleta momka i djevojku,</i>  <b><i>Ter oko njih vočke posadiše,</i></b>  <b><i>Bunar-vode kod njih iskopaše:</i></b>  <i>»Kad putnici budu putovali,</i>  <i>Iz bunara ladne vode pili,</i>  <i>Sa jabuka trgali jabuke,</i>  <i>U debelu ladu počivali,</i>  <i>I putnici budu govorili:</i>  <i>,Bog mu dao, onome junaku,</i>  <i>Koji 'e ovu vodu navodio,</i>  <i>I uza nju vočke posadio!'</i>  <i>Bog će nama oprostiti grije.«</i>  <i>Još uz momka Maleta ajduče,</i>  <b><i>On uz momka zelen borak sadi,</i></b>  <b><i>Uz djevojku vinovu lozicu.</i></b>  <b><i>Vijala se loza oko bora</i></b>  <b><i>Ka' djevojka oko svog junaka!</i> [148-156]</b></p>	<p>Each brigand inter his own dead,          But Maleta inter the bride and the groom.          Around them he plants fruit trees,          A well of fresh water they dug on the side:          "Whenever the travelers my travel this way,          Whenever they may drink from the cool well,          Whenever they may pick an apple          And whenever they may rest in the shadows,          They will have to say:          'God bless him, the nobleman,          Who dug this well          And planted the fruit trees on the side!'          God will give us a redemption."          On the side of the groom          Maleta plants a green pine,          And on the side of the bride – a tiny vine.          The tiny vine bent around the pine          Like the girl around her lover.</p>
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Between the maiden and bachelor graves there is no significant difference because in both cases the death is understood as an interruption in the process of ripening: it is all about the brides who never entered the state of married women and about the young, still not proven enough men who get killed either by mistake, or of bad luck – in any case before their time:

DEVOJACKI I MOMACKI GROBOVI

*sabljama joj sanduk satesaše,*  
*nadžacima raku iskopaše;*  
*Posuše je grošim' i dukatim';*  
***čelo glave vodu izvedoše,***  
***oko vode klupe pogradiše,***  
***posadiše ružu s obje strane:***  
*ko j'umoran, neka se odmara;*  
*ko je mlađan, nek se kiti cv'jećem;*  
*ko je žedan, neka vode pije*  
*za dušicu lijepe djevojke*  
 [Vuk III, 78:190-201].

MAIDEN AND BACHELOR'S GRAVES

They cut her casket with swards,  
 With hatchets they dug her grave;  
 They covered her with groats and duckats ;  
 Above her head they dug a well,  
 Around the well they built some benches,  
 They planted roses on both sides:  
 Who is tired, let him rest;  
 Who is young, let him cut the flowers;  
 Who is thirsty, let him drink the water  
 For the sake of the beautiful girl's soul

*Lipo su mu greba iskopali,  
Blizu dvora na vrati od dvora.  
Na glavu mu cviče posadili,  
A na noge vodu izvodili.  
Ko je mlađi, neka cviče bere,  
Ko je žedan, neka vode pije,  
Neka reče: Pokojna mu duša!*  
[MH II,33: 139-145]

*I ljepo ga Janko ukopao  
i kod groba posadio klupe  
i kod klupe izveo vodicu:  
tko ti je trudan, neka počiva  
tko je žedan, nek pije vodicu.*  
[ER 157: 45-49]

*oko groba stole pometao,  
čelo glave ružu usadio,  
a do nogu jelu usadio,  
do te jele bunar iskopao  
i za jelu dobra konja svez'o:*

*koji prođe tud drumom carevim,  
ko j' umoran, neka otpočine,  
ko je mlađan pa je za kićenje,  
nek se kiti ružicom rumenom,  
a koga je obrvala žećca,  
bunar ima, nek' utoli žećcu,  
ko je junak vredan za konjica,  
nek' ga dreši, pa nek drumom jezdi-  
sve za zdravlje Iva Senjanina  
i za dušu nejaka nećaka*  
[SANU III, 40:100-114].

*Kopajte mi jamu pri svetemu Ivanu,  
nutra prostirajte moju kabanicu,  
na jnu položite moje grešno telo.  
Vane ostavljajte moju desnu ruku,  
za jnu privežijte mojega konja vranca.  
Nek se konjic plače, kad se ljuba neče.  
Kopajte mi zdenec ober groba moga,  
doj mi putem pojde, vode se napije,*

They dug him a nice grave,  
Near his home, at the threshold of his home.  
Above his head they planted flowers,  
At his legs they dug a well of water.  
Who is young, let him cut the flowers,  
Who is thirsty, let him drink the water,  
Let him say: God bless his soul!

Janko nicely buried him  
And by his grave he put some benches  
And by the benches he dug a well of water:  
Who is tired, let him rest  
Who is thirsty, let him drink

Around the grave he put some tables  
At the head he planted a rose  
By the legs he planted a fir tree  
By that fir tree he dug a well  
And for the fir tree he left a good horse:

Whoever passes by the imperial road,  
If he is tired, let him rest  
If he is young a likes to embellish himself  
Let him cut the rose  
And who is thirsty,  
There is the well, let him drink  
Who is worthy of the good horse  
Let him have it and ride it on the imperial  
road –  
All these for the health of Ivo from Senj  
And for the sake of his nephew's soul.

