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## THE ROLES OF WOMEN IN THE LEXICON OF THE ALBANIAN “CODE OF SKANDERBEG” (*KANUNI I SKANDERBEGUT*)

**Abstract.** A lexical analysis of the so-called *Kanuni i Skanderbegut*, an Albanian collection of customary laws, provides an insight to understand women’s social role in traditional communities living in the northern area of Albania. In the use of specific terminology one can notice a clear separation between the two sexes which is reflected in the distribution of roles and in using a structured terminology that designates not only roles and conditions, but also other aspects of social life.

*Keywords:* Ethnolinguistics, Sociolinguistics, Anthropology, Balkan studies.

### 1. Introduction

The Albanian word *kanun* which traces back to the Byzantine Greek κανών “rule, measure”<sup>1</sup> through Turkish mediation, is a common term to define the customary laws of Albania, which regulated both the public and the private life of the communities living in specific parts of Albania, especially in the so-called Northern Alps. The norms were passed on from generation to generation via oral tradition and were decreed by the council of elders.

The best known code was the so-called “Kanun of Lekë Dukagjini” put into writing for the first time by the Franciscan priest Shtjefën Gjeçovi (1874–1929) born in Janjeva south of Prishtina in Kosovo. The first study published as late as 1933 was made by the folklorist Shtjefën Gjeçov. Under the regime of Enver Hoxha, the “Kanuns” were banned in Albania, but after 1991 the power vacuum led to the resurgence of traditional *Kanun*-law not only in the North, but also in other parts of the country. The customary laws were mostly re-interpreted to “justify” private blood revenge in a new

context which had nothing to do with the model of traditional society in which these norms were once developed<sup>2</sup>.

## **2. The *Kanuni i Skanderbegut***

A collection of customary laws called the *Kanuni i Skanderbegut*<sup>3</sup> was undertaken by the Catholic priest, Frano Ilia, in the 1930s. As with Lek Dukagjini's Kanun, the name of the famous historical figure Skanderbeg has no connection with this collection of traditional law<sup>4</sup>. Ilia in fact wanted to title the volume *Zakoni i Kurbin* "The traditions of Kurbin", since this was the area where he had gathered most of his material; however, he preferred to name the customary law collection after Skanderbeg, to show that his documentation came from areas of central Albania which had once belonged to the Kastrioti family. The attribution to Skanderbeg of a specific Kanun is also recorded in 1862 by the Austrian researcher Johann von Hahn who mentioned a Kanun of Skanderbeg in the regions of Mat and Dibra. One hundred years later, however, the Albanian anthropologist Kahreman Ulqini did not refer to it<sup>5</sup> in a report of his field research about customary law tradition in Mat. As Donato Martucci rightly observes<sup>6</sup> "Possiamo affermare che quello del Kanun, o dei Kanun, non è un diritto puramente medievale, né Lek Dukagjini o Skanderbeg ne sono gli autori, piuttosto è corretto dire che questo è il prodotto di secoli di storia e, di conseguenza, di tutti i mutamenti che hanno interessato le diverse regioni dell'attuale Albania (in particolare, per quanto riguarda gli ultimi cinquecento anni, l'occupazione turca e l'opera del clero cattolico)"<sup>7</sup>. The material for Skanderbeg's Kanun was collected in some field research carried out by Ilia between 1936 and 1966. In the following year 1967, Don Frano Ilia was arrested and his work could only be published in 1993, after the fall of the communist regime.

## **3. The social structure of the Kurbin area communities**

The text of the *Kanuni i Skanderbegut* is written in the local variety, the northeastern Gheg of Kurbin and Mat, the areas where Frano Ilia collected his material. The lack of coherence, cohesion, and lexical uniformity, as well as many fluctuations in the spelling, reflect a rather hasty text processing<sup>8</sup>. On this linguistic basis, elements of the literary language of Shkodër (north-western Gheg) and, at the lexical and morpho-syntactic level, of standard Albanian appear in a mixed form. The collector probably introduced these

features to avoid using a strictly regional variety. Despite its linguistic hybrid character, the text offers a valuable insight into the strong patriarchal social structure of the Kurbin area communities. It is not surprising, therefore, that in the text of *Kanuni i Skanderbegut* the terms referring to the female sphere are not very frequent, as the social structure is predominantly patrilinear. In such an institutionalized system of male dominance, women are assigned a subordinate position in the society although they have a crucial role in procreation and taking care of domestic work.

