Albanian Traditional Music

An Introduction, with Sheet Music and Lyrics for 48 Songs

Spiro J. Shetuni
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SPIRO J. SHETUNI
In loving memory of my father, George S. Shetuni,
and in honor of my mother, Barbara J. Shetuni
Acknowledgments

I would like to extend my gratitude to a number of people for helping me in writing this book. Firstly, I would like to thank my sons, Brandon and George, and wife, Lulieta, for helping me refine my English writing, which has improved but will never be perfect. I would also like to extend my gratitude to my dear friend and colleague, Ian Price, for his help and willingness in providing musical, literary, and bibliographic resources. Others I would like to thank are: Dr. Thomas F. Heck, Dr. Alfred Uçi, Haxhi Dalipi, Dr. Xhafer M. Majkaj, Dr. Ferid Hudhri, and Dr. Agron Xhagolli. I am appreciative of their mentorship, guidance, and support through the years, without which the writing of this book would have been impossible.
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Introduction

The traditional music, folklore, and other cultural elements vary amongst different nations, peoples or ethnic groups. At the root of this phenomenon lie original, individual, and non-repeatable features in content and form. At the same time, the traditional music, folklore, and culture of one nation, people or ethnic group resemble those of another. Underlying this phenomenon are common, widespread features in content and form. The viewpoint that downplays the unique features of traditional music and folklore is just as erroneous as the viewpoint overstating their uniqueness. It is fair to say that traditional music in general consists of a blend that is neither entirely unique nor entirely similar from one culture to another.

Albanian traditional music in its content and form represents a monumental cultural and artistic heritage. As we attempt to explore it, we realize that its features are fascinating but also difficult to characterize. It is almost as if Albanian traditional music, in its richness and depth, also represents a puzzle that can be difficult to decipher. This book can be viewed as a modest attempt to describe and characterize the traditional music of the Albanians. Recordings of the songs featured in this book may be downloaded at http://www.soundcloud.com/albaniantraditionalmusic/.

I began my professional career in Albania in the mid-1970s as an ethnomusicologist. Studying Albanian traditional music for a living is a rather obscure niche, but from the very beginning I was passionate about it. In 1992 I arrived in the United States as a Fulbright scholar. It was not feasible to continue my trade as an Albanian ethnomusicologist, so I became a music professor and university librarian, a new career I have found to be a wonderful fit. Although I was working in a different profession, my enthusiasm for Albanian traditional music continues to this day. I have always felt that writing a book on this subject in English (as well as in Albanian) would be useful and well suited to someone with my knowledge of and appreciation for this subject.

Albanian traditional music exists alongside other traditional music cultures found in the Balkans and around the Mediterranean. An important feature of this region is a large collection of nations and ethnic groups in a relatively small area. A natural consequence of this conglomerate of peoples is a rich collection of brands of traditional music. The Albanians, Greeks, Turks, Bulgarians, Rumanians, Arumanians, Slovenians, Croats, Bosnians, Serbs, Montenegrins, Macedonians, Roma, and so on all have their specific types of traditional music.

There are two critical factors that should be emphasized when broadly describing Albanian traditional music. Firstly, as a whole, it contains a collection of unique character-
Map 2 — Albanian Traditional Music: Musical Dialects
istics that can be thought of as making Albanian traditional music distinctly “Albanian.” Secondly, there is tremendous diversity within it. Unique elements can be found that differentiate one region from another, within regions certain cities can be distinguished by their own set of distinct features, and sometimes even villages contain in their traditional music a peculiar flavor that is native to them.

Albanian traditional music can be thought of as consisting of four fundamental musical dialects: (1) the Gheg; (2) the Tosk; (3) the Lab; and (4) the Urban. Traditional music of the Albanians exists in both monophonic and polyphonic structures. Interestingly, in Northern Albania, it is exclusively monophonic. This comprises the Gheg musical dialect along with Urban music of the Northern Albanian cities. On the other hand, music in Southern Albania is predominantly (but not exclusively) polyphonic. So, the Tosk and Lab musical dialects and Urban music found in Southern Albanian cities are, in the vast majority of cases, polyphonic.

Gheg traditional music is found in Northern Albania (commonly referred to as Ghegëri). No subdivisions can be made of this dialect. Still, there are distinct musical styles within the different parts of Ghegëri. The Main Highlands (a.k.a. Shkodra’s Highlands), the Small Highlands (a.k.a. Gjakova’s Highlands), Mirditë, Mat, Dibër, and other areas all contain distinct musical styles that fit under Gheg traditional music. The Gheg musical dialect: (1) is exclusively monophonic; (2) has a modal/tonal system that at times is diatonic and at other times chromatic; (3) has a generally measurable meter/rhythm; and (4) in the case of vocal Gheg music, is usually accompanied by musical instruments.

Tosk traditional music is found in Southern Albania (commonly referred to as Toskëri). This dialect can be further divided into the Tosk, Myzeqar, and Cham sub-dialects. Within the sub-dialects there are yet more distinctions, to be referred to as different styles. In the Tosk branch, there are easily distinguishable variations in style, found in the regions of Skrapar, Kolonjë, Devoll, Gorë, Opar, Mokër, and the like. Although the other two sub-dialects also contain within them stylistic differences, these are not easily classifiable to different geographic areas. The Tosk musical dialect: (1) is mainly polyphonic; (2) has great depth, development, and complexity in melody, counterpoint, harmony, and other means of musical expression; (3) has a pentatonic modal/tonal system; (4) features the phenomenon of imitation of preceding lines of melody; (5) has a meter/rhythm frequently indefinable, although there are exceptions; and (6) in the case of vocal Tosk music, is usually a cappella.

Lab traditional music is the dialect of Albanian traditional music that occurs in the geographical region known as Labëri. Analogous to Gheg music, it is exclusive of musical sub-dialects, but there are variations in style from one zone to another. Some of the well-known distinct musical styles within Lab music are found in the following regions: Kurvelesh, Lopës, Lunxheri, Zagori, Gjirokastër, Smokthinë, Himarë, Dukat, Pilur, Bënçë, and the like. Lab traditional music: (1) is mainly polyphonic; (2) marked by the recitative nature of the melody and other musical means of expression; (3) has a pentatonic modal/tonal system; (4) features the phenomenon of marked contrast between ongoing melodic lines; (5) has a usually measurable meter/rhythm; and (6) given the absence of instrumental accompaniment, virtually all Lab vocal music is a cappella.

Lastly, we have the Urban musical dialect. As the name suggests, this music is found in urban centers throughout all of Albania and also extends to Kosovo. It is best to think of Urban music as consisting of two distinct sub-groups, defined on the basis of monophony or polyphony. The great majority of Urban traditional music is monophonic, with some of
the most well known representations (all containing their own unique stylistic variations) being in Shkodër; the Central Albanian cities of Tiranë, Durrës, Kavajë, and Elbasan; several cities in Kosovo including Prizrrn, Gjakovë, and Pejë; and the Albanian city of Berat. The most notable cities with polyphonic Urban music are Përmet and Vlorë. Urban traditional music is more haphazard in its modal/tonal system and meter/rhythm, showing considerable variation in pattern with regard to both. Urban vocal music is almost always accompanied by musical instruments.

Besides being classified into dialects, sub-dialects, and styles, all of Albanian traditional music falls under one of the following descriptive terms, which I refer to as core structural groupings: (i) rural traditional music and urban traditional music; (ii) vocal and instrumental; (iii) monophonic and polyphonic; (iv) sung and danced; (v) female and male; (vi) youth and adult; (vii) traditional music performed individually and traditional music performed collectively; and (viii) a cappella vocal traditional music and instrumentally accompanied vocal traditional music.

The notion of traditional music is virtually unknown to Albanian ethnomusicology. Instead, popular music and folk music are more widespread terms. In this book, traditional music is used over the other two terms for a few reasons. Firstly, this expression does a better job conveying the idea that the music in question is native to a particular ethnic group. Secondly, traditional music expresses more straightforwardly the connection between an ethnic group and its musical art form, created and passed down orally through the ages. Lastly, this term is less ambiguous and thus harder to mistake for other forms of a people’s music.

One of the downfalls of the term popular music is its ambiguity in meaning when considering different regions of the world. Today, in the Western world, the term refers to a sort of unsophisticated, commercial music made to appeal to large numbers of people. Of course, this is in contrast to the way popular music is used in many other parts of the world, including Albania, where it simply refers to traditional music. In Albania, the term came into use as a means to distinguish between art and traditional music. Folk music also suffers from the lack of clarity in meaning, usually being considered a narrower concept than traditional music. The term folk music was introduced as a direct translation from English into Albanian language. Like popular music, it also serves to refer to traditional music, but it generally has a narrower connotation and its use is not as widespread as the term popular music. As scholars have pointed out,

The International Folk Music Council (IFMC), founded in 1947, attempted a definition of “folk music” at its conference in São Paolo (1955) that incorporated Sharp’s three criteria [continuity, variation, and selection] and the notions of “tradition” and “oral transmission.” Folk music was “the product of a musical tradition that has been evolved through the process of oral transmission” [Pegg 2001, vol. 9:64].

Several ethnomusicologists and musicologists, Albanian and international alike, have contributed to the study of Albanian traditional music. During the first half of the 20th century, a modest contribution was given by scholars such as Pjetër Dungu, Gjon K. Kujxhia, and Kolë Gurashi. Later, during the second half of the 20th century, a rather significant contribution was given by scholars such as Lorenc Antoni, Ramadan Sokoli, Beniamin Kruta, Hysen Filja, Albert Paparisto, Bahtir Sheholli, Rexhep Munishi, Ferial Daja, Pirro Miso, and Kosta Loli. During the last decades, there has been a number of new scholars, including Sokol Shupo, Vasil S. Tole, Eno Koço, and Ardian Ahmedaja. In the meantime,
different aspects of Albanian traditional music have been studied by international scholars Yury Arbatsky, Doris Stockmann, Erich Stockmann, Jane C. Sugarman, and George Leotsakos, among others. Finally, during the second half of the 20th century, the research on Albanian traditional dancing was contributed by scholars like Ramazan H. Bogdani, Nexhat Agolli, and Skënder Selimi.

Very little literature on Albanian traditional music exists in English. Among these works, I would like to mention *Beating the Tapan in the Central Balkans* (Arbatsky 1953), *Engendering Song: Singing and Subjectivity at Prespa Albanian Weddings* (Sugarman 1997), and *Albanian Urban Lyric Song in the 1930s* (Koço 2004). Let us mention also two academic articles published in *New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*: “Albania” (Stockmann, Stockmann 1980, vol. 1:197–202), and “Albania” (Leotsakos, Sugarman 2001, vol. 1:282–9).

While we highly value these scholarly contributions, as well as those in Albanian, it seems that the vast majority of works, in either language, tends to focus on a particular issue, aspect, dialect, region, and even genre of Albanian traditional music. I felt it would be novel and more useful to attempt to describe the entire subject in one book. This book is comprehensive in this respect, but it is concisely written and in a manner that is easy to follow by an audience with basic musical knowledge. A book replete with jargon and small details concerning an admittedly obscure subject could easily seem esoteric and unpleasant to the unfamiliar reader. I tried to avoid this pitfall and instead bring to the audience a reader-friendly description that brings to life the rich diversity in the traditional music of Albanians. Despite the distortion of and decreased attention to traditional music in contemporary Albania, this book describes the subject matter in its pure form. It is true Albanian folklore, a true cultural product of the Albanian people.

It must be mentioned that traditional music in today’s Albania is suffering. Globalization and de-ruralization, common themes of the contemporary world, have come to Albania and have affected its traditional music. Classic traditional gems have been mixed and remixed by contemporary artists to include synthesizer-generated beats, electric guitars and other artificial instruments, and bizarre alterations in singing. Recognizable lyrics and melodies of well-known traditional songs, instrumentals, and dances are sometimes incorporated in new creations that otherwise sound cynical or violent, or contain vulgar language. These concoctions usually have a sound that resembles pop, techno, or rap, thus losing the unique traditional essence and taking on a generic flavor.

Following communism Albanians became free to move at their volition. The result was massive emigration and also massive shifts of residents from villages and towns to Tirana or other major Albanian cities. This de-ruralization phenomenon continues today. Most villages now contain few young or middle-aged people. The ones that still remain are often times looking to move. In this reality, it is not surprising that the creation and performance of pure traditional music in rural Albania have dwindled.

It is difficult to predict what the future holds for traditional music in Albania. I certainly hope we do not continue to see a recycling of traditional songs, instrumentals, and dances in versions that take on the flavor of pop, techno, or rap music. One thing is for sure: Albanians have a lot of respect for their traditional music. I suppose the modernizing of traditional music is as much an act of admiration as it is a bastardization. Let us hope the respect for their ancient, priceless music leads Albanians to perpetuate and create more of it for generations to come.
General Classifications

Albania: Ethnographic Regions and Peoples/Ethnic Groups

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>MAIN ETHNOGRAPHIC REGIONS</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Ghegëri (AKA Northern Albania)</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>• Ghegëri (north of Shkumbin River)</td>
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<td>• Lekni or Dukagjin (south of Drin River)</td>
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<tr>
<td>• The Highlands (north of Drin River)</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Seaside Plains of Northern Albania (from Lake Hoti in the North to Shkumbin River in the South)</td>
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<td>• Eastern Plains (Dukagjin Plateau along with Kosovo Plains)</td>
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<th><strong>Toskëri (AKA Southern Albania)</strong></th>
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<tr>
<td>• Toskëri (Southeastern Albania)</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Myzeqe (Imprecisely defined region in the north-central portion of Southern Albania)</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Chamëri (Imprecisely defined region in southern-most part of Albania)</td>
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<td>• Labëri (Southwestern Albania)</td>
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<tr>
<th>MAIN PEOPLES/ETHNIC GROUPS</th>
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<td>• Albanians</td>
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<td>• Arumanians</td>
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<td>• Greeks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Macedonians</td>
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<td>• Roma</td>
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Albanian Traditional Music: Classification

<table>
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<tr>
<th>GHEG MUSICAL DIALECT</th>
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<tr>
<td>• Musical Style of Main Highlands</td>
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<td>• Musical Style of Small Highlands</td>
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<td>• Musical Style of Mirditë</td>
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• Musical Style of Mat
• Musical Style of Dibër

**Tosk Musical Dialect**

**Tosk Musical Sub-dialect**
• Musical Style of Skrapar
• Musical Style of Kolonjë
• Musical Style of Devoll
• Musical Style of Gorë
• Musical Style of Opar
• Musical Style of Mokër

**Myzeqar Musical Sub-dialect**

**Cham Musical Sub-dialect**

**Lab Musical Dialect**
• Musical Style of Kurvelesh
• Musical Style of Lopës
• Musical Style of Lunxheri
• Musical Style of Zagori
• Musical Style of Gjirokastër
• Musical Style of Smokthinë
• Musical Style of Himarë
• Musical Style of Dukat
• Musical Style of Pilur
• Musical Style of Bënçë

**Urban Musical Dialect**
• Musical Style of the City of Shkodër
• Musical Style of the Cities of Central Albania (Tiranë, Durrës, Kavajë, Elbasan) and Some Cities in Kosovo (Prizren, Gjakovë, Pejë)
• Musical Style of the City of Berat
• Musical Style of the City of Përmet
• Musical Style of the City of Vlorë
PART I
— Chapter One —

Albania: A Historical, Ethnic, and Demographic Synopsis

From Tivar down to Prevez,
Where the Sun sheds light and warmth,
It is our land, our ancestors left us,
No one must take it for, for that we die,
We die as men died long ago,
Not to be forgotten to God!