Dig me a grave near Saint John,  
Put in it my cloak,  
Put on it my sinful body.  
Only my right arm leave outside,  
Bind my black horse for it.  
Let the horse cry for me lest my darling  
won't.  
Dig a well of water in front of my grave,

<p style="text-align: center;"><i>za dušu spomene.</i></p> <p><b><i>Sadite mi rože oko groba moga,</i></b>  <i>doj mi putem pojde, rožicu otrgne,</i>  <i>za dušu spomene.</i></p> <p><b><i>Delajte mi klupu oko groba moga,</i></b>  <i>doj mi putem pojde, za klupčicu sedne,</i>  <i>za dušu spomene.”</i></p> <p style="text-align: right;">[Delorko 1973]</p>	<p>Whoever passes by on the road, let him drink and think of my soul. Plant roses around my grave, Whoever passes by on the road, let him cut the rose and think of my soul. Make a bench around my grave, Whoever passes by on the road, let him sit on the bench and think of my soul.</p>
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Although the difference between a bachelor's and a warrior's grave is visible only in ritual offerings to the dead, their epic images have quite different connotations. In case of the duke Kaica, for example, this difference is most easily noticeable:

<p><i>sa sabljama sanduk otesaše.</i></p> <p><i>saraniše vojvodu Kaiiu,</i></p> <p><b><i>čelo glave koplje udariše,</i></b></p> <p><b><i>na koplje mu sokola metnuše,</i></b></p> <p><b><i>za koplje mu konja privezaše,</i></b></p> <p><b><i>po grobu mu oružje prostreše;</i></b>  <i>od Madžara unku načiniše,</i>  <i>obgradiše groba Kaičina,</i>  <i>da mu mrtvu ne pretresu telo</i></p> <p style="text-align: right;">[Vuk II, 81:244-253]          “Smrt vojvode Kajice”</p>	<p>They cut the casket with swords They buried the duke Kaica They left his spear above his head, On the spear, they left his falcon, For the spear they tied his horse, Over his grave they spread his weapons; They made a hummock of Hungarians, They fenced in the Kaica's grave To protect his body from thieves. “Death of duke Kaica”</p>
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Similar sepulchral gifts, but without a grave, are left for the dead Jugovics, the warriors killed in the Kosovo battle 1389 and left in the battlefield unburied (“Smrt majke Jugovica” / The Death of Jugovic Mother, Vuk II, 48):

<p><i>Mrtvi nađe devet Jugovića</i></p> <p><i>I desetog star-Juga Bogdana,</i></p> <p><b><i>I više nji devet bojni koplja,</i></b></p> <p><b><i>Na kopljima devet sokolova,</i></b></p> <p><b><i>Oko koplja devet dobri konja,</i></b>  <i>A pored nji devet ljuti lava.</i> [15-20].</p>	<p>She found them dead, all the nine Jugovics And with them the tenth, the Old Jugovic Bogdan, And above them nine piercing lances, And on the lances she found nine falcons, Around the lances were bound nine good horses, And behind them stood nine fierce lions [=hounds].</p>
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The dislocation of the system begins when the Jugovic mother leaves her dearest dead in the battlefield and takes all the sepulchral gifts with her – the knightly animals and weapons. The elder (maybe even the eldest) layers of the customary-ritual practice that served as material for this poem, with one of the most touching and strongest poetic images in the whole Serbo-Croatian epics, were

long ago abandoned and forgotten as an epic practice when the variants to this poem were born. In one of them, e.g. in the song about Ivan's mother (SANU III, 46) with the similar attitude towards the sepulchral gifts, even the mother's silent suffering larger than life is condemned as inappropriate and heartless, without any understanding whatsoever for its true poetic role [cf. Cajkanovic 1994/1: 94-109]:<sup>9</sup>

<i>Al' besedi Ivin konj zelenko:</i> "Ja sam konjic, žalim gospodara, A ne žali majka Ivanova!	So speaks the Iva's horse Zelenko: "I am but a horse, and I grieve for my master, And his mother grieves for him not!"
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So, unlike the unburied dead left in the battlefield, the dead in the woods get a rather stylish burials: they are laid down the other way round – facing east (in the cemetery, the dead are facing west, cf. Detelic 1996), and on/around the grave itself, the fruit trees (usually an apple tree<sup>10</sup>), or a rose/pine/vine are planted, some benches are built, and a well of fresh water is dug. Explaining such treatment of graves in the woods, Cajkanovic [1994/5:160-182] points that behind them there had to be an antique custom known as *paulisper assidere*, meaning that "any traveller, passing the holy woods, should stay a little and sit down for some time" [175]. So the recommended short stay beside the grave in the woods, which is interpreted in the poem as a doing "for the soul" of the dead and as redemption of the living, could itself had been a part of the cult of the dead, or a survival of the ancient practice of exposure of the dead (presumably to some demonic being) that could be recognized in traditional healing by exposure "under dittany" [Cajkanovic 1994/2] or some other shady tree.

Judging by where they are planted and under what circumstances, plants on the grave in the woods have themselves to be shady because their purpose is to attach a soul to themselves or to offer the soul as much as possible of advantages it was deprived of when denied the regular burial. Both apple and rose really are plants of binary symbolism: they can grow both in heaven and under the earth, and in both places they serve some special purpose. Apple is the attribute of the Greek goddesses Eris, Aphrodite, and Hero and of Hell, the German goddess of the netherworld; as a mythic tree, an apple grows both in Paradise and at the entrance to the underworld; according to tradition, in Paradise apples grow as a solace for the smallest of the children longing for their mothers. An apple tree can also represent the axis mundi, as in the poem: *Jabuka je nasred raja rasla, / na*

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<sup>9</sup> Cajkanovic here concludes that Jugovic mother had to be a fairy because it is utterly inappropriate for a traditional mother to suffer silently (even if she finally dies of it). This could be corroborated by completely unusual taking the offerings from the dead, which is simply never done. In this case, mother herself poses as a goddess of death, very similar to Valkyrae.