#### 4. References to women in the Kanuni i Skanderbegut

In this sections below we will look at explicit references to women in the *Kanuni i Skanderbegut* and within the specific social contexts in which they occur: in their birth family; as brides; as wives and mothers; as transgressors; as widows; and as “sworn virgins.”

##### 4.1. Women in their birth family

We find the first reference to the female role in the first chapter *Familja* “the family” which is divided into 10 sections. The first one is dedicated to the *fis*, a term of Greek origin<sup>9</sup> that refers to the descent in the male line, or to “those who descend from a common progenitor”, the second chapter treats the *gjinia*, a term borrowed from the (Byzantine) Greek γενεά<sup>10</sup> referring to kinship in the female line, or to the “family and *fis* of the married woman”:

KS I, I, II, 65, 22: *Gjinia asht shtëpia e fisi i grues se martueme. Gjinia perfshin: Gruen, prindër e saj dhe rrjedhjen e barkut të tyne, brez mbas brezi sa të mbahet mend.* “*Gjinia* is the family of the married woman. *Gjinia* includes: the woman, her parents and the offspring of their womb, from generation to generation as far as memory goes back”.

KS I, I, II, 70, 22: *Gjinia rrjedhimisht kunetia shkaktojne disa të drejta e pengesa te caktueme prej kanunit.* “The relationship of *gjinia* and, consequently, the cognate relationship, give rise to rights and impediments established by the *Kanun*”.

Kinship terminology in Albanian, like in other Balkan languages<sup>11</sup>, is rich in specific terms to define in a precise manner of the type of family relationship in the male, as well as in the female line. An interesting example in our text is the term *baxhanak* “the sister’s husband”:

KS I, I, II, 69, 22: *Burrat e motrave në mes tyne quhen baxhanakë*. “the sisters’ husbands call themselves *baxhanakë*”.

This form is borrowed from the Turkish *bacanak*<sup>12</sup>, which reflects the various etymological origins of the Albanian lexicon. Another loanword from Turkish is *selem* “advance payment of a product”<sup>13</sup> referring to the goods possessed by the married woman:

KS I, IV, XLVI, 521, 48: *Selemi i grues qe s’len fëmijë, shkon mbas pajës*. “The childless woman’s goods follow the dowry”.

#### 4.2. Women as brides

In the fourth section “Engagement and Marriage” (*Kreu IV, Fejesa e Martesa*), and in the tenth section “Inheritance” (*Kreu X, Trashigimi*), we find other terms connected to the women’s social life and used to define social functions related to age distinctions. The performance of ritual practices marks the woman’s transition from one role to another, allowing her access to the new roles defined by the terminology. When a girl enters puberty she is called with two particular inherited terms of the Albanian lexicon: *vajzë*, a form typical of the standard language, as well as all Albanian varieties, and *cucë*, a form used specifically in the Eastern and Central areas of the Gheg dialect<sup>14</sup>:

KS I, VI, VIII, 721, 60: *Me kenë tue udhtue nuse e cucë, kjo prinë, nusja mbas sajë*. “If a bride and a girl travel together, the girl precedes and the bride follows”.

As a rite of passage, the wedding ceremony changes the status of the *vajzë* “girl” becoming a *nuse* “bride”<sup>15</sup>, which is another inherited term.

KS I, IV, XVI, 268, 33: *Darsma në kanu asht marrja e nuses dhe qitja nuse e vajzës, me krushq darsmor, miq e shokë dhe gosta qe u shtrohet atyne*. “The wedding, according to the Kanun, consists of taking the bride and letting the girl out as a bride with the paranymphs, celebrating with friends and companions and with the banquet which is hosted for the occasion”.