Vaso Pasha (1825–1892)

Brief 20th-Century Historical Overview
of the Albanian Nation and State

In a conscious effort to give Albanians a sense of pride, joy, sensibility, and responsibility for their land, the most prominent Albanian writers and poets have historically written about their country with love and passion. Indeed, it is not at all by chance that they constantly praised, idolized, and idealized Albania. Among them, let us only mention: Vaso Pasha, Ndre Mjeda, Naim Bey Frashëri, Andon Zako—Çajupi, Alex S. Drenova—Asdreni, Faik Konica, Theofan S. Noli, Gjergj Fishta, Llazar Gushto—aka Lazgush Poradeci, Sejfulla Malëshova, Dritëro Agolli, and Ismail Kadare. In the face of a constant barrage of harsh historical realities, such as unstable sociopolitical systems, internal turmoil and outside wars, economic struggle, emigration that at times reached massive proportions, and substantial land loss to neighboring Balkan countries, these writings served to maintain and even strengthen a sense of national identity and pride towards their country.

Geographically, Albania is situated in southeastern Europe, in the western portion of the Balkans. In the north, it is bordered by Montenegro and Kosovo; in the south by Greece; in the east by Macedonia; in the west by the Adriatic and Ionian Seas (the Adriatic Sea washes over the coasts of Albania as well as Italy, and the Ionian Sea washes over the coasts of Albania and Greece). As a country, today’s Albania has a population of 3,600,000 people and covers a surface area of 28,700 square kilometers. However, the population of Albanians in the region is substantially larger than in the state of Albania. Approximately 2,500,000 Albanians live in their own communities in the neighboring states of Montenegro, Macedonia, and Kosovo. Specifically, of Montenegro’s 672,000 inhabitants, 48,000 are Albanian; of Macedonia’s 2,070,000 inhabitants, 509,000 are Albanian; and of Kosovo’s 1,800,000 inhabitants, 88 percent are Albanian. This disparity in the population of Albania the state
compared to Albania the nation can in part be explained by two large land losses taking place early in the 20th century, following the departure of Ottoman rule.

Until the year 1912, Kosovo, like the rest of the Albanian lands, was part of the Ottoman Empire. From December 1912 through August 1913, in London, a series of conferences among representatives of the Great Powers (Austro-Hungary, Great Britain, France, Germany, Italy, Russia) took place that led to the formation of the Treaty of London. Here, Kosovo, the cradle of Albanian patriotism, was ultimately separated from the rest of Albanian lands and given to Serbia (Malcolm 1999:255–7). Five years later, in 1918, Kosovo was included as part of the “Kingdom of Serbs, Croats, and Slovenians.” In the talks of 1912 through 1913 in London, the Great Powers also decided that Chamëri, the southernmost region of Albanian lands, would be taken away and given to Greece; only a small portion of this region was left to Albania.

Toward the end of the 20th century, beginning in the early 1990s, Yugoslavia disbanded and its component states formed independent countries (Slovenia, Croatia, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Montenegro, Macedonia). Kosovo as well aspired to gain independence and started an independence movement, but Serbia quickly stepped in to crush it and launched what became an ethnic cleansing campaign against the Kosovar Albanians. This genocide ended following military intervention by NATO. In June 1999, right after the end of this war, the United Nations denied Serbia’s right to govern Kosovo, thereby granting the region self-governing rights. On February 17, 2008, Kosovo declared its independence from Serbia.

Following the early 20th-century splits of the Albanian nation, the state of Albania experienced three sociopolitical systems that together spanned all of the rest of the 20th century. From the departure of the Ottomans in 1912 roughly until the beginning of World War II, Albania was primarily a monarchy. The most prominent monarch of this time period was the Albanian king, Ahmet Zogu (1895–1961). Following World War II, Albania became a communist state, belonging to the eastern European block of communist countries. Communism in Albania was especially harsh, consisting of the denial of basic human rights (such as freedom of speech and religion), extreme poverty, and eventual isolation even from the other communist countries in Europe. The reason behind Albania’s isolation was that its dictator, Enver Hoxha (1908–1985), considered the brand of communism practiced in the Soviet Union and its satellite countries impure, tainted with revisionist elements. Albanian communism ended in 1991; it was the last to fall in Europe. It was replaced by a parliamentary democracy, a system that is in place to this day. The political leader, Sali Berisha (1944–), was at the forefront of communism’s upheaval and became the first president ever elected by the Albanian people.

**Major Ethnographic Regions, Ethnicities, Languages, and Religious Beliefs**

Major ethnographic regions of present day Albania are delineated by the country’s terrain. Rivers, valleys, mountains, and ranges form natural confines providing for the formation of villages, towns, and cities of Albanian people. The main delineation is made by the River Shkumbin that runs east to west, separating Albania geographically (and somewhat culturally) into two, roughly equal parts. The Northern portion is called Ghegëri, whereas the Southern portion is referred to as Toskëri. Within these two parts, there exist further ethnographic subdivisions. The largest subdivision in Ghegëri also uses the name
Ghegëri, and the other major subdivisions comprising this area are: Lekni or Dukagjin, the Highlands, the Seaside Plains of Northern Albania, and the Eastern Plains. Similarly, the largest subdivision in Toskëri is also named Toskëri, and the other major regions are: Myzeqe, Chamëri, and Labëri.

From an ethnic perspective, Albania is a relatively homogeneous country with Albanians comprising 95 percent of the population. Other ethnicities are: the Arumanians (or Vlachs), Greeks (or Hellenics), Macedonians, and the Roma. Arumanians are the largest minority in Albania; they are primarily located in Southern Albania and in the cities of the Central part of the country. Greeks are located largely in the South. Macedonians are primarily located in Southeastern Albania, while the Roma can be found mostly in cities throughout the country. The Arumanians and Greeks can be said to be indigenous to the Balkans, as their existence has been largely confined to this region over the span of history. On the other hand, the Macedonians arrived as part of Slavic migrations from northeastern Europe in the fifth to seventh centuries, while the Roma are believed to have originated from India. Albanian, Greek and Arumanian are all Indo-European languages. The former two have no close linguistic association to any other Indo-European language and are thus classified as separate branches. Arumanian is a Romance language, with its closest ties being to modern-day Rumanian. The native language of the Roma, referred to as Romany, is a part of the Indo-Iranian branch of Indo-European languages.

The predecessors of the Albanians, the Illyrians, gave up polytheism in favor of monotheism — Christianity — at about the same time as other ancient peoples of the Balkan Peninsula, in the first century A.D. All Albanians practiced Christianity as Catholics or Orthodox until the introduction of Islam from Ottoman Turks, beginning toward the end of the 15th century. By the end of the 18th century, the majority of the Albanian population had converted to Islam. For unknown reasons, ethnic minorities of Albania (Arumanians, Greeks, Macedonians) largely maintained their Christian faith. Today, Albanians belong to three main religions: Islam (70 percent of the population), Orthodox Christians (20 percent), and Catholics (10 percent). The contemporary Albanians can be described as generally casual about their religion, regardless of which one they belong to. This is a legacy of the Communist regime, lasting from 1944 to 1991. The Communists in Albania were strictly atheist. Their anti-religious attitude gradually grew from the beginning of the regime, reaching its pinnacle in 1967, at which point all religion of any kind was actually outlawed. Also, much of the clergy were imprisoned and all churches and mosques were shut down. To this day, communist Albania stands as the only country in history to outlaw religion.

Albanian Emigration

There have been several waves of Albanian emigration throughout the world. The two main reasons driving Albanians to leave their homeland have been relief from economic hardship or to escape sociopolitical oppression. Thus, over the centuries the Albanian Diaspora has evolved. Most scholars agree that there have been five main waves of Albanian emigration. Some of the most noted works on the matter have been elaborated by Albanian figures, such as Sami Bey Frashëri (1850–1904) (Frashëri 2002:50–2) and Zija Shkodra (Shkodra 1973b:24–7), and also by international scholars, most notably the Croatian historian Milan Šufflay (1879–1931) (Šufflay 2002:163–81). In brief, the five waves, listed chronologically, are:
Emigration to the Hellenic lands
Most evidence indicates that this took place during the seventh to eighth centuries A.D. However, there is some indication, mainly in the chronicles of Cyprus, that it may have begun as early as the fourth century (Shkodra 1973b:24). This was the first of several bouts of Albanian emigration to the Hellenic lands. According to the Austrian historian, Jakob Philipp Fallmerayer (1790–1861), the largest of these waves took place in the first half of the 14th century, the period of time marked by the end of the Byzantine Empire’s rule and the inception of Serbian feudal rule in the region (Shkodra 1973b:24).

Emigration toward Northern Dalmatia, Venetia, and the eastern seashore of the Apennine Peninsula
This wave of emigration started during the 15th century, right after the death of the Albanian national hero Gjergj Kastrioti – Skanderbeg (1405–1468) and the subsequent capture of the Fortress of Krujë by the Ottoman Empire.

17th to 19th centuries emigration
During this period of time there happened a continuous outflow of Albanians toward many different, mostly European neighboring countries. No particular historical event was associated with this flow; reasons were primarily economical.

First half of the 20th century emigration
From the beginning of the 20th century up until the start of World War II, Albanians emigrated in relatively small numbers, mostly to the United States. Following World War II, subsequent to fierce communism, Albania became isolated with complete absence of any emigration. This lack of emigration lasted until the collapse of the communist regime, starting in 1990.

Post-communism emigration
Following the end of communism, Albanians immigrated in great numbers to many countries. About 20 percent of the population left within the first two years after communism. Those countries receiving the largest numbers of Albanians include: Greece, Italy, Germany, France, Canada, and the United States.

Traditional Music of the Diaspora
Among the musical dialects of the Albanian Diaspora are those of the Arbëresh (Albanian Diaspora in Italy) and the Arvanitas (Albanian Diaspora in Greece). The Arbëresh, arriving in Italy during the 15th century and thereafter, through living in their new communities in the southern part of the country, developed their own distinct brand of music. The most frequently encountered themes in their songs center around the old country, Arbëria (Albania’s medieval name), whether longing for it or concerned about its fate and future. Frequently, these songs evoke a sense of melancholia, or strong emotions of longing for the old land and people left behind. As an example, one of the most well-known Arbëresh tunes, “Oh you beautiful Morë,” is a two-verse song dealing with leaving behind Arbëria. In the first verse, the lyrics are in the voice of a man who misses his homeland. Specifically, they can be translated as:

Oh you beautiful Morë,
How we departed and I never saw you again,
How I left,
How I left and never saw you again!

The second verse describes sadness associated with losing loved family members and having to live with the fact that the subject is in a foreign land, far away from where they are buried:

There I have my father,
There I have my mother,
There I have my brother,
All deceased, and buried there!

From a modal/tonal perspective, it is not difficult to recognize similarities in Arbëresh music to the four Albanian musical dialects: Gheg, Tosk, Lab, and Urban. Solid evidence can be found from recognizing that these musics share the same minor modal/tonal system. At the same time, major modes do not exist in Arbëresh music. This is largely the case in Albanian traditional music, with Gheg, Tosk, Lab, and polyphonic Urban music all without major modes (the exception is monophonic Urban music, which contains major modes).

Some of the most important commonalities between Arbëresh musical dialect and Albanian musical dialects are:

- the general song structure is made up of one, two or three lines of melody;
- the modal/tonal system is pentatonic, diatonic or chromatic;
- a propensity for the $\frac{7}{8}$ meter/rhythm; and
- the frequent appearance of the *a cappella* style.

Oftentimes, in the modal/tonal system of Arbëresh traditional music, the semitone (the smallest interval in use in the system) is present. This interval often comes in the form of alteration (sometimes going up and sometimes going down). The presence of the semitone interval in the form of alteration gives the music a wide range of expressive power, enabling transmittance of various emotions. With regard to Albanian traditional music, alteration can be found in Gheg and Urban musical dialects, but not in the Tosk and Lab ones.

As previously mentioned, the Albanian Diaspora in Greece is the oldest living Diaspora. Not much can be said about the Arvanitas’ music, except that their unique dialect used to exist and in some way probably still exists today. Through centuries of living together in ethnically confined communities, they developed their own dialect of traditional music. However, assimilation from the dominating Hellenic culture has been pervasive, making it difficult to discern Arvanitas musical elements to this day.