<sup>10</sup> Although it is named distinctively, an apple tree is not a reliable term because on the level of linguistic history and etymology it signifies any fruit of adequate shape [cf. Detelic 2013].

*pakao grane nadnijela* [An apple tree grew in the middle of Paradise / Its branches overreached the Hell - cf. Čajkanović 1994/4; Detelić 2013].

A rose, on the contrary, is a symbol of beauty, love, and death so it unifies all the three categories together. According to Veselovsky, the Slavic name for rose (coming from Latin *Rosa*, ae, f) is connected with the antique custom called *rosalia/rosaria*, which reached Russia through the South Slavs (Serb. *rusalije* – All Souls Day; *rusalke* – spirits of the dead) [cf. Dizdarevic-Krnjevic 1997]. During the early Christianity, rose were often planted on the graves of the first martyrs where it symbolized a resurrection, whereas in the Balkan folklore under a rose, near its roots, an Easter egg should be hidden to ensure a good and fertile year [Мифы 2 s.v. *Роза*; Čajkanović 1994/4: s.v.].



The most recent populist use of this symbolism was in Disney’s film “Snow-white and the seven dwarfs” in the image of the dead Snow-white in the glass casket exposed in the woods: beautiful girl, dead, and loved by many, waiting for her true love with her head on the pillow of roses (of course, her death was only conditional).

Although their roles in formula are different (who is hungry – to eat apples, who is young – to embellish him/herself with a rose), both plants in this context share the same characteristics: they grow “on the border” between the worlds,

their nature is shady and in direct connection with the cult of the dead.<sup>11</sup> There are, however, many more plants and trees of the kind (maple, for example, which is a favourite with Bulgarians; yew tree, basil etc.) never mentioned in the epics in connection with graves, although they are perfect from the standpoint of the cult and rites.<sup>12</sup> So, the choice of apple and rose for the graves of boys and girls should – probably – emphasize the liminal phase within the rite of initiation which, because of the unfortunate track of events, never ends and thus becomes permanent. Behind this unwanted inversion lies an alarming concept of the dead who – after all – are not completely at peace as far as one can speak with them, which is almost an epic routine. Thus the neutral meaning of the term “permanent”, through the elevation, changes into an ominous “eternal”:

<i>Često Lazo na grob izlazio,</i>	Lazo often went to her grave,
<i>Pa je pit'o svoju zaručnicu:</i>	And asked his bride to be:
<i>„Jel' ti, dušo, zemlja doteščala?“</i>	“My darling, is earth too heavy for you?”
<i>Devojka mu mrtva odgovara:</i>	And the dead girl answers him:
<i>„Nije meni zemlja doteščala,</i>	“It is not earth that is heavy to me,
<i>„Već je teška materina kletva.“</i>	But my mother’s curse.”
[Vuk II, 7:151-156]	
<i>Svako ga je jutro oblazila:</i>	She visited him every morning:
<i>„Sine Konda, jel' ti zemlja teška?</i>	“My son, Konda, is earth heavy for you?
<i>Il' su teške daske javorove?“</i>	Or are the maple planks too heavy?”
<i>Progovara Konda iz zemljice:</i>	And Konda answers from under the earth:
<i>„Nije meni, majko, zemlja teška,</i>	“It is not earth, mother, that is heavy for me,
<i>Nit' su teške daske javorove,</i>	Neither earth nor the maple planks,
<i>Već su teške kletve devojačke:</i>	But maidens curses are too heavy for me:
<i>Kad uzdišu, do Boga se čuje;</i>	When they sigh, even God hears them;
<i>Kad zakunu, sva se zemlja trese;</i>	When they curse, all the earth trembles;
<i>Kad zaplaču, i Bogu je žao!“</i>	When they cry, even God feels sorry.
[Vuk I, 368]	

Contrary to this, vine on the grave in the woods<sup>13</sup> does not appear regularly in the epics. The example with Maleta the brigand is exceptional because the actual making of wedding graveyards are rarely described at all. Usually, there is only a verse or two, like: *svaki se je svoga privatno / I u ladan grob ga položio*

<sup>11</sup> For multiform functions of rose cf. Dizdarević-Krnjević 1997; Karanović 2010; for apple Čajkanović 1994/4, s.v.; Detelic 2013.

<sup>12</sup> According to Serbian legends, basil shot up on the grave of the emperor Uros, even on the grave of Jesus; or it was made of tears of St. Sava the Serbian [Čajkanović 1994/5:171].

<sup>13</sup> In epic poems it, actually, has not to be just vine (Serb. loza): any liana or wall creeper could do – ivy or wild grape that sprouts freely anywhere. It is, however, supposed that the word is about the vine because it has always been considered shady and holy, so no other plant could take its place in pointing the grave of a saint or of a person tragically killed in the woods.



(They each took his own dead / And in cold grave put him [MX VIII,20]); *pak ih lepo pokopasmo ondi / devojku i momka poreda / a svatove pod jele zelene* (So we buried them there nicely / the girl and the boy together / and the wedding guests under the green fir trees [ER 157]) etc. The aberration of this pattern is not motivated by needs of the epic poetics which would appreciate quite a different treatment of vine on the grave: it should sprout by itself from the bodies of tragic lovers or from a martyr (usually a maiden or a wife), as in the poem “Bog nikom dužan ne ostaje” (God never spares anyone – Vuk II, 5) where from the body of the righteous sister (after the plants that grow from the places where her limbs were fallen) finally a church materializes:

<i>Na Momiru zelen bor nikao,</i>	On Momir a green pine tree appeared
<i>Na Grozdani vinova lozica,</i>	And on Grozdana the vine:
<i>Savila se loza oko bora,</i>	The vine bound around the pine
<i>K'o sestrina oko brata ruka.</i>	As a sister's arm around a brother
[«Nahod Momir» Vuk II, 30:91-94] <sup>14</sup>	“Momir the foundling”
<i>De je od nje kaplja krvi pala,</i>	Where a drop of blood fell off her,
<i>Onđe raste smilje i bosilje;</i>	There immortelle and basil grew;
<i>De je ona sama sobom pala,</i>	Where she herself fell down,
<i>Onđe se je crkva sagradila.</i>	There a church itself was built
[„Bog nikom dužan ne ostaje“ Vuk II,	“God never spares anyone”
5:87-90]	

In that way the very important task of manifestation of the God's miracles on the Earth is fulfilled, which is one of the epic's constant features (cf. «Bog nikome dužan ne ostaje» / God never spares anyone SANU II, 4; MH I, 41-43; «Đakon Stefan i dva anđela» / Deacon Stevan and two angels Vuk II, 3; MH I, 6; «Kumovanje Grčića Manojla» / Godfathering of Manojlo the Greek Vuk II, 6; SANU II, 5 etc. [see also Bakotić 1937]). If it is planted on purpose, as it is a case with Maleta the brigand, this choice is motivated by its numerous and significant

<sup>14</sup> Such examples are many: in love songs collected by Nikola Begovic ( *Tu dva groba naporeda biše: / Iz junaka javor drvo raste, / Iz đevojke vinova lozica. / Lozica se oko bora vila, / Kao svila oko grude smilja. / Oko njih mi šance iskopaše, / I u šance vodu navedoše; / Oko groba klupe sagradiše, / Oko klupa voće posadiše. / Ko je žedan neka se napije, / Ko je gladan neka voće ije, / Ko je trudan neka odpočiva, / Nek spomene krvave svatove* [Begović 1885]. Especially interesting is the following example from Bulgaria: *Насяха лози на гроба, / на гроба, на Николова, / на гроба, на Маламкина. / Мина се малко, не много, / мина се до три години. / Расли лозите, порасли, / че се през черква изплели, / тогаз са грозде родили. / Тогава са се сетили, / гробове да си одровят, / кокали да им съберат. / Де заровиха Никола, / там не најдоха Никола, / Никола го в гроба няма; / като Маламка одровиха / и двама в гроба лежаха. / Горна Оряховица* [СБНУ 26, № 254].

connotations. First of all, it is a symbol of life and survival of the species (“loza mu se ugasila” - may his lineage<sup>15</sup> drop dead/cut off/die away/vanish), and thus the symbol of fertility; it is a custom to put it on flames on the grave of those who died “without a candle” (in darkness); it is carved and painted on tombstones etc. [Древности 1(1995): s.v. *Виноград*]. In folklore, vine is not just a shady, but also a holy plant avoided by vampires and werewolves (so it is a good shelter against them). On the fire built with vines saints are burnt (st. Sava and st. Andrija/Andrew): “When st. Sava was put to flames, his relics could not burn on the common wood fire, but vine had to be cut from the vineyards and only then they succeeded to burn him out” [Corovic 1927]; st. Andrew, before he was reborn, burnt his own self on the fire lit by vines as a redemption for the sin of mixing vine with water [Čajkanović 1927: no. 166; cf. Matičetov 1971].

It is clear, finally, that all the three plants – apple, rose, and vine – are planted on the graves not only because they are connected with the cult of the dead, but also because they are ambivalent and thus represent for the dead both an offering and a promise of eternal peace and serenity. In that context, the edible fruits and vicinity of water guarantee a seasonal renewal of offering rites in place where the presence of friends and family is not easy (if not impossible) to obtain. Fir trees, though, fulfil the same promise in quite a different way.

Whether they appear on the grave of young people (two boys or a man and a woman) or they stand as a metaphor for the living youngsters (especially if there is a need to stress something exceptional in their looks or their destiny) – pine and fir tree are always a direct substitute for a human:

MRTVI	DEAD
<i>Dv'je grobnice ovdje iskopajte,</i>	Two graves you dig here,
<i>Jednu meni, drugu bratu momu,</i>	One for me, one for my brother,
<i>Pa nas, braćo, l'jepo sahranite.</i>	And bury us, brothers, nicely,
<b><i>Dva zelena bora usadite,</i></b>	Two green pines plant here,
<i>Medju njima spomen podignite</i>	Between them put the tombstone
<i>I na njemu ovo napišite:</i>	And write this upon it:
<i>„Ovdi leže dva brata rođena,</i>	“Here lie two sibling brothers,
<i>Po imenu mali Marijane</i>	By the names of little Marijan
<i>I bratac mu arambaša Ivo.</i>	And his brother arambaša Ivo.
[MH I, 48: 473-481]	

<sup>15</sup> Loza in Serbian has both meanings: a plant and a lineage of anything living (both animals and humans).

ŽIVI	LIVING
<i>Dva su bora naporedo rasla,</i>	Two pines grew together
<i>Među njima tankovrha jela;</i>	And between them thin topped for tree;
<i>To ne bila dva bora zelena,</i>	Those were not two green pines
<i>Ni međ' njima tankovrha jela,</i>	Neither with them a thin topped fir tree,
<i>Već to bila dva brata rođena:</i>	But those were two brothers
<i>Jedno Pavle, a drugo Radule,</i>	First one Pavle, the other Radule,
<i>Među njima sestrica Jelica.</i>	And between them their sister Jelica.
[Vuk II, 5: 1-7]	