The Kanun also establishes precise rules according to whether the young woman who dies shortly before a Catholic or a Muslim<sup>16</sup> wedding can be called a *nuse* or not. This distinction is important because it bears consequences on the return of the dowry:

KS I, IV, XLVII, 543, 49: *Ma vdekë nusja ditën e darsmes para dreke, veshë a pa veshë nuse, paja i kalon dhandrrit: Asht vajzë. Po vdiq një orë mbas dreke, veshë a pa veshë nuse, paja i mbet prindve të sajë: quhet grue.* “If the bride (*nusja*) dies on her wedding day before dinner, dressed as a bride or not, the dowry passes to the bridegroom: she is a maiden (*vajzë*). If she dies an hour after lunch, dressed as a bride or not, the dowry remains with her parents: she is called a woman (*grue*)”.

KS I, IV, XIII, 249, 32: *Për muhamedanët po vdiq nusja para dreke, kjoft e veshun nuse ase jo, quhet cucë e paja e saj, kthehet dhandrrit. Po vdiq mbas dreke, e veshun nuse ase jo, quhet nuse e paja u mbetet prindve të saj.* “For Muslims, if the bride dies on her wedding day before dinner, dressed as a bride or not, she is considered a girl and her dowry is returned to the bridegroom. If she dies after the wedding dinner, whether she is dressed as a bride or not, she is considered a bride and her dowry remains with her parents”.

5. In *Kanuni i Skanderbegut* and in the other collections of customary law from other areas of Albania (especially the Northern parts), different types of relationships are mentioned, but only the *martesa me kunore* “the marriage with crown” is granted full legitimacy. The expression, which reflects the custom of placing a crown over the heads of the spouses<sup>17</sup>, refers to the religious marriage, which may be celebrated according to both rites, the Catholic one (cf. Article XXXII, *Kunora fetare katolike*), and the Muslim one (Art. XXXIII *Kunora fetare muhamedane*). Unlike the *Kanuni i Lek Dukagjinit*, which reflected the customs of a Catholic population, the *Kanuni i Skanderbegut* was aimed at a mixed religious community of Catholics and Muslims. Therefore, it provided specific articles for both faiths.

KS I, IV, VII, 169: *Burri muhamedan i lidhun me kunor të parë, mundet me marrë grue e gra të tjera, kjoftë kur i lshon e kjoft kur e mban tjetren e të tjerat që ka me kunorë e pa kunorë.* “A Muslim man, married for the first time with a crown, can take another wife or even more, both when he leaves the previous one, and when he has to keep the other wives he married with a crown or without a crown”.

However, the *grueja pa kunore*, i.e. the woman who has not married under the rules of the *Kanun*, is not granted the possibility of being chosen as *zojë e shtëpie* “mistress of the house”:

KS I, IV, XXXVI, 427, 43: *Grueja e pa kunorë, në shtëpi të madhe, nuk zgjidhet zojë shtëpie, ajo qyret kurdoherë si e huej, e panderë dhe e mallkueme.* “The uncrowned woman in a large house is not elected mistress of the house, and she is always considered a stranger, dishonoured and damned”.

The entry of the *nusja e re* “the new bride” into the new house is celebrated with propitiatory rites of luck, prosperity and fertility:

KS I, IV, XXV, 356, 38: *Kur të bajë nusja me kapercye shqimin e deres (prakun) do të kalojë mbi një filxhan me mjaltë. Ajo mjaltë i jepet sa dhandrrit sa nuses. Asht shej urimi: Ju shkoftë ambel moti e jeta. Vende vende nusja do të lyej me mjaltë dyreket e derës, apo prekë një copë bukë, kapercen një sahat apo një gja sermi, dhe të gjithë këto janë sheje urimi për një jetë të lumtun.* “When the bride is about to cross the threshold of the house, she will pass over a cup of honey. This honey is given to the groom and the bride. It is a sign of good wishes: May your life pass as sweet as honey. The bride will anoint the door jamb with honey, or touch a piece of bread, pass over a clock or a silver object and all these are good-luck wishes for a happy life”.