Since their arrival and settlement in Massachusetts in the first half of the 20th century, the Albanians coming to the United States have regularly conducted festivals of Albanian traditional music. The Albanian Orthodox Church in Boston has been and is still active in organizing these events. A new musical dialect distinct to this Diaspora has not been born in America; rather there exists a preservation of the homeland’s traditional music.
Chapter Two

History of Albanian Ethnomusicology

Birth, Development, and Achievements

The word ethnomusicology is of Greek origin and composed of the following three roots: etnos = place, music = music, and logos = knowledge. It was originated by the Dutch scholar Jaap Kunst (1891–1960), who used it in his book *Musicologica: A Study of the Nature of Ethnomusicology, Its Problems, Methods, and Representative Personalities* (Kunst 1950). Ethnomusicology is defined by scholars as “the study of social and cultural aspects of music and dance in local and global contexts. Specialists are trained primarily in anthropology and in music, but the multidisciplinary nature of the subject leads to different interpretations” (Pegg et al. 2001, vol. 8:367).

This discipline used to be referred to as comparative musicology, although the field always encompassed more than just comparative studies of traditional music between different peoples.

Ethnomusicology is one of the newer fields of study in Albania, with its origins dating back to the 1950s. It existed throughout the time period in which the communist regime ruled the country (1944–1991 was the life span of communism in Albania) and has continued thereafter. In rhetoric and financially, the leadership during communism encouraged the development and promotion of Albanian traditional music; this was part of a broader push towards the development of Albanian culture. Subsequently, there took place a large number of concerts and festivals of traditional music, which for the first time in Albania’s history brought together the entire wealth of the country’s traditional music. Many traditional musics had long been evolving separately and in different directions from one another, and to bring them all together to the forefront for the Albanian public to experience was in and of itself an accomplishment; it made Albanians aware of just how much richness and diversity existed within their small country’s music. The National Folkloric Festival, held every five years starting in the late 1960s, is one of the best examples of the promotion of Albanian traditional music. This festival collected songs, instrumentals, dances, and other forms of music from all musical dialects and all regions of the country, including not only cities and towns but also small, remote villages. Traditional attire specific to the various regions was worn at this event, another sign of the encouragement of Albanian artistic and cultural life during this time period.

Concomitant with the bloom in traditional music, the field of ethnomusicology experienced its own consequent growth and achievements. What can be considered the very
beginnings of Albanian ethnomusicology actually took place during the years of World War II, marked by the publishing of a couple of musical anthologies. In 1940, the Albanian composer Pjetër Dungu published the book entitled *Lyra [sic] Shqiptare (Albanian Lute)* in Italy. Three years later, a well-known Albanian musician of the time, Gjon K. Kujxha, published *Valle Kombëtare: Cori Nazionali Albanesi: Vol. I (National Albanian Dances: Vol. I)*, also in Italy. Both of these anthologies contained urban traditional music; they would remain the only anthologies in Albanian urban traditional music for the next 50 years.

Perhaps a more official beginning to ethnomusicology in Albania began in the 1950s, when the Institute of Folklore was founded. In part, this institution was dedicated to the study of traditional music. In the 1970s the Institute of Folklore was restructured into the Institute for Traditional Culture, which became the center stage for scholarship in ethnomusicology. Indeed, it was a significant achievement simply to have institutions that were in part dedicated to the study of Albanian traditional music. In the 1960s, the Albanology Institute of Prishtinë was founded in Kosovo. The Institute for Traditional Culture along with the Albanology Institute of Prishtinë was responsible for the majority of Albanian ethnomusicology works that took place in the second half of the 20th century.

Arguably the greatest achievement by Albanian ethnomusicologists during the communist era was a comprehensive collection of all dialects of Albanian traditional music, through recordings of a large number of songs, instrumentals, and dances, throughout the country. This was followed by transcription and publishing of a large number of anthologies. There was great value in capturing Albanian traditional music through recording and transcription. It gave this art form a greater sense of existence, a sense of permanence, and made it an important part of Albanian identity through exposure to large numbers of people. Some of the most prominent anthologies that deserve mention are:

*Albanian Musical Folklore (volumes I–III 1956, volumes IV–VII 1970)*

A seven-volume collection of Gheg traditional music. Without a doubt, the most comprehensive anthology of Gheg traditional music to this day.

*Traditional Songs* (1964)

Collection of traditional music from all over Albania, with relatively few political overtones.

*250 Traditional Wedding Songs* (1966)

An anthology dedicated to wedding songs in all regions of Albania.

*Kreshnik Rhapsodies (Texts and Melodies)* (1983)

An anthology of songs that have been spawned by Albanian mythology in the region of Ghegëri.

*Lab Polyphonic Songs* (1986)

The most comprehensive collection of Lab traditional music to this day.


A vast collection of the most classic traditional songs, instrumentals, and dances representing every dialect of Albanian traditional music performed at the National Folkloric Festivals.

To be sure, many of the anthological works published were not without their flaws. A recurring theme in many of them was a predilection for selecting songs based on lyrical content. Melodic value was an ancillary criterion for selection compared to lyrical value. Two good examples of this phenomenon are *Këngë Popullore Historike (Historic Traditional
Songs), published in 1968, and Këngë nga Folklori i Ri (Songs from the New Folklore), published in 1969, which consist of collections of songs whose lyrics talk about prominent historic figures, important historical events and dates, and other topics deemed to be of importance. Without wanting to undermine lyrical substance, musical criteria are more apt as the primary basis for choosing songs of an anthology. Choosing based on musical criteria would have led to a selection of songs that melodically are classic representations of the various musical dialects and ethnographic regions.

In any case, transcription and publishing of anthologies was a great stepping stone in Albanian ethnomusicology because it wound up facilitating analytical scholarly activity in the field. A number of research books were produced mostly in the 1970s and 1980s. Perhaps even more impressive, periodicals were also produced. Their start was in the 1960s, but the most prolific age of journal publishing was in the 1980s. There were three chief periodicals regularly receiving work to be published in the 1980s, all of which were produced by the Institute for Traditional Culture. Besides books and journals, in the 1970s and 1980s, a number of symposiums and conferences took place nationally and to a much smaller degree internationally, and research findings in Albanian traditional music were presented.

So, the field of ethnomusicology had gone from literally not existing before communism to becoming a robust and prolific arena featured in anthologies, analytical books, journals, and conferences, and all in just a few decades, and all in a country as small as Albania. It is not an exaggeration to say that the communist leadership was the most important reason behind this development. Its promotion of traditional music brought this entity to the forefront of Albania’s attention. As previously mentioned, the communist leadership was a fervent promoter of not just traditional music but all aspects of Albanian culture. And it had its motives for doing so.

**Downfalls and Communist Influence**

Hand in hand with promotion, the communists had a heavy, exclusive influence in dictating the content of cultural products produced by Albania during their reign. The outcome was a bombardment of propaganda in every cultural realm, asserting the greatness of the Labor Party and their people’s putative concordance with everything it stood for.

The ultimate objective of the communists was to tighten their grip on Albania’s people as their absolute rulers. Albania was completely shut off from any cultural influence by Western countries and to a large degree even from other communist countries. Western movies, music, dances, books, newspapers, and the like were strictly barred from entering Albania. The void created was filled by domestic products. Their contents were influenced and meticulously screened to contain material that at the very least did not go against communist ideologies and preferably expressed, either directly or indirectly, an approval of or satisfaction with the Labor Party’s doctrine. These tactics were aimed at assuring the allegiance of the entire nation.

Within Albanian traditional music, the volume of new songs coming out was infused with lyrics singing the praises of communism and the society it had produced. Here are a couple of representative examples:

I work for my society,
And my society works for me,
That’s where I find happiness,
Another type of society I do not want,
I am tied to the Party,
Like the nail is to the flesh,
Let me tell you, I don't have riches,
I don't have them, but I don't want them!
Only the proletariat,
That's what I consider my wealth!
Karl Marx and Lenin,
They are my profits!

---------------------
Oh you young bride,
How pretty you are,
The pickaxe and the rifle,
You brought as your dowry!

Today these lyrics may seem outlandish, but they were commonplace throughout the communist era in Albania. The Labor Party went so far as to actually change older lyrics, true products of Albanian folk culture, made prior to the communist era. The following song, initially entitled “Lullaby,” was written as follows:

Sleeping, who rocks your cradle,
The pretty lady in the village!
Sleeping, mother's daughter,
Hope you grow like the moon's glow:
May you become hard working like a bee,
And your words sweet as honey, succeeding in work effortlessly!

In the late 1980s a new version surfaced, with the title changing to “May You Grow Strong for the Party” and the following two lines being added after the rest of the original lyrics: “Sleeping, keep on sleeping my dear soul, I hope you grow strong for the Party!”

To put this in perspective, communism in Albania ended in 1991; the fact that only a few years prior to its ending the Party's henchmen were still engaging in changing lyrics is a telling sign that the stringent, censored culture did not ease up very much toward its last days.

Besides overt propaganda through lyrics, Albanian music was also heavily censored. Texts not directly singing the praises of communism were rosy in content, centering around topics, such as: optimistic youth, building a great new society, and a promising future. Melodies (both vocal and instrumental) that seemed to have any sort of Western influence were not allowed. Generally, music had an intensely positive and optimistic flavor, although this phenomenon affected professional more than traditional Albanian music.

Superficially, the increase in the volume of music (and all other cultural expressions) could be interpreted as a sign of prosperity, something along the lines of a burgeoning country with lots to offer. After some analysis one sees that Albanian traditional music suffered a striking lack of diversity with regard to lyrics during the communist era. A phenomenon of increase in quantity alongside a decrease in diversity generally applies to all Albanian cultural products during the tenure of the Labor Party.

During the second half of the 20th century, the term *new folklore* was introduced and became widely used in anthologies and all studies of Albanian ethnomusicology and folklore. This was an imposition aimed to direct the study and interpretation of Albanian ethnomusicology (and all other social disciplines) within the framework of Marxist-Leninist ideology. New folklore was just one of a number of *new-isms* coined by the communist leadership,
others being new society, new life, and new socioeconomic system. Albanian traditional music did not fundamentally change during this time frame; it was just another gimmick to place everything in society within the context of communism.

Another phenomenon that should be pointed out during the time period in question is the silencing of minorities’ cultures, including their traditional music. Consequently, the traditional music of the Arumanians, Greeks, Macedonians, and Roma was neglected in academic studies. Furthermore, the Arumanians and Roma were never represented in festivals, as if they did not exist. As previously mentioned, the Albanian nation was encouraged to develop and enrich its cultural life. On the other hand, minorities were not in the least bit cheered on to do the same. Although there was never overt and public discouragement, it was implied and clearly understood, and virtually no one dared disobey. Minorities were supposed to just be a part of the mainstream Albanian culture. This phenomenon was a consequence of the teachings of communism, in which the individual is not supposed to stand out. Rather, the collective effort and society as a whole were of prime importance. Encouragement of minorities’ own unique cultural features would serve to promote an alternative identity, a more individual identity, and thus confer a greater degree of freedom on the individual. The consequence was a decrease in the performance of minorities’ already existing music with an attendant lack of production, leading to shrinkage and undermining.

Promotion of Rural Over Urban Traditional Music

Often, composers of art music are found to base their creations on traditional music. This phenomenon has been especially prevalent in eastern Europe. In this region, many composers borrowed from traditional music, especially that found in villages. Some of the most notable composers known to have been influenced by traditional music include the Czechs Dvořák and Smetana, the Hungarians Bartók and Kodály, the Romanian Enescu, and the Russians Mussorgsky, Borodin, Rimsky-Korsakov, and Stravinsky. It is worth pointing out that some of these composers also became involved in the collection and study of traditional music. Most notable here are Bartók and Kodály. In this context, it is important to keep in mind that different eastern European composers and ethnomusicologists were fond of the idea that within the realm of traditional music, that found in villages was more pure and authentic compared to the traditional music in towns and cities.

Rural traditional music in Albania can be viewed as having a slower start in scholarship than urban traditional music, with the first rural anthology being published in the 1950s. In Kosovo in 1956, the composer and scholar Lorenc Antoni published Folklori Muzikuer [sic] Shqiptar (Albanian Musical Folklore), consisting of rural Gheg songs. In 1964, scholars Eftim Dheri, Mexhid Daiu, and Qemal Haxhihasani published Këngë Popullore (Traditional Songs) in Albania, consisting of Tosk and Lab rural traditional music. Around this time period, the notion that rural traditional music was purer and more authentic became widely embraced in Albania. Unlike in urban traditional music, these first two anthologies were followed by a series of others. During the latter half of the 20th century, it is apparent that rural traditional music gradually gained a higher status compared to its urban counterpart. It was recorded, transcribed, published, and studied systematically; it became regularly featured in radio, television, and cinematography; and enjoyed a higher representation in folkloric festivals, locally and nationally. It is obvious this time period was the golden age for rural traditional music.
Meanwhile, urban traditional music slowly lost its equality and status. Thus, it was not recorded, transcribed, published, and studied systematically; it did not receive as much attention in radio, television, and cinematography; it received a small representation in folkloric festivals, locally and nationally. As a matter of fact, some songs, instrumentals, and dances were officially banned!

One thing is for sure: the notion that rural traditional music is purer and more authentic than urban traditional music was completely approved by the Labor Party. The communist leadership had somewhat of a distaste for urban traditional music, viewing it as morally loose. Oftentimes, urban traditional music was performed in social gatherings involving drinking and partying. A subset of this kind of music was called Këngë të Ahengut (Songs of Partying). Furthermore, some of the melodies in urban traditional music were more modern sounding and could be interpreted as provocative or sensual. Some themes were open in speaking about love, women’s beauty or having a good time. Such aspects were judged not to embody the high moral ideals and teachings promoted by communism. This preference of rural over urban traditional music by the Labor Party was the biggest reason rural traditional music received more promotion for production and more attention in media outlets, concerts, and also in scholarship during the second half of the 20th century.

It becomes clear that we cannot speak of Albanian traditional music and ethnomusicology without keeping in the backs of our minds the heavy influence the Labor Party and its ideals had on them. Indeed, one cannot speak of any cultural products produced by Albanians during the time of communism without keeping in consideration their leadership’s impact. The discussion presented here was not meant to be a one-sided bashing of the Labor Party for their hand in Albanian cultural expression; rather, it is a fair but honest representation of their presence in this aspect of Albanian history.
Chapter Three

Classification in Albanian Traditional Music

Art and culture have been a part of the Albanian people throughout their harsh history. Under conditions of marked socioeconomic lack of development, their poetry, song, dance, and traditional music have been important means of spiritual emancipation. This culture as a whole, while being transmitted over time, played important functions, such as: developing artistic skills and talents, teaching aesthetic ideas, cultivating high morals and ethics, and promoting pronounced feelings of patriotism. As a whole, Albanian art and culture have been a manifestation of the vitality and strong will of the Albanian people to preserve their ethnic identity.