In folklore, pine is considered a shady and holy tree. Cajkanovic is of opinion that it can also get divine and kingly attributes, especially in connection with some exquisite, old, and tabooed examples – e.g. the pine of king Milutin, of the emperor Uros, of the empress Milica etc. [1994/4, 34-36]. The same author also thinks that euphemistic curses like “bora mi” (by pine)<sup>16</sup> or “gloga mi” (by hawtorn) actually preserve the ancient times knowledge when pine and hawthorn were equal with “god” in the same type of phrases (“boga mi”). In that case, the origin of those phrases/formulas should be looked for in popular believes that gods and demons (all kinds of numina) permanently or temporarily dwell in trees (e.g. the antique Daphne in laurels, and later the fairies and spirits of the dead in other kinds of trees, etc.). The example could easily be found in one of the wedding songs from the 19<sup>th</sup> century [antology by Jovan Cvetkovic 1890-1894]:

<i>Boga moli mlado momče</i>	A young fellow prays to God:
<i>„Daj mi Bože zlatne nože</i>	“Oh, God, give me golden knives
<i>„I srebrne parokčiče</i>	And silver horns,
<i>„Da probodem boru koru</i>	Let me cut through pine’s bark
<i>„Da ja vidim šta j’u boru.</i>	And see what is in the pine.”
<i>Bog mu dade zlatne nože</i>	God gave him the golden knives
<i>I srebrne parokčiče</i>	And the silver horns
<i>Te probode boru koru</i>	So he cut through the pine’s bark
<i>Te on vide šta j’u boru</i>	And he saw what was there in the pine
<i>Kad u boru mlada moma</i>	And there was a young maiden in the pine
(ASANU Etn zb. 1-1-52).	

So, pine on the grave served at the same time as a tombstone, a binder for the soul, a permanent replacement for the dead, and his/hers deified shade. A fir tree in that context figures as a feminine variant of the same thing, as it usually is a custom to compare a girl with a fir tree “slim and tall” in both epic and lyric (ritual

<sup>16</sup> In Serb. the difference is in one vowel: bor (pine) and bog (god). Same as in Eng. “by gosh”. The same similarity in sound goes also for the next example – gloga mi (glog – bog).

or love) songs. It should also be mentioned that the caskets - the last mansions of the dead both in the woods and in the regular cemetery - are usually made of fir or of maple wood.

There is a great number of shady trees and plants in folklore: acacia is a “bad tree”; elm, ash, poplar, and wild fruit trees, together with nuts, belong to demons; beech, as well as iris, peony, Virgin grass (*bogorodicina trava*) and a very long list of plants are good for spells and healings, etc. [cf. Cajkanovic 1994/4]. What influenced the epic choice of these particular five (apple, rose, vine, pine, and fir) can only be guessed at. One of the reasons could have been the antiquity of beliefs connected with those plants, permanently present in traditions of many nations from ancient times till today. This argument holds in the epic optics too, because any appearance of those plants in the epics has its own, stable formula: *ko je gladan (neka jede)* [who is hungry, let him eat], *ko je mlađan (nek se kiti)* [who is young, let him spruce him/herself], *dva su [zelena] bora (rasla)* [two green pines grew together], *savila se loza oko bora* [the vine grew around the pine] etc. together with others connected with the bench and water unit, belonging to topos of the holy woods/grove.

At this particular moment it is difficult to differ the aim from the means of translation of the holiness in connection with the digging of the grave in the woods: are the holy woods/groves good for burials because they were deified by the divine presence, or are the graves what makes the place numinous – because of the care the living showed towards them. In both cases, the combinations of plants – of which some are upright and with their roots connect the dead with the treetops in the heavens, and some are creeping and interlacing around the others – testifies more about the dynamics and movement than about a static interruption of life. Contrary to this, a bench on the side of a grave implicates the end of motion, the adoration by sitting down (*paulisper assidere*), and thus brings the balance to the structure of the *daemon loci*. To this structure, each and every one of the elements contributed something of its own:

- a ball-shaped fruit (apple) – association with celestial bodies, bolts, and thunders (*Munja groma nadigrala / Dvjema-trima jabukama / I četirma narančama* [The Bolt outplayed the Thunder / With two or three apples / And with four oranges] - Vuk I, 235);

- vines – its ancient connections with souls and metempsychosis (*Srdita devojčica* [A wrathful girl] / *Srdito bežala* [Wrathfully ran] / *Uz lojze zeleno*: [By the green vines:] / „*Bože, mili bože*, [’Oh, my dear God] / *Pretvori me, bože*, [Change me, dear God,] / *Đižu belo grojze!*“ [Into a white vine!] / *Momče po nju trči* [A boy ran after her] / *I bogu se moli*: [And prays to God:] / „*Pretvori me, bože*, [“Change me, dear God,] / *Pile kosovile* [Into a mocking bird] / *Da*

*pozobem, bože*, [And let me peck, oh God,] / *Đižu belo grojze!*“ [The white vine!”]– Koželjac, no. 37);

- rose – its connection with blood and knowledge/keeping of secrets (sub rosa), as well as the ability to creep high over surfaces ( *Ružo Sovijanće*, [O Rose, Creeping Rose,] / *Ti visoko rasteš*, [You grow high,] / *Ti daleko vidiš*. [You see far.] / *Dole Smederevo*, [Down there is Smederevo,] / *Dole mi je vojno*, [Down there is my husband,] / *Kaži mu da dojde*. [Tell him to come back.] / *Sve mu je propalo*: [Everything goes apart:] / *Seno nekošeno*, [Grass is not reaped,] / *Lozje neobrano*, [Vines are not picked,] / *Ljube neljubeno*. [Wife is not kissed.] - Đul devojče, no.160);

- fir and pine – their direct connection with the idea of axis mundi, as well as the ancient capacity of marcation, putting a sign on an important place (, *U visoku Bišćansku planinu*, [In the high mountain of Bisce] / „*Đeno ima suhvrha jela*, [Where there is a high fir tree] / „*I pod jelom jedan bijel kamen*, [And under that tree a white stone] / „*Kod kamena jedna voda ladna*, [And by that stone a cold, running water] / „*Tu ćeš mene naći, pobratime*, [There you will find me, my blood brother] / „*Sa mnom hoćeš svu družinu moju* [And all my company with me] - Vuk III,42, 19-24);

- water – the ambiguity of an element which is, at the same time, not only a means of cleansing of the dead (libations) but also a way to protect the living from them, both the source of life and the borderline the dead can never cross.