KS I, IV, XXIV, 357, 38: *Mbasi nusja të jetë ulë në karrigë, shkon baba i dhandrrit, ungjë i tij apo një ma i afermi e e zbulon nusen, tue ia çue duvakun syper ballit e mandej gratë ia hjekin fare e atëherë ia venë në prehen djalin e vogel. Si i hjekin djalin prej prehni i opin kafen e kur e ulë filxhanin në tabake, s’thotë asnjë fjalë, por len aty një pare. Ajo tashti asht ba një e shtëpisë, në shtëpi të vet* “After the bride sits down on a chair, the father of the groom, the uncle, or the closest relative unveils her, removing the *duvak* (wedding veil) over her forehead, and then the woman takes it off completely and that is when they put the little boy on her lap. After they take the baby away, they give her coffee and when the bride puts the cup on the tray, she says nothing but puts a coin on the tray. The bride has become one of the family, and she is now at her home”.

### 4.3. Women as wives and mothers

After marriage (*martesa*) the *gruja e martueme*<sup>18</sup> “the married woman” must attend to household chores, be subject to her husband, and behave respectfully and in a reserved manner because:

KS IV, II, II, 1888, 127: *Grueja shqiptare asht ndera e prindve dhe e shtëpisë së burrit të vet.* “The Albanian woman is the honour of her parents and her husband’s family”.

Another step which marks the woman’s social life is the birth of her first child (Article XXXV *Fëmija e parë*). According to the *Kanun*, the *grueja e djergun* “the woman who has just given birth” must follow some prescriptions during her puerperal period:

KS I, IV, XXV, 423, 43: *Grueja e djergun nuk del shtëpie as s’pershëndetet me kend as në shtëpi as jashtë deri që të hyjë nder uratë. Djergunia ngiatë rreth tri javë. Dhe kur grueja e djergun shkon me hy në kishë, do të percillet*

*prej njej grueje a fëmije dhe shkon e mertysun der në sy, dhe shaminë a rizën e ngrenë vetem mbasi t'ijenë ba lutjet në kishë. Kshtu merr fund djergunia.* “The woman who has just given birth does not leave the house, nor does she greet anyone, neither at home nor outside, until she has received the blessing. The puerperium lasts up to three weeks, and when she goes to church, she will be accompanied by a woman or a child and will be covered up to her eyes. The handkerchief or veil will be removed after her prayers are done in the church. Thus, the puerperal period ends”.

As can be seen from the above example, the concept of “new mother” is expressed by the nominal phrase *grueja e djergun* literally “woman lying in (for the childbirth)” formed with the typical Gheg past participle *djergun*, which goes back to an inherited verbal form<sup>19</sup>.

#### 4.4. Women as transgressors

If a wife does not conduct herself properly toward her husband by committing adultery, or stealing, or leaving the marital household, she not only brings dishonour on her family, but she also undermines one of the fundamental values of the traditional society: honour (*nderi*). In these cases, the *Kanun* gives the husband the right to kill his wife to defend his reputation:

KS V, I, IV, 2290, 151: *Fajet per te cilat zakonisht lshohet fisheku janë [...] 6) Per grue qe ik, qe vjedh; 7) Per grue buqë qe gjindet keq, fishekun e lshon kanuni.* “The sins for which the cartridge is generally granted are [...] 6) when the woman runs away, or steals; 7) when the bitch is caught in the act, the cartridge is granted by the Kanun”.

The expression *grueja e pa ndershme* “the dishonorable woman”, which refers to a woman whose behaviour clashes with the sexual morality accepted by the community, is a highly derogatory in tone:

KS VI, III, V, 3396, p. 210: *Grueja e pa ndershme quhet buqë.* “The dishonest woman is called a bitch”.