As previously mentioned, the division made by the Shkumbin River not only divides Albania geographically into North and South (Ghegëri and Toskëri respectively), but also has some cultural implications. In rural Albanian traditional music, the Shkumbin River stands as the dividing line between monophony and polyphony. Monophonic rural traditional music is found primarily in Ghegëri, while polyphonic rural traditional music exists primarily in Toskëri. Leaving Urban traditional music aside, this is the most fundamental subdivision in Albanian traditional music, as its three core rural dialects (Gheg, Tosk, and Lab) are strictly one or the other variety. As such, rural traditional music of the North (Gheg music) is monophonic, while that of the South (Tosk and Lab music) stands as polyphonic.

One feels compelled to ask the question: “Why are these two varieties strictly confined to their geographic regions?” This phenomenon is thought to be explained in part by the difference in living arrangements and ways of life in these regions. In Ghegëri, people lived in houses resembling towers that were relatively far apart from one another. In Toskëri, people were geographically situated in a more compact manner, one that gave more impression of a community. Moreover, throughout its history, Ghegëri has been plagued by the tradition of blood feuds, many of which spanned hundreds of years in time. This has been extremely pervasive in the region and is probably the biggest reason life in Ghegëri has been much more solitary. Even families not directly part of a feud found themselves obligated to pick one side, thus isolating from the other party and undermining the sense of community. It should be mentioned that this long-standing, deep-rooted tradition virtually disappeared during the era of communism. The communists were very active in fighting this backwards tradition, obligating families in feud to forgive each other. Great success was achieved, but unfortunately some of the feuds returned once communism collapsed. The more isolated way of life in Ghegëri can also be attributed to the terrain and weather there. This region
is very mountainous and considerably colder than Toshëri year-round, so there took place less transit from one conglomerate of people to the other.

During the second half of the 20th century, in Albanian society there took place a number of major economic and social changes as well as the aforementioned cultural promotion. As a consequence of the newfound emphasis on culture, the volume of songs, instrumentals and dances in Albanian traditional music greatly proliferated, and traditional music as a whole can be said to have experienced a golden age. The blossoming of Albanian traditional music was accompanied by some new phenomena, such as: a greatly increased number of people involved with making and performing of traditional music; large numbers of events (concerts, festivals, competitions) centered around traditional music; and newfound emphasis on folklore.

For a nation of only 3,600,000 people, Albania today can be considered to contain quite a rich repertoire of traditional music. As it was mentioned, within the country’s small geographical area, unique elements in music can be found that differentiate one region from another, within regions certain towns can be distinguished by their own sets of distinct features, and sometimes even villages contain a peculiar flavor in their traditional music that is native to them. Great diversity is of course considered to be a good thing, something to be proud of, but it also poses a difficult challenge when attempting classification. It is an entangled array with many exceptions and uncertainties, and at times a certain level of subjectivity in interpretation. Despite these difficulties, this book introduces a classification scheme for all of Albanian traditional music with the basic formula, becoming more specific with each step, being one of the following two varieties:

- Albanian Traditional Music ➔ Musical Dialect ➔ Musical Style
- Albanian Traditional Music ➔ Musical Dialect ➔ Musical Sub-Dialect ➔ Musical Style

What follows is a discussion of musical style as it relates to Albanian traditional music. The concept of musical style is not an unknown term in ethnomusicologic studies. First becoming used in musicology, later it naturally entered ethnomusicology as well. In the realm of traditional music, the concept of musical style denotes a unique, original way of singing and performing that musically varies most often from one ethnographic region to another and sometimes between towns or even villages. Melodic lines and modal tonal structure play a defining role in distinguishing between musical styles. A given musical style can encompass a broad ethnographic region, or it can be less spread out, being restricted to a given town or just a village.

Some musical styles are older while others are newer. For example, within the Lab musical dialect, the styles of Kurvelesh, Lopës, Lunxheri, and Zagori are considered old. In structure and form these contain features of Lab traditional music dating back to the beginning of the 20th century, or even earlier. Other Lab styles, such as those of Dukat and Bënçë, are considered newer; they contain the newer musical features acquired by Lab traditional music during the second half of the 20th century. However, all of these styles, old and new, are widely being performed today and so are considered contemporaries. Although we can consider all musical styles to be equally enjoyable and aesthetically pleasing, at the same time we need to underscore differences in several aspects, such as: degree of melodic uniqueness, sophistication of means of expression, and transcendence of features into other musical styles. From the standpoint of means of expression, generally speaking, rural musical styles are less developed compared to urban ones. A musical style noted for its influence on others is the Lab style of Himarë; its characteristics can be widely discerned in other Lab
musical styles. Broadly speaking, there is an active give and take between rural musical styles and urban musical styles. Although traditional music reaches a broad range of people and is meant to be enjoyed by everyone, only the most talented performers are capable of capturing the nuances unique to every style.

A given musical style reflects its immediate society at a given point in time, including its people’s level of education, their aesthetic preferences, and their overall cultural and artistic sophistication. Musical styles are dynamic, reflecting changes in their societies over time. These changes are an important factor in musical styles’ enrichment and evolution over time. We may speak of a musical style’s features, but only if we keep in mind that it pertains to a given time period. In this sense, the evolution of traditional music is a reflection and consequence of the development of its musical styles. To be sure, although not static, traditional music is relatively slow to change; in some styles of Albanian traditional music, features are thought not to have undergone significant change for hundreds of years (e.g., songs of lament, lullabies, and other non-modernized genres all over the country).

The birth of musical styles is always accompanied by a collaborative process between content and form. New culture in society is a catalyst in the search for new forms of musical expression, thus facilitating the birth of new musical styles. Development of new musical styles in Albanian traditional music does not lead to the extinction of older ones. Old and new styles live alongside in harmony with one another, continuously influencing each other. Newer musical styles contain the same basic framework of all other styles in a given dialect. In other words, they are newer but not fundamentally different. They don’t deviate from their dialect’s modal/tonal system, rather they serve to enhance it.

It is interesting to note that during the second half of the 20th century, newer musical styles have had a tendency to develop within a few villages in a given ethnographic region (rather than being evenly distributed throughout the region). It is difficult to discern why some villages developed their own musical styles of a dialect while others didn’t. These villages were not larger on average, nor were they artistic hubs of a larger area. For example, the village of Bënçë developed a unique style of Lab traditional music that first manifested during the early 1970s. Personal experience in this village in the late 1970s revealed that the most notable feature there was a skilled and prolific lyricist. Soloists and singers would meet with him and after hearing the lyrics create their own parts in a song. One can postulate that it was simply more talent in this village that led to the dawn of their unique musical style — more people with a creative zeal and skills to go along.
Chapter Four

Gheg Musical Dialect

Gheg traditional music is full of originality and individuality. As a vital component of social life, it developed and took form from generation to generation. As there is a complete absence of any historical documents, it is difficult to ascertain the period in history during which distinctly Gheg traditional music was born. In any case, it is believed that it has been present for a long time and has its roots during the Illyro-Thracian era. The Italian scholar Lorenzo Tardo, while speaking about the traditional music of Albanian emigrants in Italy, circa the second half of the 15th century, states:

Albanians, because of their hatred for Muslim enslavement, left their country and did not bring with them the music of Constantinople, nor the art of trained chanters, but instead an ancient regional, mountainous musical tradition which was alive in the 400s and 500s, but actually extends to an even older time [Tardo 1938:111].

Evidence of Gheg traditional music’s ancientness is found in the features that characterize it, but even to the untrained ear, this music leaves an impression that it is archaic. Some specific characteristics testifying to its old age are: its incomplete diatonic modal/tonal structure, existence of recitative vocals and distinct loud calls, and songs with a complete lack of instrumental accompaniment. Although these features can be found throughout Gheg traditional music, they are especially common in songs of “call to action,” the legendary heroic epic, songs of lament, and lullabies (these genres will be discussed later in the chapter). Gheg traditional music encompasses a comprehensive range of song themes, including everyday life, love, work, customs and traditions, battles, bravery, heroism, warriorship, and so on. Lyrics centering around bravery, courage or skill in battle are especially notable in Gheg traditional music, and they usually have a dramatic or epic feel. One such example is the song entitled “Your Name Will Never Be Forgotten,” dedicated to Bajram Curri (1862–1925), an Albanian hero:

I
Hey, the Earth is shaking,
The Highlands are booming,
Hey, in these mountains men are fighting,
Hey, together with the brave ones of Krasniqe,¹
With Bajram Curri,² the man with a steel heart!
Bajram Curri, oh Bajram Curri,
Your name will never be forgotten,
You were born from mother Gjakova,³
Kosovo can never forget you!

25
Hey, the brave one has emerged from these our mountains,
Hey, smoke and flames were flowing from his mouth,
He fought with the trader Kadri Mehmeti,4
And in Dragobi our brave one left us,
Bajram Curri, oh Bajram Curri, ....

Fundamental Features

When broadly considering the Gheg musical dialect, its most fundamental characteristics are:

- monophonic structural character;
- modal/tonal system, which at times is diatonic and at other times chromatic;
- generally measurable meter/rhythm; and
- usual accompaniment by musical instruments.

Monophonic Structural Character

Monophonic structural character means that the music has only one melodic line. Songs can be performed by one or more singers, but the structure always remains monophonic; when songs are sung by more than one singer, every member performs the same melodic line. When more than one vocalist is present, melody can be performed in unison by all singers, or the same notes can be performed in different octaves. Oftentimes, use of a technique referred to as call and response takes place when two or more singers are present. Here, just one singer performs the first musical phrase, the call, while one singer (or more) performs the next one, the response. This pattern repeats itself a few times until the end of the song. Instruments at times are played by the singers themselves, and at other times separate performers are designated to play them. In other words, some performers are singers as well as instrumentalists, while some are singers only and others instrumentalists only. Being accompanied by musical instruments, Gheg traditional music becomes homophonic.

Diatonic and Chromatic Modal/Tonal Systems

Gheg traditional music consists of two types of modal/tonal structure: diatonic and chromatic. The melody is characterized by an ambitus that can be narrow or normal (range of pitches can vary from a third up to an octave). The diatonic modal/tonal system means that musical structure is made up of two semitones and five whole tones. In Gheg traditional music, diatonic modes/scales are of minor character, a feature present throughout all Albanian traditional music. The chromatic modal/tonal system consists of a musical structure in which certain pitches alternate by means of an accidental, i.e., they go up or down by a semitone. As a rule, in Gheg traditional music, the notes B and C alternate. B decreases by a semitone, becoming B-flat; C goes up by a semitone and thus becomes C-sharp.

The main distinction between the diatonic and chromatic modal/tonal systems rests in the way that the semitones are rendered. In the diatonic system, semitones do not follow one another, whereas in the chromatic system they may follow each other. The diatonic system in Gheg traditional music consists of the following characteristics:
• minor third above the basic note (A);
• the existence of semitones between the B–C and also the E–F notes;
• the existence of the note G under the A note; and
• the often incomplete nature of musical modes/scales.

Regarding the chromatic system in Gheg traditional music, its major characteristics are:

• alteration, that is, increase or decrease by a semitone, which results in, among other effects, generation of intervals with distinct functions, such as: the dissonant interval of the minor second and the distinctive interval of the augmented second;
• use of the notes B and B-flat, and C and C-sharp, in a manner that leads to the increase of minor seconds within musical modes/scales;
• the existence of the note G under A; and
• the often incomplete nature of musical modes/scales.

Both diatonic and chromatic modal/tonal systems in Gheg traditional music are products of the complex interplay among their fundamental major features listed earlier.

**Measurable Meter/Rhythm**

Gheg traditional music generally consists of a measurable meter/rhythm; in other words, usually it is metrically/rhythmically well defined. Musical pieces, whether songs, instrumentals, or dances, through being metrically organized in a simple or compound or intermixed manner, are metrically/rhythmically precise. In addition, the meter/rhythm found in Gheg traditional music can be quite complex, which piques the interest of many scholars. Artists performing this music are not professionally trained; sometimes they come from very rural areas with low levels of socioeconomic development, yet they come up with well-defined, repeating patterns of music that at times are quite elaborate.

**Accompaniment by Musical Instruments**

Gheg traditional music is usually accompanied by musical instruments. Some of the more common ones are: the whistle; the shepherd’s flute; an oboe-like woodwind instrument referred to as a *zurna*; a two-string mandolin with a long neck referred to as a *chifteli*; a long-necked string instrument with 5 to 12 strings in 3 courses and 12 to 22 frets, called a *sharki*; a bowed, single-stringed instrument with an egg-shaped body and long neck, called a *lahutë*; the tambourine (*dajre* or *deff*); and the drum (*lodër* or *daulle*). A *dajre* (or *deff*) is found in both rural and urban musics. Basically, it is used to keep the rhythm of the music steady. Its membrane is made of goatskin stretched over a wooden ring. Along the edge of the *dajre* there are several pairs of loosely attached metal disks, which produce short, crisp sounds as the player strikes the instrument with the wrist and the fingers. Traditionally, the *dajre* was a female instrument. However, today it is also plied by men.

The most common musical genres containing instrumental accompaniment are: lyrical song with all its various themes (e.g., work, weddings), ballad, legendary heroic epic, and historic heroic epic. Lyrical song mostly employs the whistle, shepherd’s flute, *zurna*, *chifteli*, *sharki*, and tambourine. The legendary heroic epic always features one instrument, the *lahutë*, whereas the ballad and historic heroic epic use this instrument amongst a number of others. Traditional dances are accompanied by the shepherd’s flute, *zurna*, and a certain
drum referred to as a *lodër* in Albanian. It is usually the singers themselves who are playing the instruments. The number of instrumentalist singers (within one song) can vary greatly across Gheg traditional music, from 1 to 10, 20, or even more. Relatively rare are the instances when the singer is just singing while another person is playing an instrument.