So, in more ways than one, an epic grave in the woods is – so to say – a multilayer topos, every element of which is most carefully selected. It is not a mandatory procedure with those who die in the woods (or in the battlefield), but a gift to the dear departed, a sign of the last and the greatest mercy. That said, the most interesting find of this analysis is the complete absence of this motive in the Muslim epic songs. They too sing of warriors who fight and die in the woods/ mountains, but Muslim singers never leave anybody in the woods:

<p><i>Tude malog Mehmedagu najde,</i>  <i>Gje on leži pod zelenom jelom,</i>  <i>Jer su Mehu rane osvojile,</i></p>	<p>There he found the small Mehmedaga,          Lying down under a green fir tree,          Because the wounds took over Meho</p>
.....	
<p><b><i>Mujo njega diže na zekana,</i></b>  <i>Dodade mu u ruke kajase,</i>          [EH 7: 1189-1205]</p>	<p>Mujo got him on the horse,          Put the reins in his hands</p>

*Ali ranjen razgovara Mujo:  
»Od te kajde ne imade fajde,  
Ovako je od Boga suđeno,  
Meni vakat umrijeti dođe.  
Vi hajdete bijeloj Kladuši,  
Povedite Mijat harambašu,  
Bacite ga na dno u tavnicu.  
Mrku ćete noćcu prenoćiti,  
Pokupite mlade Kladušane,  
Vodite ih u Kunar-planinu,  
Onda ćete mene ukopati,  
U planini turbe namjestiti.«*

[KH II, 48: 161-172]

***Udariše poljem zelenijem,**  
Halaknuše, Boga spomenuše,  
A za oštro gvožđe prihvatiše.*

.....  
*Tu šehite svoje pokopaše,  
Mezare im glavam' okitiše,  
Ranjenike svoje poniješe,  
Na dva koplja četiri junaka*  
[KH I, 23:776-779]

*Vrlo su me rane savladale,  
Sjaši, brate, đogu velikoga,  
Pa se svrati s puta u planinu,  
Nakreši mi jelove četine,  
Pa mi prostri pod jelom zelenom,  
A pokrij me divan-kabanicom,  
Prinabij mi moje puške male,  
Obe puške metni kod meneka;  
A ti hajde na grad na Udbinu,*

.....  
*Kada na grad na Udbinu dođeš,*

.....  
*Svedi doru do čardaka moga,  
Podaj konja mojoj staroj majci,  
Pa mi kaži na odžaku majci,  
Nek prodaje sinova dorata,  
Neka sebe na odžaku hrani;  
A kaži mi sestri jedinici,*

But wounded Mujo said:  
“There is no purpose in this doing,  
God had it for me in his hand,  
My dying hour is here.  
You go to the white Kladusa,  
Take Mijat arambasa with you,  
Put him to the bottom of the dungeon.  
When the black night is over,  
Gather young Kladusa men together,  
Take them to the Kunar mountain,  
And there you will bury me  
In the mountain, with my turbeh.”  
(the hero is still alive and fairies later  
save him, so he does not get buried in the  
woods)

They went through the green field,  
They yelled, mentioning God,  
And held their sabres and swords

.....  
There, they buried their dead,  
They ornated tombstones with heads,  
They took their wounded,  
On two spears – four warriors

My wounds have overcome me,  
Dismount, brother, your big horse,  
Leave the road, go to the mountain,  
Cut the fir branches for me,  
And make me lie there under green fir.  
Cover me with my robe,  
Gove me my little guns,  
Both of them as near as possible;  
And you go to town of Udbina

.....  
And when you come to the town of Udbina

.....  
Take my horse down to my castle,  
Take him to my mother,  
And tell my mother in my castle  
To sell her son's horse,  
To sell him and support herself;  
And to my only sister you will tell

<p><i>Nek s'udaje, a mene ne čeka,</i>  <i>Mene nikad dočekati ne će.</i>“                  [majka i sestra pronađu junaka, odvedu                  ga kući i neguju do ozdravljenja]                  [MH III, 15:445-466]</p>	<p>To marry, not to wait for me                  Cause I will never come back again.”                  (mother and sister go to the mountain and                  find the hero, take him home and nurse                  him to his full health)</p>
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The very fact that protagonists go back to fetch their dead and wounded, although those insisted on being left at the place they went down, testifies about the relatively recent origins of Muslim epic singing in the Balkans. Only once, depicting the death of Lika Mustaj-bey, the Muslim singer leaves the murdered bey in the mountain where he died, but even then it is only for a time being. The accents, of course, are not on the place of death, but on the poor character of the killer (a goat-herd) because the very idea of a better warrior than Lika was outrageous and unimaginable. When time comes, he is taken from the mountain and buried in a better place.