The two terms, *buqë* and *lojce*, are used when referring to the *grueja e pa ndershme*, the adulterous woman who, according to the harsh law of the *Kanun*, deserves to pay with her life for her bad behaviour:

KS IV, II, II, 1889: *Grueja vritet vetem kur te bahet buqë ase gjindet keq. Në këte rasë fishekun e lëshon vetë kanuni në shpinëtë sajë.* “The woman is killed only when she becomes a bitch or when she is caught in the act. In this case a bullet in the back is granted by the Kanun”.

KS I, IV, XXXIX, 449: [...] *Në qoftë se ajo grue asht lojce, prindet e sajë, ma në fund, do ta përcjellin me fishek në shpinë.* [...] If that woman is of dubious morality, her parents will eventually accompany her to the bridegroom with a bullet in her back (*me fishek në shpinë*).

The term *buqë* which is widespread in the colloquial register, is originally a diminutive form built with the suffix *-çë*<sup>20</sup> which applies to the noun stem *bushëtër*<sup>21</sup> “female of the dog”. The term *lojce* is connected to *lojc*, *-e*<sup>22</sup> “mobile; fickle”, “cunning” and, regarding female behaviour, “coquettish”, an adjective which is etymologically related to the verbs *luaj* “move, move, play” and *loz* “play” of the inherited stock of the Albanian lexicon<sup>23</sup>.

#### 4.5. Women as widows

The *Kanuni i Skenderbeut* also treats the roles of the *grueja e vejë* “the widow”. As can be seen in the following examples, the *Kanuni* allows them more freedom of action in comparison with the aforementioned female roles. The widowed woman is not only free to organize her own marriage, if she wants to remarry, but it also gives her the possibility to choose a husband for herself:

KS I, IV, VI, 164, 28: *Grueja e vejë, flet vetë për fejesës e martes të vet. Kanuja thotë se “grueja e vejë i kthen krushqit n’udhë”. Ajo ka të drejtë me e zgjedh vetë burrin e vet, ashtu edhe shkuesin, kurse të gjitha punët e tjera të fejesës e të martesës së vet u’a len atyne ku të jetë pshitet, sidomos prindve po i pat.* “The widowed woman speaks for herself about her engagement and marriage. The Kanun says that “the widowed woman let the paranyphs go back”. She has the right to choose for herself her husband and the *shkues*<sup>24</sup>, while all the duties of her engagement and marriage are entrusted to the people she is supported by, first of all to her parents, if they are still alive”.

KS I, X, VI, 888, 70: *Gruen e vejë në ç’do moshe kjoftë, me fëmijë e pa to, që don me ndejë në plang të burrit të vdekun, nuk mund ta qesin andejas prindët e vet as shtëpia e burrit e fisi i këtij.* “A widowed woman, of any age, having or nothaving children, who wants to stay at the home of her deceased husband, cannot be sent away neither by her family nor her husband’s household or *fis*”.

However, a widowed woman must also comply with certain conditions:

KS I, IV, XLV, 501, 47: *Me vdeke burri pa mbushë 12 muej martesë, paja e vejushes së tij mbetet në vend, e kur të doli, del vetem me çka tëket veshë.* “If the husband dies before completing 12 months of marriage, his widow’s dowry remains where it is, and when she leaves her husband’s house, she takes only the clothes she is wearing with her”.



The previous two examples show that the adjectival phrase *grueja e vejë* and the originally diminutive form *vejushë*, formed with the suffix *-ushë*, refer to the widowed woman. The adjective *e vejë* which belongs to the standard language continues the inherited Proto-Indo-European word *\*h<sub>2</sub>widhéhew<sub>2</sub>-* (cp. Vedic *vidháva-*, Latin *vidua*, Old Church Slavonic *vdova* etc.).