In older days, only one type of instrument served to accompany a song. During the second half of the 20th century, songs evolved to include the presence of a few different types of instruments, leading to the birth of small groups referred to as *little orchestras* (in Albanian: *orkestrina*). Instrumental accompaniment confers modal/tonal stability to Gheg traditional music, so changes from a lower to a higher modal/tonal center do not take place. Also, the presence of instruments leads to meters/rhythms that are measurable and to a more dynamic sound. The genres of lullabies, laments, and songs of “call to action” are *a cappella*.

Gheg traditional music is usually made up of four, six, or eight musical phrases. More recent music has also evolved in the manner in which singing is organized into stanzas. Whereas in the past all lyrics were fit into one long verse, nowadays strophic songs made up of several stanzas are prevalent.

*Notable Musical Styles*

Gheg traditional music is considered to be made up of different styles based on differences in musical features. Each style is confined to a particular geographic region, after which it is named. The Gheg genres already mentioned receive varying amounts of play in each musical style, being heavily featured in some while virtually not existing in others. What follows is a discussion of the most salient features found in each of the Gheg notable musical styles, with some emphasis on the most differentiating characteristics. Before proceeding, it should be mentioned that there are many commonalities among them; to the untrained ear they might sound almost the same. However, subtle differences add up to make them instantly distinguishable by someone raised in the culture or who has otherwise gained familiarity with the music.

**Musical Style of the Main Highlands**

The Main Highlands lie in northwest Albania, bordering mostly Montenegro to the north and west, and the Drin River in the south. As this region is located in the northernmost, relatively isolated periphery of the country, folklore has served a vital role in the social life and entertainment of its inhabitants. Within the style of the Main Highlands all genres of Gheg traditional music lead an active life. Lyrical song is noted for its wide array of themes, such as historic events and heroes, and also matters of day-to-day affairs. Epic dances are also an emphasized form of folklore in this region. Here men are the performers and they sing and dance simultaneously. A few of these dances are interesting in their ritualistic, sword-fighting acts.

Music of the Main Highlands is very similar to that of the Small Highlands. Both are uniquely characterized by frequent use of the *lahutë*, a feature that is virtually absent in other Gheg musical styles. The *lahutë* is mostly used in the legendary heroic epic, a genre quite popular in these two regions. The main difference between the styles of the Main Highlands and Small Highlands lies in that the former generally sounds more primitive. In
the style of the Main Highlands, melodies are usually composed of a few notes (often completely recitative), the meter/rhythm is simple or compound and sometimes irregular, and songs tend to be short. Overall, songs in the Main Highlands are quite slow in tempo and convey a low level of energy. This serves to create an epic and distant impression.

**Musical Style of the Small Highlands**

The Small Highlands are situated in northeast Albania, bordered by Kosovo in the east and Drin River in the south. Although the epic, distant feel is certainly present in the musical style of the Small Highlands, generally, this style sounds more musically developed compared to the Main Highlands; melodies contain more notes, singing is less often recitative, tempo is faster, and meter/rhythm is more often complex and measurable. Overall, songs are less monotonous. Another difference rests in that singers in the Small Highlands perform at a high register or pitch. Small Highlands' music contains more chromatic elements compared to Main Highlands in modal/tonal structure. This is thought to be an influence coming from the town of Gjakovë in this region.

**Musical Style of Mirditë**

Mirditë as a region is south of the Highlands and northeast of the city of Lezhë. Its style resembles those of the Main and Small Highlands. Common features include widespread use of the call and response singing technique and in general an epic and distant feel to the music. The style of Mirditë diverges from those of the Highlands in the absence of the labuṭë (i.e., the legendary heroic epic is not performed here) and the level of energy in music. In general, songs of Mirditë are fast and full of energy, yet they retain a sense of grandeur like in the Main and Small Highlands. Meter/rhythm is complex, attesting to a higher level of sophistication compared to both Highlands. Modal/tonal structure in the style of Mirditë can be diatonic or chromatic, no different from the rest of the Gheg musical styles, but chromatic elements are more common.

**Musical Style of Mat**

Mat as a region is located south of Mirditë and west of the city of Peshkopi. Mat music does not especially resemble one of the Gheg styles more than the others. It is characterized and distinguished by lyrical topics that center around everyday events (e.g., work, love) rather than historic and heroic themes that have a mythical flavor. This is reflected in the melody, which takes on a cheerful and straightforward nature. Contrast this with the epic vibe found in other Gheg musical styles. Other features in the musical style of Mat are shared with the rest of the Gheg styles, such as a modal/tonal system that can take on diatonic or chromatic forms and a generally complex meter/rhythm. Within the Mat style there are a couple of dances well known throughout Albania, the most famous one being the “Dance of Burrel.” This is a cheerful dance performed by men and characterized by four repeating musical phrases that are heavily accompanied by drums in the 9/8 meter/rhythm. The instrument generating the melody in the “Dance of Burrel” is the zurna.

**Musical Style of Dibër**

As a region, Dibër is situated south of the Small Highlands, bordering Kosovo to the east. This style is distinguished from the other Gheg musical styles by a more melodically
rich and sophisticated melody that incorporates a number of elements from urban traditional
music. Instruments are used widely, the most popular of which are: the whistle, shepherd’s
flute, zurna, çifteli, and drums. Meter/rhythm is complex, with a tempo that tends to be
faster paced. Female singers often dance as they sing their songs. Traditional dances are
accompanied with shepherd’s flute, zurna, and drums, and they are known for being viva-
cacious and energetic. In many dances, drums play complicated metric/rhythmic patterns
that consist of “beats” of unequal duration in pulses. Additionally, at times, patterns change,
making it difficult, if not impossible, to transcribe. In a large number of performances,
males dance on their toes, a feature unique to the dances in this region.

Distinct Musical Genres

There also exist several distinct genres of Gheg traditional music that receive varying
amounts of attention in different Gheg ethnographic regions. Let us now touch on some of
the genres of Gheg traditional music.

Songs of “Call to Action”

This art form is a reflection of the Gheg mountaineer in past times, the social envi-
ronment in which he lived, and also the attendant traditions and culture. Because of its
specific features, the genre carries with it an ethnic identity tied to the Gheg people. The
word-for-word translation of songs of “call to action” is songs over the elbow (in Albanian:
maje-krahri). The name is derived from the stance taken by the singer while performing.
The singer holds a unique position in which he flexes his right arm at the elbow while plac-
ing his palm on the back of his head or on his right ear. While in this stance, the performer
shouts at a very high register into the distance as if to gather a crowd of people and announce
important news. Some of the news spread includes: the birth of a child, death of a person,
a social gathering for a wedding or a feast, imminent natural disasters such as fires or floods,
calls to battle, and others. Songs of “call to action” used to serve a news-spreading function
in Gheg traditional life. In more-modern times the tradition lost its societal function and
became just a musical genre.

Besides the loud volume of the calls, there is an epic quality to them, suggesting that
their content is of high importance. Songs of “call to action” are performed in all regions
of Ghegëri with minor variation that stems mostly from performers’ nuances. Songs are
made generally of four musical phrases that tend to be really short, only a few words each.
As might be expected, in songs of “call to action” the melody is almost entirely recitative
and always a cappella. Meter/rhythm is either half or entirely free. The following is a trans-
lation from a particular song of “call to action,” entitled “The Eagle Pledged Its Word”:

    The eagle pledged its word,
    Our land we won’t sell,
    High stand our ideals,
    Our land, may you live as long as the mountains!

Songs of “call to action” are performed by men only, usually by one singer. In some
instances there are two or more performers, who use the call and response technique. Here
the singers alternate melodic lines, thus responding to one another. Although this genre is
a proud cultural tradition of the Gheg people, in contemporary times it has waned in popularity. Today, new songs are rarely being produced, but old ones still live on.

**LEGENDARY HEROIC EPIC**

This is an ancient, oral tradition of the people of Ghegëri, in which lyrical verses are joined by the one-stringed *lahutë*, which accompanies with a melodically undeveloped, dry and primitive sound. It is equally accurate to view the legendary heroic epic as an oral, poetic tradition rather than a musical genre. To describe the musical sound as unsophisticated here is not necessarily a criticism. Such a sound gives an epic feel to and is a natural fit for the mystical and heroic lyrics that present to the listener the great mythology and legendry of Northern Albania, as well as the proud warrior history of the region. Indeed, in the legendary heroic epic, the stories concerned human heroes, sometimes with supernatural powers, helped by spirits and deities dwelling in their land to fight for and protect their borders and people.

Sometime during the 18th or 19th centuries the epic evolved to dealing with heroic figures of actual historic existence. This kind of phenomenon gave rise to the birth of another epic: historic heroic epic. It is interesting to note that both genres, legendary heroic epic and historic heroic epic, only existed in the regions of Ghegëri that border other neighboring ethnicities, thus showing that stories were inspired by heroic battles fought by Albanians against neighboring enemies. Today, the tradition is preserved more or less by people in all regions of Ghegëri. The following are a couple of translated excerpts from the legendary heroic epic:

**Muji** and **Halili**

All mighty God, to him we are indebted
We are merely people, and the Almighty has shown us mercy!

When Harapi emerged from the sea,
Young warriors he demanded from the king,
A deep sadness the king experienced,
Three hundred warriors he did find,
All boys without mother and father,
Boys not engaged nor married,
He sent them to Harapi in the battle field,
Three hours, no longer than that,
All with sword Harapi murdered,
A deeper sadness the king experienced,
At that moment his daughter tells him,
“If you seek brave warriors, I can find them,
Brave warriors are Muji and Halili,
People say they’re together in Jutbinë.”

**Muji’s Strength**

Look what Gjeto Bashe Muji did!
Early in the morning the brave one got up,
He wore and fastened his battle suit,
His outfit for war he put on,
Then he fastened his battle sword,
And he readied his battle horse,
Up and at ’em, he jumped on his horse,
And he boldly gazed at the vast highlands,  
With Halili he traveled the mountains,  
“Did you know, Halil o brave one?  
Today we step on the battle field,  
There will come Krajlevič Marki,  
If we can, with a rifle we kill him,  
Or alive we capture him,  
To escape we will not let him.”

As alluded to, melody in the legendary heroic epic has limited versatility. It is generally built on three musical phrases: an introductory phrase, which is instrumental only, followed by the second and third phrases, both of which are instrumental and lyrical. Musically, all three phrases sound quite similar and songs flow naturally from one to another. There are various iterations of the three phrases, with melody staying the same while new lyrics are sung. Many songs are quite long. Other salient musical features of epic music include: ambitus in fourth, fifth, or sixth; incomplete diatonic modes/scales of Dorian and Phrygian types; beginning of songs in E and ending in the A note; the significant role played by the E note in contribution to melody; composed of small intervals (unison, minor second, major second, minor third, and others); flow of pitch, as a rule, in descending order, often in sequence; slow tempo; and a free meter/rhythm. The epic is performed by men only.

As it was mentioned above, the legendary heroic epic is always accompanied by the \textit{labutë}. This is a bowed, single-stringed instrument with an egg-shaped body and long neck, primarily making low-pitched, rough sounds. It is thought that the music accompanying the lyrics of the epic preceded them. Although it is not for certain, the melodies of the \textit{labutë} are thought to have been adapted to the oral tradition sometime during the Middle Ages.

**SONGS OF LAMENT**

This is a distinct genre classified on the basis of common melodic features that always accompany lyrics of lament. Typically, these songs are performed when someone dies, or to mourn someone who died sometime in the recent or distant past. Lyrics verbalize their life or the sorrow the performer is experiencing. As might be expected, melancholic melodic features are present, and the voice of the performer tends to tremble.

**GHEG LULLABIES**

As the name suggests, this genre consists of songs sung by mothers to their babies, to comfort, caress, and put them to sleep. Lullabies are quite similar musically and lyrically in all regions of Albania. Performance is always \textit{a cappella}, with melody being rather simple. Oftentimes lyrics are improvised. Here is a common example from a village near the city of Shkodër:

Rock-a-bye baby, my son,  
Sleep because it is good for you,  
As mother gently caresses you,  
May you become number one in the village,  
Rock-a-bye baby in your cradle,  
As mother caresses you oh dove,  
May you become number one in the village!
Chapter Five

Polyphonic Traditional Music: Origins and General Features

Different scholars who have studied polyphonic traditional music in the Balkans believe that its origins took place a long time ago, during the Thraco-Illyrian era. For example, the Bosnian musicologist Cvjetko Rihtman expressed that the polyphonic singing found in the Balkans could be a remnant of ancient Thraco-Illyrian culture (Rihtman 1952:30–5). This same notion was also described by the Bulgarian ethnomusicologist Nikolay Kaufman, 15 years after Rihtman (Kaufman 1967:2–21). Albanian scholars are also of the opinion that polyphonic traditional music in Albania is ancient, with its roots dating back to Thraco-Illyrian times, like the rest of the polyphonic musical culture of the Balkans (Sokoli 1963:127–38), (Kruta 1989:3–11), (Shetuni 1989b:21–8).

So what are the arguments regarding the age of Albanian polyphonic traditional music based on? It is difficult to have a definitive opinion on the issue, since there is a complete absence of any historical documents, let alone any transcribed music. Scholars thus form their opinions by analyzing the polyphonic traditional music that lives today, as it is presumed to be a product of oral transmission from many generations. Several features point to ancient origins in Albanian polyphonic traditional music, including:

Pentatonic modal/tonal structure.
It is widely thought that pentatonic modal/tonal structure represents an early beginning to a people’s musical culture.

Presence of recitative vocals.
A musical tradition is thought to be in a more primitive state when vocals are not developed in melody.

Existence of calls and shouts.
These elements suggest a primitive stage of development in a people’s musical culture.

A cappella singing.
Lack of instrumental accompaniment is also thought to be an indicator of old age in a musical tradition.