This should not be understood as a complete absence of burials in the place of death – this motive is very well known and very frequent in Muslim epics:

<p><i>A šehite svoje pokopaše,</i>  <i>Pokopaše, gdje i poginuše.</i> [na polju                  Brestovcu]                  [KH II,65: 1009-1010]</p>	<p>And they buried their dead,                  On the spot where they died [in the                  Brestovac field]</p>
<p><i>te sve svoje mrtve pokopaše,</i> [u polje                  Markovo]  <i>ranjenike svoje poniješe</i>                  [KH III,2:929-930; 1774-1775]</p>	<p>And all their dead they buried [in the                  Markovo field]                  And their wounded they took with them</p>
<p><i>Pokopaše po polju šehite,</i>  <i>Ranjenicim sala napraviše</i>                  [EH 9:1122-1123]</p>	<p>They buried the dead in the field,                  And made stretches for the wounded</p>
<p><i>Jedni ljudi grobove kopahu,</i>  <i>Pokraj puta kopaju svatove,</i>  <i>Pokopaše tri stotine svata,</i>  <i>Ranjenike u grad opraviše.</i>                  [KH II, 74:556-559]</p>	<p>Some were digging graves,                  By the road they dug the wedding guests,                  They buried 300 wedding guests,                  And wounded they took to the town</p>
<p><i>Ranjenike Turke iskupiše,</i>  <i>A šehite ondje pokopaše</i> [u lužini, pod                  kulom]                  [KH III, 2:838-839]</p>	<p>They took the wounded Turks,                  And the dead they buried on the spot [in                  the cops, under the fortress]</p>

It even has its own stable formula: *i šehite/lešine/mrtv(ac)e pokopaše* [they buried their dead] (KH I,21, 23, 26, 27; KH II, 53, 54, 57, 59, 74; KH III, 3, 10; MH III, 9, 12, 17; MH IV, 29, 33, 37, 41, 43, 45). In the Christian epics this phrase is doubled by the usual report on death by a human hand, whether it was in context of pillage (of bride's gifts, of wedding guests, of merchants, caravans etc.), or of clash of arms.

The Muslim songs, not less than Christian, recognise also a motive of wedding cemeteries, but their attitude towards them is quite different. The best example could be found in the "Zenidba Ahmet-bega Vezirovica" (The Wedding of Ahmet-bey Vezirovic" KH II, 61) where the difference between the woods/mountain and the field is maximally stressed:

<p><i>Sedam su je puta provodili</i>  <b>Pod Bakonju, zelenu planinu,</b>  <i>Na široko polje Zlatarevo,</i>  <i>A studenom vrelu Šarganovu,</i>  <i>Tu imade sedam mezarova,</i>  <i>Djevojačkih sedam mušterija,</i>  <i>Sve nesretne đuzel-đuvegije,</i>  <i>Sve su oni tuden izginuli,</i>  <i>A najposl'je Derviš begoviću,</i>  <i>Nije takog u sandžaku bilo</i>  <i>Tu su begu turbe načinili,</i>  <i>Viš' glave mu ružu usadili,</i>  <i>Ispod noga kajnak mu izvire.</i>  <b>Kad pogledaš poljem Zlatarevim,</b>  <b>Rekao bi, plugom je orato.</b>  <i>Nije pusto plugom podorato,</i>  <b>Već sve taze grobljem potkopato,</b>  <i>A Bakonja, zelena planina,</i>  <b>Rekao bi, sn'jegom je posuta;</b>  <i>Nije, brate, snijegom posuto,</i>  <b>Već se b'jele mnoge kosti tude,</b>  <b>Mnoge kosti konjske i insanske,</b>  <b>Sve nesretne Zlatije svatova.</b> [168-190]</p>	<p>They went with her for seven times  Under the Bakonja, the high mountain,  To the wide open field Zlatarevo,  To the cold water spring Sarganovo.  There are seven graves there,  Seven maiden's proposers,  All unfortunate bridegrooms,  Who were all killed there,  And the last of them Dedrviš begovic  Who was one and only in the whole sandzak.  They made a turbeh for bey,  Above his head they planted a rose,  Under his legs the water springs.  If you look along the field of Zlatarevo,  You should think it was ploughed.  It was not ploughed  But covered with new graves,  And Bakonja, the green mountain,  You should think it is covered with snow;  No, my brother, it is not the snow  But plenty of white bones,  White bones human and of the good horses,  Of the unfortunate Zlatija's wedding guests</p>
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Turbeh,<sup>17</sup> rose (by his head), and water (by his feet) are recognisable elements of an epic grave in the waste land, but in the Muslim variant it is a field – not a mountain or forest – and it is not a solitary grave but an extremely luxurious specimen within a densely populated cemetery of guests of a wedding party. What is left unburied in the woods, as well as in the battlefield, are the bones “of horses

<sup>17</sup> Turkish/islamic tombstone.



and men”, exactly those which in Christian epics serve as material for building a fairy town/fortress:

<p><i>Grad gradila prebijela vila Ni na nebo ni na zemlju crnu, No od jele do zelene jele, Ne gradi ga klakom i kamenjem, No bijelom kosti od junaka, Od junaka i od konja vrana, Evo joj je preminula građa Do pendžera i prvog tavana. Tad se vila na nevolji nađe, Te mi piše listak knjige tanke U Perastu Baju Pivljaninu:</i></p>	<p>A white fairy built a city Not in clouds, not on the black earth, But from one fir tree to another. She does not build it with mortar and stone, But with the white human bones, Bones of men and of the black horses. Now she spent all material she had But built the city only up to windows of first floor In order to solve this problem, She writes a thin letter To Bajo Pivljanin in Perast:</p>
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<p>..... “Premanjka mi kosti junačkije. “No okupi tvoju četu, Bajo, “Ajde s njima u planinu, pobre, “Ne bi li ti Bog i sreća dala, “Da bi mene nabavio građe.” Kada Baju sitna knjiga dođe, I kad vide što mu sitna piše, Onu čita, brže drugu piše, Odasla je u planini vili: “Čuješ li me, posestrimo vilo, “Ne mogu ti nabaviti građe, “Nego ćeš me malo pričekati “Do vesela danka Đurđevoga, “Kad se gora izodije listom, “A rudina travom i cvijetom, “Kad okopni snijeg u vrhove, “Kad presahne voda u lugove, “Ženiće se Ale od Novoga, “S milom čercom paše od Čengića, “Tadar ću ti građe nabaviti.”</p> <p>[Vuk VII, 47:1-36; slično i SANU II, 59 the builder is Filip the Hungarian]</p>	<p>..... “I spent all bones of men. But take your company, Baja, And go to the mountains with them, my brother, May God and Fortune bless you To collect some material for me.” When Baja received the thin letter, And when he saw what was written in it, He read it and instantly replied And sent his letter to the fairy in the woods: “Do you hear me, my sister fairy, I cannot get you any material But you will have to wait a little Till the merry day of st. George When the woods will be in leaves And fields in grass and bloom, When snows melt on mountaintops, When water dries off the groves, Then Ale from Novi will be getting married With the dear daughter of the pasa Cengic, Then I will collect you material you wish.</p>
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Thus, the analogies emerge where the least expected, and numen “enters through the narrow door” even if its presence was permanently and skillfully avoided. This could, probably, explain why the dead are not buried in the woods throughout the Muslim songs: it is not about their cultic impurity (it stays the same in the field as in the woods), but in the fear of dangerous and dreadful place with

which the Islamic tradition and culture in the Balkans did not have any correspondences. "In the Balkans" is a very important location here because the Balkan Muslims are not a unified ethnicity of similar individuals, but a conglomerate of nations, traditions, and cultures conjoint by the same religion. They are mutually different by their ways of life, by cultural paradigms, by political geography etc. In the Balkans, the Muslim epic singers by the greatest percentage come from the converts (Christian to Muslim), people who – together with the new religion – also adopted a new attitude towards the close and open space. The socio-political relationship between the Turks/Muslims and the *raya*/Christians was reencoded in the epics as a relationship between the open-space-(gora)-protective/Christian and the close-space-(town)-offensive/Turkish. Because of that, *gora* cannot be anything else for the Muslim singers but a battlefield, i.e. not a place for burials but for leaving without looking back [cf. Detelic 1992].

It is interesting, though, that it took only 2 or 3 centuries to lose this important relationship with the *gora*/woods, i.e. the time between the arrival of Ottomans (in 15<sup>th</sup> century) and the first tides of converting (not before 17<sup>th</sup> century). Muslim convert singers of epic songs with a solid repertoire emerge only that late in history, and by that time the idea of Muslim graves in the woods was completely extinguished.

## CORPUS AND ABBREVIATIONS

Vuk I: *Српске народне пјесме*, скупио их и на свијет издао Вук Стеф. Караџић, *Књига прва у којој су различне женске пјесме*, у Бечу, у штампарији јерменскога манастира, 1841, Сабрана дела Вука Караџића, књига четврта, приредио Владан Недић, Просвета, Београд, 1975.

Vuk II-IV : *Сабрана дела Вука Караџића, Српске народне пјесме*, издање о стогодишњици смрти Вука Стефановића Караџића 1864-1964 и двестогодишњици његова рођења 1787-1987, Просвета, Београд, 1986-1988.

Vuk VI-IX : *Српске народне пјесме* 1 - 9, скупио их Вук Стеф. Караџић, државно издање, Београд, 1899-1902..

SANU II-IV : *Српске народне пјесме из необјављених рукописа Вука Стеф. Караџића*, Српска академија наука и уметности, Одељење језика и књижевности, Београд, 1974.

SM : Сима Милутиновић Сарајлија, *Пјеванија црногорска и херцеговачка*, приредио Добрило Аранитовић, Никшић, 1990. [*Пјеванија црногорска и херцеговачка, сабрана Чубром Чојковићем Црногорцем. Па њим издана истим, у Лајпцигу, 1837.*]

- MH I-IX : *Hrvatske narodne pjesme*, skupila i izdala Matica hrvatska. Odio prvi. Junačke pjesme, Zagreb, 1890-1940.
- KH I - III : *Narodne pjesme muslimana u Bosni i Hercegovini*, sabrao Kosta Hörmann 1888-1889, knj. I-II, drugo izdanje, Sarajevo, 1933.
- Narodne pjesme muslimana u Bosni i Hercegovini*, Iz rukopisne ostavštine Koste Hörmanna, redakcija, uvod i komentari Đenana Buturović, Sarajevo, 1966. (KH III)
- EH : *Muslimanske narodne junačke pjesme*, sakupio Esad Hadžiomerspahić, u Banjoj Luci, 1909.
- ER : *Erlangenski rukopis*, novo čitanje na adresi <http://www.branatomic.com/erl/> Begović : Никола Беговић, *Српске народне пјесме из Луке и Баније*, које је сакупио за штампу Никола Беговић, у Загребу, 1885.
- Koželjac: Љубиша Рајковић Кожељац, *Јато голубато. Лирске народне песме из источне Србије*, Зајечар, 1991.
- Đul devojče: *Ђул девојче. Лирске народне песме из белопаланачког краја*, група аутора, Ниш, 1979.
- СБНУ: *Сборник за народни умотворения наука и книжнина*, от. кн. 27. *Сборник за народни умотворения и народопис*, МНП (от кн. XIX изд. Българското книжовно дружество, а от кн. XXVII – БАН), София, 1889.
- Miladinovci: Братя Миладиновци Димитрия и Константин, *Български народни пѣсни*, собрани одъ – – –, и издани одъ Константина, Загреб 1861. Доступно на: <http://litternet.bg/folklor/sbornici/miladinovci/index.htm>.

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