#### 4.6. Women as “sworn virgins”

The term *virgjineshë* “sworn virgin” instead is loaned from Latin *virgo*, *-inis (m)* and, like in other traditional societies of the Balkans<sup>25</sup>, refers to a woman who after having taken an oath in front of witnesses and guarantors promises to remain chaste for the rest of her life. As M. E. Durham notes: “If she could find twelve elders of her tribe to act as con-jurors she could swear perpetual virginity. If she broke the vow the honour of the con-jurors was blackened, and a blood-feud ensued. It was not easy for her to find twelve con-jurors”<sup>26</sup>. In *Kanuni i Skanderbegut* we find the following definition of the *virgjineshë*:

KS I, X, XII, 981: *Virgjineshë asht një vajzë që rrin pa u martue dhe banon te prindet e vet.* “The virgin is a girl which remains unmarried and lives with her parents”.

There are several reasons why a young girl decided to become a “sworn virgin”. She might prefer 1) to avoid an unwanted marriage, 2) to handle the family assets in case of the death of her parents and absence of male adults. She might also choose to become a *virgjineshë* for 3) filial love, or 4) a vow. In Skanderbeg’s Kanun it is stated that one girl could become *virgjineshe përshpirt* “for the soul”. If a girl had not married, however, for health reasons, she could not be defined as a *virgjineshë*:

KS I, X, XII, 986, 75: *Një vajzë që për arsye të ndryshme shëndetsore: trupore apo mendore mbetet pa u martue nuk quhet virgjineshë as nuk veshet si burrë, por rrin vajznisht.* “A girl that for healthy reason, physical or mental ones remains unmarried may neither be called *virgjineshë* nor be dressed like a man, but she remains a girl”.

These women could dress and behave like men, without however acquiring men’s rights. They were not allowed to sell family assets, and they did not have the right to vote in the assemblies. Their new condition did not allow them to have a particular role in practicing religious rites. They were not allowed to become part of a structured social group. It should also

be noted that the new condition of “sworn virgin” had nothing to do with homosexuality<sup>27</sup>. As Durham writes, they often openly disdained women and their degree of misogyny could often compete with that of men: “She (scil. a “sworn virgin”) treated me with the contempt she appeared to think all petticoats deserved” (Durham 2000: 80).

Specific terms which refer to the female roles occur in another ritual event, the funeral, which, like marriage and birth, represents an occasion that strengthens the community’s sense of unity. In such contexts, language plays a fundamental role, not only through the explicit classification of participants, places, and objects that make up the context of interaction, but also in speech acts and verbal exchanges. In the context of the funeral ritual, it is possible to make a precise distinction between two parts, the one performed by the *gjamtarët*<sup>28</sup> “the funeral singers”, and the other performed by the women singing the *vajtimi*, a term of onomatopoetic origin<sup>29</sup> that designates “the lament”:

KS I, IX, IV, 774, 63: *Kur burrat fillojnë gjamën, gratë lanë vajin dhe i lanë shteg të hapët atyne te i vdekuni* “When the men begin the *gjamë*<sup>30</sup>, women stop their lament and give up their place next to the dead”.

The *gjamtarësi* scratch their faces until they bleed, chanting aloud in a heart-breaking tone to honour the dead, a member of their *fis*. The *vajtimi* is sung by the women in a more composed form and consists of singing in verse praising the deceased:

KS I, IX, IV, 771, 63: *Burra në gjamë grishten ftyret deri në gjak, dhe nuk lahen deri të largohen prej katundit a lagjes së vdekunit. Gratë në vajtimet e veta nuk grishten.* “The men performing the *gjamë* scratch the face until it bleeds and do not wash until they leave the village or neighbourhood of the deceased. Women do not scratch themselves in their lamentations”.

KS I, IX, IV, 776, p. 63: *Vajtimi i grave asht një pershkrim në vjerrshë e laudimeve të të vdekunit, me za të permallshem e të thekshem* “The lament of women (*vajtimi*) consists in singing in verse the praises of the deceased, with a heart-breaking and moving voice”.

## 5. Conclusions

As we have observed in Sections 4.1–4.6, the clear separation between the two genders in the traditional community governed by the rules of the *Kanun* is reflected in the distribution of roles and in using a struc-

tered terminology that designates not only roles and conditions but also other aspects of social life.