One has to give some consideration to the role that Medieval Byzantine music has played in relation to polyphonic traditional music found in the Balkans; after all, this was an influential entity in the region for hundreds of years (395–1453 and later). It is not
believed that Byzantine music had any hand in giving rise to the polyphonic traditional musics of the Balkans. As already mentioned, the origins of Balkan polyphonic traditional music are believed to be much older. As a whole, polyphonic traditional music in the Balkans represents a more primitive state in comparison to Byzantine music. For one, the former has continually been collectively formed and non-institutionalized, while the latter existed as institutionalized and was created by individual composers. Secondly, Balkan polyphonic traditional music has been heretofore passed on orally. Generally, its interpreters are not musically literate. On the other hand, Byzantine music was consistently documented. Additionally, Balkan polyphonic traditional music is and has been performed by common people while Byzantine music was performed by trained and educated professionals. However, the musics did live side by side for hundreds of years. Naturally, it is expected that they would have had a give-and–take relationship, mutually exerting influence on one another. In regard to Albanian polyphonic traditional music, it is thought that there has been relatively little interaction with Byzantine music because, although the country is in the Balkans, the presence of Byzantine music in Albania was relatively small.

Albanian polyphonic traditional music exists in two dialects, Tosk and Lab. The Tosk musical dialect exists in the geographic regions of Toskëri, Myzeqe, and Chamëri. The Lab dialect is performed in the region of Labëri.

In regard to structure, Albanian polyphonic traditional music exists in three main groups, categorized on the basis of the numbers of melodic lines. There exists music composed of two, three, and four melodic lines. Polyphonic traditional music made up of three melodic lines is widespread throughout the regions of Toskëri, Myzeqe, Chamëri, and Labëri. The two-voiced variety is found in only a few villages in the aforementioned ethnographic regions, while the four-voiced variety is restricted to Labëri.

The first voice is called marrës in Albanian and can roughly be translated as “taker” in English, while the second is referred to as kthyes or “turner.” The third voice is called hedhës, which means “launcher.” Lastly, we have the iso, meaning “drone” in English. These are descriptive names, referring to the function each line of melody plays. The roles of taker, turner, and launcher are all performed by only one singer, while a group of people participate in performing the role of drone. The taker begins and serves as the leader of songs. He or she individually sings the first lines of every verse, dictating the lyrics and melody to be performed by the rest of the group. Following the introductory lines of the taker, the music is punctuated by the turner, who typically has a short individual part that serves as a cue for the rest of the performers to join. When all singers have joined the verse, the taker and turner continue their melodic lines in harmony with the rest of the group. Their voices can be distinguishable from one another or they can blend in. The launcher begins after the cue of the taker, simultaneously with the drone, and serves to enrich the song both melodically and harmonically with its distinguishable melodic line that often undulates. The role of the drone is to sing one note continuously, which serves as a modal/tonal center.

It is thought that in its beginnings, Albanian polyphonic traditional music was composed of two melodic lines, the taker and turner. Early on, the turner probably played a non-specific melodic role; this is more or less still the case in today’s two-voiced polyphonic traditional music of the women in the city of Gjirokastër. The turner is believed to have gradually become more precisely defined melodically. A good contemporary example of two-voiced (taker and turner) traditional music in which the turner has a clearly defined melody is found in the music of the men of Dukat.

As time passed, the drone is believed to have been the next melodic line to evolve into
Albanian polyphonic traditional music, thus giving rise to three-voiced polyphony. The drone seems to have fit in quite naturally with the preexisting melodic lines; today it is pervasive in Albanian polyphony, and varieties without it are rare. Three-voiced polyphonic traditional music was an artistic victory, as it enriched and diversified the harmonic interplay between melodic lines. The launcher was the last melodic line to develop, giving rise to four-voiced polyphony. In fact, this type of music is completely absent in the regions of Toskëri, Myzeqe, and Chamëri, existing only in Labëri. Although the birth of the launcher marked an increase in artistic sophistication, vocal harmony and interplay did not fundamentally change from that of three-voiced polyphony. Actually, in a number of Lab musical styles, the same songs can be sung with or without the launcher. On the other hand, the drone serves a vital function in Albanian polyphonic traditional music, as there are no instances in which one song normally containing the drone can be performed without it.

In the past, inhabitants of Toskëri (composed of Toskëri, Myzeqe, Chamëri, and Labëri) have traditionally been involved primarily with sheep herding. The geography and climate in this region of Albania facilitated herding much more than farming. Consequently, pastoral culture was widely reflected in traditional polyphony in the south. Recurring themes have to do with the difficulties and also joys of pastoral life. Common topics are: singing about tall boys and pretty girls going with their herds, the sheep and mountain dogs, the herdsman’s camp, and ram bells. Pastoral life is also significantly reflected in the melodies. Singing is intermixed with recitative shouts and whistles that are supposed to resemble characteristic sounds of shepherds, thus creating an image of a pastoral environment. The following is a representative sample of lyrics, from the well-known song *Sons of Shepherds We Are*:

**I**

Sons of shepherds we are,
Goats and sheep we have tended,
   By those hills and by those shadows,
Where the girls look pretty as stars,
Girls—oh stars—oh,
   In those mountains in those paths,
Where the partridge sings its song!

**II**

Together, amongst crags with bushes,
We’ve had and overcome troubles,
   In those mountains of rocks,
Climb the boys like deer,
Boys—oh, brave ones—oh,
   In those fields of shamrocks,
Where the nightingale sings its songs!

**III**

Sons of shepherds we were,
Under tents we slept,
   Snow and rain we have endured,
Sometimes fed and sometimes hungry,
Whoever dared encroach our land,
We have shot in the forehead,
Not one step could they take,
Muzzles over their faces we imposed!
Nature in the region of Toshëri is quite pristine and beautiful. In the east and south there are rugged mountains with little plant life. The west lies alongside the Ionian Sea. In the mountains the climate tends to be cool in the summers and harsh in the winters. The seashore on the other hand has a characteristic Mediterranean climate. Songs in Toshëri are reflective of its beautiful natural environment, often provoking lively emotions.
Chapter Six

Tosk Musical Dialect

The region of Toskëri comprises all of Albania south of the Shkumbin River. The Tosk musical dialect thus exists in this region, with the exception of an area in Southwestern Albania referred to as Labëri. The music found in Labëri is so distinct that it is grouped as a separate dialect, which will be discussed later.

Tosk traditional music has a tremendous amount of diversity within it. There are three regions with easily discernable variations in their brand of Tosk music, named Toskëri (not to be confused with the same name referring to Southern Albania in general), Myzeqe, and Chamëri. Within these regions there are substantial further subdivisions in musical features. The term *style* is reserved for the most fundamental subdivisions in this book, so the music generally found in Toskëri, Myzeqe, and Chamëri will be referred to as a *sub-dialect*. Discussion of the musical styles found within the Tosk, Myzeqar, and Cham sub-dialects is beyond the scope of this book.

Fundamental Features

The most important unifying features found throughout all variations of the Tosk musical dialect are:

- largely polyphonic structure;
- developed melody;
- pentatonic modal/tonal system;
- imitative melodic lines;
- either free or measurable meter/rhythm; and
- lack of instrumental accompaniment.

Polyphonic Structure

More specifically, in the vast majority of the Tosk dialect there are either two or three melodic lines. In two-melodic line polyphony, songs are performed by the *taker* and the *turner*. These roles are always fulfilled by only one person. In three-melodic line polyphony, the taker and turner are joined by the *drone*. The former two are again one-man jobs, but the role of the drone is assumed by a group of people. The taker is more than just the first person to begin singing. He or she dictates the tone, emotions, and overall melody throughout the song. In Tosk music, the turner is usually a variation in the melodic line of the
taker. The drone provides a background foundation consisting of a one-note melodic line. For completeness, it is worth mentioning that the genres of lullabies, lament, and pastoral song, although only a small fraction of the entire Tosk dialect, do exist, but unlike the rest of the music their structure is monophonic.

**DEVELOPED MELODY**

Tosk traditional music is distinctly richer melodically compared to its neighbor of Lab traditional music in Southern Albania. This is reflected in its improvisational nature of singing, frequent musical ornamentalations of various kinds, and the presence of pitches in the high range. More specifically, it is the taker and turner who have more developed melodies in Tosk traditional music compared to Lab traditional music, since the drone performs only one note in both dialects.

**PENTATONIC MODAL/TONAL SYSTEM**

Tosk traditional music is built on the pentatonic mode/scale, which is a musical scale consisting of five pitches. As a rule, the five different pitches are placed in intervals of major seconds and minor thirds. Exceptions to this rule do occur, manifesting as shortened or widened intervals, but these are sporadic. Pentatonic structure in Tosk traditional music is mono-modal, meaning that melodic lines belong to a single mode/scale. Also, the minor third originates between the second and fourth grades (notes B and D).

**IMITATIVE SINGING**

Melodic lines in Tosk traditional music generally have resemblance to one another. More specifically, the turner will engage in emulating the melodic line of the taker as a means of supporting the singing begun by the taker. The emulation of the taker by the turner also exists when it comes to meter/rhythm. In general, the turner will try to keep the same pace with the taker.

**FREE OR MEASURABLE METER/RHYTHM**

Throughout the Tosk dialect, there is an interesting compartmentalization when it comes to meter/rhythm. Music performed by men is generally metrically/rhythmically free, whereas that performed by women is generally measurable in meter/rhythm.

**LACK OF INSTRUMENTAL ACCOMPANIMENT**

*A cappella* singing is a pervasive characteristic in Tosk traditional music. This feature is thought to have led to the development of the following three phenomena: the niche of the drone, modulation, and dancing accompanied by singing.

In the slow and complicated evolution of polyphonic traditional music, a crucial achievement was the development of the drone. The drone holds the mode/scale steady, helps to integrate the other melodic lines, and augments the emotional punch of the melody. Being *a cappella*, Tosk and also Lab traditional musics are considered to have the drone serve as their “instrumental accompaniment.” The drone is the major factor that makes Tosk and Lab polyphony stable from a modal/tonal standpoint.
Modulation refers to a continuous displacement from a given, lower modal/tonal center to a higher one. This is accomplished as follows: through melodic ascent of the taker during its cadences; through melodic ascent of the turner during its cadences; and through an ascension that taker and turner reciprocate with one another. These elevations are minor but nevertheless discernable. In professional music and any other music with instrumental accompaniment, modulation is accomplished by instruments. Achieving modulation through voice requires a large amount of experience and a high level of skill, more so than when using musical instruments. Modulation through voice brings a unique and beautiful aesthetic touch to the emotional quality of songs in Toskëri.

A cappella singing is so widespread throughout Southern Albania that traditional dances are accompanied by singing as opposed to instruments. Dance dictates a certain set of features in singing. In general, songs accompanying traditional dance are melodically more recitative. Metrically/rhythmically, they are measurable so the dancers can anticipate and repeat their moves.

During the course of historical development of the Tosk musical dialect, all three of its sub-dialects—Tosk, Cham, and Myzeqar—started to include musical instruments in their songs. This process is believed to have begun during the end of the 19th century, a time when musical instruments, such as the clarinet, violin, lute, and tambourine, were introduced in Southern Albania. However, instrumental use never became widespread, as the majority of songs remained and continue to remain a cappella. Even in songs with instrumental accompaniment, instruments have small parts. For example, at times, songs begin with a short instrumental introduction after which a cappella singing begins and continues for the entire stanza. Although rare, songs with continuous instrumental presence do exist in the Tosk dialect. These songs begin with an instrumental introduction consisting of clarinet, violin, lute, and sometimes tambourine. Following the introduction, vocals begin, and only one instrument, the lute, continues the rest of the song. Interestingly, in such cases, the lute serves to play one musical chord continuously (the modality/tonality of the first degree), serving as a harmonic background support to the melody. This is of course similar to the role of the drone, so the purpose of the lute here can be thought of as a supplementary drone. Tosk traditional music with instrumental accompaniment tends to be more organized melodically and harmonically, and measurable metrically/rhythmically. When present, instruments have adapted to Tosk songs’ musical features without compromising their distinctiveness and aesthetic value.

Notable Musical Sub-Dialects

As previously mentioned, the Tosk dialect is composed of the Tosk, Myzeqar, and Cham sub-dialects. All of these musics have virtually identical cultural roles in their respective regions of Southern Albania, being performed at a variety of different occasions, including weddings, holidays, family gatherings, and social gatherings.

The Tosk sub-dialect encompasses the largest ethnographic region; it takes up most of Southeastern Albania and has within it the cities of Pogradec, Korçë, Ersekë, Leskovik, Përmet, and others. Myzeqe occupies the northwest portion of Southern Albania, bordered by the Shkumbin River in the north, the Vjosa River in the south, the Adriatic Sea in the west, with imprecise borders to the east. Chamëri, the region where Cham music is found, is an imprecisely defined region, most of which is actually in present-day Greece. Today,
there are only seven Cham villages and one town—Konispol—in Albania, found in the southernmost part of the country. Of the three sub-dialects of Tosk music, the Tosk and Cham sub-dialects are most closely related, and they share largely the same differences compared to Myzeqar music.

In general, Tosk and Cham musics are melodically more developed compared to Myzeqar music. Their songs, instrumentals, and dances consist of melodies that manifest more variation, including ambitus with wide ranges and larger intervals between notes. With this said, the Myzeqar sub-dialect can be thought of as possessing more harmonic diversity than its two cousins, as the taker and turner at times have contrasting melodic lines here, while they are largely imitative in Tosk and Cham traditional music. Myzeqar traditional music is known for incorporating instruments in a greater number of songs than the other two sub-dialects; probably about one out of three songs in Myzeqe has some instrumental presence. The instruments used have already been mentioned, and their parts adhere to the patterns already described for the Tosk dialect in general. Myzeqar traditional music is generally metrically/rhythmically measurable, and a greater proportion of Myzeqar songs, instrumentals, and dances are metrically/rhythmically measurable compared to Tosk and Cham music. Out of the three sub-dialects, Cham music possesses the least number of styles within it, and the differences are subtler from one style to another.

So how do the Tosk and Cham sub-dialects differ from one another? Part of the difference between them has to do with the fact that the Cham people are a distinct Albanian identity. They refer to themselves as Chams, although they are ethnic Albanians, and their culture is no different from other Albanians in the South. In addition to this, there are of course musical differences that lead to classification in separate sub-dialects.

As the largest branch of the Tosk dialect, the Tosk sub-dialect can be thought of as the “classic” version of all Tosk music. Overall, sound here is smooth, and as alluded to, there is a wide range of melodic variation. The vocals in Cham music, unlike Tosk music, tend to have a nasal quality to them. More often than in Tosk music, pitch tends to be lower. Overall, sound is remarkably smooth, and a mild, constant sense of melancholia is usually present. These qualities make for quite beautiful songs that can provoke a deep emotional reaction in the listener. However, most people familiar with it will not describe a sad sense of emotion arising from listening to Cham traditional music, but rather an awesome appreciation of how beautiful these smooth, nasal voices sound. Cham traditional music also has a meter/rhythm that is mixed in some songs, instrumentals, and dances, a feature quite rare in the Tosk sub-dialect, and meter/rhythm is measurable in Cham music more often than in Tosk music. Instruments are incorporated in a larger proportion of Cham than Tosk songs and dances, although not nearly as often as in Myzeqar music.

The Tosk sub-dialect has a rich repertoire of songs, instrumentals, and dances with masterful artistic performances well known to all Albanians. The most famous Tosk creation is perhaps “I Am Left Here, Brothers, I’m Left Here for Good” (In Albanian: “Mbeçë, more shokë, mbeçë”), a song performed for the first time in the 1968 National Folkloric Festival. This is an emotionally powerful *a cappella* song consisting of pitches in the high range combined with touching, graphic lyrics that can give any listener goose bumps. The subject matter is about an Albanian soldier in the Ottoman army who winds up dying in battle with his remains buried in a foreign land. The lyrics can be translated as follows:

I am left here, brothers, I’m left here for good,
Past the Bridge of Qabë!!
Send regards to my mother:
She shall sell both my oxen,
And console my widow,
And sell my horse and mule,
And raise my son and daughter.
If she asks about me,
Tell her he married!
If she asks:— What wife did he marry?
— Seven bullets to the chest!
If she asks:— What horse did he mount?
— One with three woods of death!
If she asks:— Who was with him?
— Ravens and crows are eating him!

For its part, the Cham sub-dialect is noted for having a number of dances well known throughout Albania. Perhaps the most famous of these is “The Dance of Osman Taka,” believed to have originated in the 19th century and dedicated to a Cham Albanian hero who fought the Ottomans. In contemporary times, this dance has been performed at a number of national occasions, and the instrumental accompaniment includes the clarinet, violin, lute, and tambourine in addition to vocals. “A Tribute to Çelo Mezani” is another well-known Cham creation, revered by Albanians for its artistic mastery and deeply emotional quality. This song was performed for the first time in the late 1970s at the National Folkloric Festival.

It deserves mention that all music in the Tosk dialect requires a high degree of artistic skill to be performed. Although most performers do not have much formal musical training, they have been schooled and groomed as singers, instrumentalists, and dancers throughout their lives in order to precisely achieve the distinct features that define the music in their region.
Chapter Seven

Lab Musical Dialect

The term Labëri refers to a region in Southwestern Albania that includes the cities of Vlorë, Tepelenë, Gjirokastër, and Sarandë. As previously mentioned, although a part of geographical Toskëri, Labëri is distinguished by a traditional music that is unique enough to be grouped as a separate musical dialect—the Lab musical dialect.

Fundamental Features

Core features characterizing the Lab musical dialect are the following:

- largely polyphonic structure;
- recitative melody;
- pentatonic modal/tonal system;
- contrasting melodic lines;
- measurable meter/rhythm; and
- lack of instrumental accompaniment.

Polyphonic Structure

In Lab polyphonic music, the songs, instrumentals, and dances can consist of two, three, or four melodic lines. As is the case with Tosk polyphonic music, two- and three-melodic-line polyphony consists of taker and turner, and taker, turner, and drone, respectively. The taker and turner are again one-person roles, while the drone is performed by a number of people. In four-melodic-line songs, the launcher, a one-person role, joins the taker, turner, and drone. The launcher generally begins simultaneously with the drone in Lab polyphony, following the taker and turner. Its role can take several forms. For one, it can mimic the taker, singing the same words in similar notes. In these instances the launcher confers a stylistic enrichment to melody through variation in some notes, addition of notes as redundant vowel sounds and syllables, and the use of different inflections. A classic example in which the role of the launcher assumes the form of mimicry can be found in the style of Gjirokastër. Secondly, the launcher can sing just one note, like the drone, but a minor third higher than the drone. In these instances the launcher is contributing primarily to harmonic enrichment. The styles of Himarë, Dukat, and Pilur are typical representations of the launcher taking this form. Lastly, the launcher can assume a role in which it begins singing a minor third higher than the drone, then, usually about halfway through the song,
drops down to the same note as the drone. Kurvelesh, Lopës, Lunxheri, Zagori, Smokthinë, and Bënçë are representative styles of the launcher performing in this fashion. The latter two roles of the launcher are most widespread in Lab polyphony.

Like Tosk traditional music, Lab traditional music contains a small amount of monophony, found in the genres of lullabies, lament, and pastoral song. These genres are not performed very often but they do indeed exist and have been sung at different music competitions and festivals in Albania.

**Recitative Melody**

In contrast to its Tosk neighbor, Lab traditional music is characterized by a distinctly recitative melodic nature. The beginnings and endings of songs tend to sound most recitative. When all melodic lines are performing, songs become more arioso. The degree of recitative quality varies from style to style. Especially recitative are songs that accompany Lab dances.

**Pentatonic Modal/Tonal System**

Like Tosk traditional music, all Lab traditional music, vocal and instrumental, is framed on the pentatonic musical mode/scale. In contrast to its geographic neighbor, Lab traditional music is bimodal, meaning that melodic lines belong to two different modes/scales. In this dialect the minor third is born between the first and third degrees (notes A and C). Lab traditional music manifests notes above and below the modal/tonal center (the note performed by the drone), but in comparison to Tosk traditional music, its range is more restricted. The Tosk dialect possesses a wider range, with the majority of notes belonging to a register higher than the drone’s note.

**Contrasting Melodic Lines**

A fundamental property characterizing Lab traditional music, vocal and instrumental, is contrast, in a number of aspects, between the melodic lines of taker and turner. It is worthwhile to note the distinction from Tosk traditional music, in which the first two melodic lines are imitative. This seems to be a keen difference in the evolution of the two dialects over time. Differences in singing between taker and turner can be found in melody, harmony, meter/rhythm, and modal/tonal structure. Usually, the taker’s melodic line begins and continues throughout the song in a register of higher notes compared to the drone. On the other hand, the turner’s melodic line is usually at a lower register than the drone note during the course of the song. The taker and turner develop their parts in different modes/scales, thus leading to modal/tonal contrast. So, if for example the taker builds his melodic line harmonically in the modality/tónality of first degree, the turner develops his in the modality/tónality of third degree, fifth degree or the sixth degree. Modal/tonal contrast is an important feature in Lab traditional music because it along with dissonant harmony between the taker and turner, is a key factor giving Lab traditional music its characteristic emotional feel. Regarding meter/rhythm, contrast between taker and turner exists in that the turner employs a meter with more beats compared to the taker. Often-used beats are 1/4 or 1/8 for the taker and 1/16 or 1/32 for the turner. This metric/rhythmic contrast gives Lab traditional music a sense of liveliness and energy.
Measurable Meter/Rhythm

With few exceptions, Lab traditional music utilizes meters/rhythms that overall are described as measurable. But the story is not as simple as this might sound. Different musical phrases within a song can be free. In many songs, there is an intertwining of both measurable and free phrases. A general pattern exists; that is, when all singers are active, the overall meter/rhythm is measurable, but when one or two people are performing (taker, or taker and turner, alone) the meter/rhythm tends to be half or completely free. The beginning phrase of the song, performed by the taker, is especially noted for its free meter/rhythm. Also, all types of cadences are metrically/rhythmically either half or completely free, as well as the recitative calls of the main soloists, especially the turner. Whenever the meter/rhythm is measurable, a distinct quality of Lab traditional music is its propensity to switch from one meter to another within the song. An example is the gradual and subtle change in meter/rhythm from 3/8 to 2/8 that is especially found in the styles of Gjirokastër, Smokthinë, Himarë, Pilur, and Bëncë. Here, measurable meter/rhythm begins in 3/8, then gradually switches to 2/8. Apparently, the performers find it natural to switch from the measurable but tricky-to-maintain 3/8 meter/rhythm to the measurable and more straightforward 2/8 meter/rhythm. The opposite change, from 2/8 to 3/8, is never observed. The a cappella nature of Lab traditional music is thought to be a factor leading to this change of measurable meter/rhythm.

Lack of Instrumental Accompaniment

The Lab dialect is almost completely a cappella. But the burgeoning artistic life of traditional music during the second half of the 20th century led to the incorporation of musical instruments in a few instances. Today, there exist a handful of songs that are accompanied by instruments such as: the shepherd’s flute, clarinet, violin, lute, and tambourine. Like in Tosk traditional music, the instruments serve to form an introduction to a stanza, and they cease after vocals begin. This pattern repeats itself throughout the song. There is not one example of instruments accompanying vocals throughout the course of a song.

From analyzing the use of instruments in the Tosk and Lab dialects, it is apparent that many of the same ones are used and that they serve very similar roles. However, it should be emphasized that this does not mean instruments were a common feature of the musics from older times. They are an artificial introduction from sometime around the turn of the 19th century. Lab and Tosk traditional musics are cousin dialects, and they are a cappella in their purest form.

Notable Musical Styles

The Lab dialect has a large number of musical styles for a relatively small geographic region. The following is a description of the most notable ones.

Musical Style of Kurvelesh

Kurvelesh is an area consisting of 15 villages. Throughout the course of history, its inhabitants have managed to keep their music, folklore, and other traditions quite pure.
Lyrical topics in the Kurvelesh musical style reflect many aspects of the Lab villager life, including the social character of Labs, struggles encountered by them, and their heroic feats in various wars, as well as the pristine natural beauty of Labëri.

Kurvelesh is one of the Lab musical styles least influenced by changes in Albanian culture during the second half of the 20th century, preserving its purity in traditional singing. Music in Kurvelesh most often is made up of three melodic lines, with some instances of four melodic lines. Melodically, the style traditionally is distinguished by an ambitus that may be normal or narrow (pitches can range from a fifth up to an octave) that is typified in many songs by frequent use of the minor seventh. Kurvelesh melody is also generally characterized by the use of small intervals, mainly prime, major second, minor third, and perfect fourth, but also others. The perfect fourth is noted as an interval often employed by the taker. It usually marks the beginning of a musical phrase.

For the most part, it is difficult to describe Kurvelesh songs as clearly consisting primarily of minor or major chords. The chords themselves are relatively limited, making Kurvelesh harmonically perhaps the least developed style within the Lab dialect. Harmony is often made up of three or four different notes, one of which is frequently contributed by two different melodic lines. Metrically/rhythmically, the most frequently seen meters/rhythms in the Kurvelesh style are 2/8 or 2/4, but there are a number of others, such as 3/8 and 3/4. Songs in Kurvelesh are usually performed by groups composed of either men only or women only. In more recent times mixed groups have also been introduced. These are made up of younger people.

**Musical Style of Lopës**

The geographic region of Lopës consists of five villages. Lopës musical style embodies the fundamental features of Lab traditional music, but it is not widely known to Albanians outside of Labëri. Lopës and Kurvelesh are very similar styles, with two differences being that Lopës is generally less recitative sounding and has a slower tempo than Kurvelesh. Melodies here have a lyrical character when songs deal with topics of Lab nature and environment, the life of a Lab villager, and pastoral work; on the other hand, they consist of more dramatic or epic notes in songs of hardship or quarrel over herds and pastures. Indeed, shepherds have lost lives over such quarrels in Labëri. Like Kurvelesh, the style of Lopës is characterized by an ambitus that can be narrow or normal, with the range of pitches here being from a sixth up to an octave. The use of the minor seventh is also typical in Lopës. Lopës music can be made up of three or four melodic lines; however, the launcher is not vital and songs can easily be performed without its participation. Three-melodic-line harmony exists in two groups: harmony made up of two notes with the first degree doubled, and that of three notes with each melodic line performing a different note. Harmony with four melodic lines exists in three separate groups: two-note harmony with the first and third degrees doubled, three-note harmony with only the first degree doubled, and four-note harmony with no doubling of any degree.

The Lopës style usually manifests itself as metrically/rhythmically measurable and precise, utilizing a variety of meters/rhythms. Simple ones, such as 2/8 and 3/8, and mixed ones, such as 5/8 and 9/8, are found. In addition, there are songs in which the meter/rhythm switches, for example, from 5/8 to 3/8. Like in Kurvelesh, the groups of performers are usually either all men or all women.
Musical Style of Lunxheri

Lunxheri is an area of Labëri made up of 18 villages. The music here is sometimes not considered a Lab style, although ultimately this is an erroneous assertion. This view stems from a few factors. Firstly, although Lunxheri as a region is clearly within the boundaries of Labëri, its inhabitants don’t identify themselves as Labs. Secondly, the Albanian spoken in Lunxheri does not contain the same accent as that in the rest of Labëri. In addition, some customs differ between Lunxheri and the rest of Labëri. However, these differences are all trumped by the fact that music in Lunxheri is clearly Lab from a modal/tonal and structural standpoint.

Songs in the style of Lunxheri, besides dealing with more common themes, such as pastoral life or heroic war feats, also entertain the topic of emigration, a relatively unique theme in Labëri. The period these songs refer to is circa the 1920s to 1930s, a time when a number of Albanians, mainly from a few pockets in Southern Albania, left the country. At that time only the men would emigrate, and they would leave their families behind. This is reflected in songs as a sense of sadness from husbands being apart from their wives and children.

Melodically, the Lunxheri style is characterized by a normal ambitus, with the range of pitches being either a minor seventh or an octave. Harmonically, Lunxheri songs are usually of four melodic lines. Like in Kurvelesh and Lopës, chords here tend to be limited. Also, chords are dissonant with one another. Metrically/rhythmically, Lunxheri primarily uses simple meters/rhythms, with the only instances of mixed meters/rhythms encountered in songs that accompany dances.