Judging by numbers of entries these are in order of importance within the document itself: women as brides underlying the fact that within the patriarchal society of the time, their worth and value to the community (at least in the eyes of the *Kanun*), was as a resource that could be used to bargain with other families in particular for economic benefit.

The other roles of women can be seen to all be subservient to this primary function. The one, interesting exception is the case of the “sworn virgin” which represents a ritualistic way in which women could, under strict conditions, escape from the preordained destiny of daughter–bride–wife–mother–widow. However, as the section of women as transgressors underlines, women were, whatever their role at any stage of their male–dominated lives, always being kept in check by the violent and uncompromising patriarchal value system that they, like the rest of the community, were obliged to exist within.

#### N O T E S

<sup>1</sup> Valentini (1943: 31).

<sup>2</sup> Joireman (2014).

<sup>3</sup> S. KS.

<sup>4</sup> Genesin and Martucci (2019: 150 ff.).

<sup>5</sup> Frashëri (1977: 231–244).

<sup>6</sup> Genesin and Martucci (2019: 151).

<sup>7</sup> “We can affirm that that of the Kanun, or the Kanun, is not a purely medieval code, nor are Lek Dukagjini or Skanderbeg the authors of it; rather it is correct to say that this is the product of centuries of history, and, consequently, of all changes that have affected the various regions of present-day Albania (in particular, as regards the last five hundred years, the Turkish occupation and the work of the Catholic clergy)” [our translation].

<sup>8</sup> Lafe (2017: 97–99).

<sup>9</sup> The term derives from Modern or ByzantineGreek φύσις “nature, feature”, s. SE IV, 194.

<sup>10</sup> SE IV, 332.

<sup>11</sup> Fritsche (1977: 157).

<sup>12</sup> FO, 68.

<sup>13</sup> FO, 895.

<sup>14</sup> FE, 311.

<sup>15</sup> Cp. AE, 302, SE VI, 96. Topalli proposes in FE, 1096, the derivation from Latin *nuptiae*: this explanation is not very convincing from a phonetic nor semantic point of view, s. Bonnet (1999: 26).

<sup>16</sup> In Albania, three main religions are followed (Islam, Roman Catholicism and Greek Orthodox). In the north, people are traditionally either Catholic or Muslim.

<sup>17</sup> Genesisin (2005: 262).

<sup>18</sup> This adjective is a participial formation built on the verbal stem *mart-*oj** < Lat. *maritāre*, s. Bonnet (1999: 297).

<sup>19</sup> The verbal form *dergjem, u dorgja* “discendere”, Bashkimi 515, “discendere; cadere ammalato” Cordignano 26; for the etymological proposals s. Genesisin (2005: 102), Schumacher and Matzinger (2013: 969) who derive this verb from a causative-iterative formation \**derHg<sup>h</sup>éje/o-* of a Proto-Indo-European root ?\**derHg<sup>h</sup>-* ‘track, drag’.

<sup>20</sup> Xhuvani and Çabej (1976: 217).

<sup>21</sup> The term is probably onomatopoetic, s. E. Çabej in SE II, 394–95.

<sup>22</sup> FGjSh 276.

<sup>23</sup> Genesisin (2005: 63–64).

<sup>24</sup> “Matchmaker”.

<sup>25</sup> Genesisin and Martucci (2019: 156, n.2).

<sup>26</sup> Durham (1928: 194).

<sup>27</sup> Young (2001: 57–59).

<sup>28</sup> The term is a *nomen agentis* built on the stem *gjamë* “lamento” < \**gjamët(ë)* < Lat. *gemitu(m)*. The form \**gjamët(ë)* was interpreted as a plural for which the new singular *gjamë*, was coined; s. FE 597.

<sup>29</sup> Cp. Lat. *vae* etc.; FE, p. 1541.

<sup>30</sup> “A type of funeral lament”.

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*The Roles of Women in the Lexicon of the Albanian “Code of Skanderbeg”...*

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