In the early 1960s a group of artists attempted to introduce continuous instrumental accompaniment in some Lunxheri songs. At the time this generated some interest and attention from scholars and media, and expectations were high. After a few years, the fascination around the vamped up songs of Lunxheri dwindled as it became apparent that instruments were an awkward and unnatural addition. Other than this period of relative interest, the Lunxheri style has been rather sleepy outside of its native area, although it has received representation in the National Folkloric Festivals and a few competitions.

Musical Style of Zagori

Zagori is a region of ten villages in the southeastern edge of Labëri. People here also do not identify themselves as Labs, but their music is indeed part of the Lab dialect. There are a lot of resemblances in Zagori’s style to that of the three aforementioned musics. Melodically, it is noted for its frequent use of the perfect fourth interval. Pitch of the initiating singers (launcher and/or turner) often begins a third, fourth, or fifth higher than the baseline note of the drone, and afterwards, usually at the end of the musical phrase, returns to the same pitch as the drone. Songs in Zagori are usually of four melodic lines, and harmony, although variable, often is made up of three different notes that can be of minor or major chords. Zagori style distinguishes itself from the three already mentioned Lab styles mainly through its unique progression in the flow of melody.

Musical Style of Gjirokastër

Gjirokastër is a city of about 50,000 people in Southern Albania. In contrast to other cities, where urban music is played and stands apart from their surrounding villages, the
music found in Gjirokastër is the same as that performed in its surrounding rural areas. In other words, the traditional music of Gjirokastër belongs to the Lab dialect. Most Lab music performed in Gjirokastër is four-melodic-line polyphony. Song topics are broad in Gjirokastër, spanning anything from resistance of the people to foreign occupation, to historic events, socioeconomic changes of socialist society, and other more common traditional music themes, such as pastoral life and weddings. There are quite a few songs from the Gjirokastër style that are nationally well known because of the powerful themes they convey, as well as their masterful artistic performance.

Ambitus in Gjirokastër songs may be normal or narrow, and the perfect fourth finds frequent use here. Pitch in this style tends to move from higher to lower as the song progresses. The usual pattern begins a fourth higher than the drone, then drops to a third and eventually to the baseline pitch of the drone. A peculiar feature found in the Lab music of Gjirokastër is the existence of two modalities/tonalities in the rapport of taker and turner. Also, entrances and cadences of the turner are always harmonically dissonant with those of the taker.

The unique identity of the style of Gjirokastër is considerably tied to the role of the launcher. The launcher’s role here is thought of as a supplementary taker, serving to buttress the taker through a melodic variation of the same vocals and to take charge of the melody when the taker is not singing. In Lab music, the taker of course begins the song, but later in its course there are segments in which it either stops singing completely or joins the drone. In Gjirokastër, the launcher continues without change during the taker’s pauses, thus spearheading the song. Such importance in the role of the launcher is not found elsewhere in Lab music. Harmonically, Gjirokastër music consists of two, three, or four different notes of dissonant nature, giving it a generally rough feel. The style of Gjirokastër generally is performed at a slow tempo, slower than other Lab musical styles. However, tempo is not the same throughout the song, as the beginning musical phrase is faster compared to the rest of the song. To the untrained or unfamiliar ear, the style of Gjirokastër can sound monotonous or dull. True appreciation and enjoyment of traditional music is not always straightforward; it can take time for one to discern and extract the subtle beauty found therein.

**Musical Style of Smokthinë**

Smokthinë is a seven-village area southeast of the city of Vlorë. Its musical style has national recognition, a consequence of some absolutely masterful songs, created in the region in the 1960s and 1970s. In contrast, creative spirit fell silent beginning in the 1980s. Distinct melodic character and grandeur in expression are the most poignant features setting the style of Smokthinë apart from the rest of Lab music and making it readily distinguishable to the unfamiliar ear. Songs of Smokthinë are noted for their powerful emotional punch. With relatively few words, strong emotions and epic themes are conveyed. Topics tend to center around war or brave Albanian historic figures. There are also lyrics in which the character and virtues of the Lab woman are praised in proud-sounding songs.

Ambitus in Smokthinë is relatively wide, with its range of pitches being a tenth. Modal/tonal structure here is pentatonic and made up of seven notes. Alongside small intervals, Smokthinë’s melody also typically uses the perfect fourth, the perfect fifth, and even the octave. Singing begins at an interval a seventh above the drone note and then winds up at the baseline. Taker and turner employ different degrees for their harmonic development, with the taker using the modality/tonality of tonic and the turner using the mode/scale of
mediant. Songs of Smokthinë can be of three or four melodic lines, and for the most part harmony is built on three different notes. Metrically/rhythmically, this style is noted for a number of songs that are heterometric. More specifically, the first musical phrase often is in 5/8, and afterwards the song switches to either the 2/4 or 2/8 meter/rhythm. Performers in Smokthinë are all men or all women, with no instances of mixed groups, even in recent times.

**Musical Style of Himarë**

Himarë is a region of nine villages along the Ionian seashore of Southwestern Albania. Through their song, Himarë’s people express love of life, its trials and sacrifices, dedication, perseverance, and optimism. Himarë has been noted for its outstanding poetry in song, which has been matched by wonderful artistic performances.

The style of Himarë is definitely one of the most unique sounding and easy to identify Lab style, and it is well known for evoking deep emotions. In this style that is always composed of four melodic lines, the launcher has an irreplaceable and unique niche that in part gives Himarë music its characteristic sound. While the drone here sings its continuous baseline note, the launcher performs what can be described as an oscillating, tremulous baseline of one or a few notes that is a minor third higher in pitch but lower in volume compared to the drone and sounds more distant than all the other melodic lines. This sound tends to have a somber feel and gives many songs their deep emotional impact. Overall, the launcher in Himarë’s style serves to give a clear minor flavor to harmony, augment modal/tonal stability, and bring a new dimension of expression.

Melodically, Himarë’s style uses a wide ambitus with the range of pitches from an octave to a tenth. Also, melody has a straightforward modal/tonal structure, beginning and ending in the modality/tonality of the first degree. This melody is formed by both small and large intervals. Quite characteristic is the minor seventh interval, which is manifested in the taker’s melodic line. The minor seventh can serve to mark the beginning of a new musical phrase or designate a climactic point in the song. Meter/rhythm is measurable and generally organized in the 3/8 and less frequently 2/8 meter. With its beauty, originality, and aesthetic worth, the style of Himarë has not only developed a reputation as a gem in Albanian music, but has also had an impact on its fellow Lab musical styles.

**Musical Style of Dukat**

Dukat is a large village near the Ionian seashore, in the metro area of the city of Vlorë. The style of music performed here took its unique identity in the second half of the 20th century, bringing a new and unseen variation in Lab music. In the 1960s and 1970s the musical style of Dukat became quite popular and was perhaps the most widely performed Lab music. Variation between songs in the style of Dukat is quite small, mostly a function of the different performers singing. This is a consequence of the rigid, strophic form of songs in Dukat, with virtually no musical variation between stanzas composed of eight musical phrases. The strophic nature of music in Dukat was a novel way of singing in Lab music. As an innovative, new music in Lab polyphony, the style of Dukat had a noticeable influence on its sister styles.

Dukat’s style is unusual in that it is always performed by groups of both men and women. The taker here is almost always a woman, the turner almost always a man, the
launcher can be either female or male, and the drone is a mixed group of performers. Some other notable features of songs in Dukat include the assuredness and sense of conviction with which performers sing, the consistent precision of their delivery, good integration and chemistry of performers’ voices, and a lively and rather fast tempo with noticeably recitative singing.

Melodically, Dukat’s style is characterized by a wide ambitus with a range of pitches up to a tenth. Modal/tonal structure here is pentatonic and made up of seven notes. There is substantial counterpoint in the style of Dukat. Besides melodic and harmonic contrast, there also exists marked modal/tonal and metric/rhythmic contrast between taker and turner. From a modal/tonal perspective, the taker uses the modality/tonality of the first degree, while the turner uses the modality/tonality of the fifth degree. The launcher in Dukat resembles that of Himarë in that it sings a third above the drone, but it lacks somewhat the characteristic trembling found in Himarë. Harmony in Dukat is always made up of four melodic lines, and often consists of three notes. Generally, chords are minor; this is a consequence of the continual presence of the minor third over the drone’s baseline. Metrically/rhythmically, Dukat’s style uses only the 2/8 and 2/4 meters/rhythms. Mixed meters/rhythms or switches from one meter to another are absent here. The style of Dukat, although developing from the already existing Lab music, is evidence that an active life of a musical dialect can lead to the developments of new, original sounding musics.

**Musical Style of Pilur**

Like Dukat, Pilur is another village in Labëri with its own musical style. The music in this village began to gain popularity by the mid–1960s. Prior to that time, although in existence, the style was less distinct and obscure. An important new phenomenon introduced in Pilur’s style is accompaniment by instruments in a number of songs. The instruments used are shepherd’s flute and an instrument similar to it with two outlets — double flute (in Albanian: *cula dyjare*), and they are played prior to the start of vocals in the beginnings of songs. The popularity of Pilur’s music rose quickly, becoming known by the Albanian public as a more contemporary style of Lab music that brought with it a sense of freshness and liveliness to the dialect.

The style of Pilur exists in two separate forms. The principal features of one version include ambitus with a range of pitches to a tenth, seven-note modal/tonal structure, jumps to the minor seventh interval, and simple meter of 3/8. The other version is characterized by ambitus with a range of pitches up to an octave, six-note modal/tonal structure, jumps to the fourth interval, simple meter of 2/8 or 2/4, and instrumental accompaniment. In both forms, distinct importance in melodic development is played by the fourth, fifth, and especially seventh degrees. Besides small intervals, Pilur melody also uses the perfect fourth, perfect fifth, and also the minor seventh. Intertwining of melodic lines is distinguished by marked counterpoint, especially between modalities/tonalities and registers of taker and turner. Music of Pilur is made of four melodic lines, and harmony is made up of four different notes.

Regarding form, songs in Pilur, like in Dukat, are also strophic and are organized in stanzas made of six, nine, twelve, or even more musical phrases. One song, entitled “28,000 Stars,” has stanzas made of 18 musical phrases, among the most found in any Lab song. Pilur’s style is performed by groups of both men and women, with the taker usually being a woman, the turner a man, the launcher either a man or woman, and the drone performed
by many voices that can be male or female. Melodies are arioso in the first and second musical phrases, and they become more recitative in the rest of the stanza. The first and second phrases are also metrically/rhythmically free, but the rest of the verse is measurable. And they are slower compared to the rest of the verse.

**Musical Style of Bënçë**

Bënçë is a mountainous village near the city of Tepelenë. Its musical style is a testament to the evolution that took place in Lab music during the second half of the 20th century. Bënçë is the newest of the Lab styles, beginning in the 1970s and bringing with it a novel way of Lab singing. Songs in Bënçë convey a unique sense of grandeur, with epos, heroism, and lyricism intertwining, thus bringing to the listener the soul of the Lab villager, his pride, and his aspirations.

Ambitus in Bënçë is wide, with range of pitches from an octave to a tenth. Modal/tonal structure is pentatonic and made up of six or seven notes. Besides small intervals, the melodies of Bënçë utilize the perfect fourth, perfect fifth, and also the minor seventh, much like Himarë, Dukat, and Pilur. The style of Bënçë, being part of the Lab dialect, preserves a recitative character, but noticeable also are arioso parts that come as a consequence of its wide ambitus and wide intervals between notes. Melodic lines interact to result in marked counterpoint. Four melodic lines contribute to songs’ harmony, which is made of two, three, or four different notes.

Metrically/rhythmically, the style of Bënçë differs from the rest of Lab styles in that it employs polymetry in its songs. A number of simple or complex meters can be present in the same song, and switches from one meter/rhythm to another tend to be quick and frequent. The presence of polymetry and frequent time changes give Bënçë music a more dynamic and spontaneous quality than other Lab musics and make it the most sophisticated and complicated of all Lab styles in this aspect.

Form in Bënçë songs is characterized by stanzas that are long, longer than in any other Lab style. Bënçë songs are performed by groups of men and women together. Quite interestingly and unlike any other Lab style, the role of the taker is performed by two people, a woman and a man, alternating melodic lines with one another. Turner and launcher roles are both fulfilled by men, one for each melodic line. This unique arrangement of performers adds to Bënçë’s identity, characterized by the nasal voice of the male taker, the soothing voice of the female taker, the clarity of the turner, the trembling quality of the launcher, together with the drone forming a masterful choral harmony.
Chapter Eight

Urban Musical Dialect

Traditional music is found not only in the rural areas of Albania but also in its cities. The term *urban dialect* is used to refer to the traditional music of Albanian cities. A few cities in Albania perform a style of traditional music that is largely not played in other regions of the country, cities or otherwise; subsequently, the identity of such musics is tied to their home city. A few cities in Central Albania perform an urban traditional music that is virtually indistinguishable between them and is performed very little in other regions of Albania. This urban traditional music thus takes the name *music of Central Albania*. Not every city in Albania has its own unique brand of urban traditional music. This does not mean that urban traditional music is absent there; rather, the music performed resembles the rural styles surrounding the cities.

**Origins and General Features**

The time period during which urban traditional music originated in Albania is somewhat murky. An important role in the birth of this dialect, for all of its styles, was played by the formation and emergence of groups of instrumentalists. In the city of Shkodër, these groups were referred to as *ahengje* (which can be roughly translated as “to party” or “party-ing.”) In the musical style of Shkodër there is also a genre of songs performed that is known as *songs of aheng* (*aheng* is singular of *ahengje*). In other cities of geographic Ghegëri (Tiranë, Durrës, Kavajë, Elbasan), these instrumentalist groups were referred to as *orkestrina*, which means *little orchestras*. Meanwhile, in all cities of Toskëri, they (instrumentalist groups) went by the name *saze*, which is another Albanian term referring to little orchestras. Whatever the name used to describe them, it is believed that in all regions of the country, the development of such groups was the key step in the genesis of urban traditional music, and so it can be inferred that urban traditional music probably emerged during the 17th to 18th centuries throughout most of Albania. The styles of Përmet and Vlorë are exceptions; they are younger in age, with their origins taking place around the turn of the 20th century.

In their earliest days, instrumentalist groups or single individuals joined to form small societies or unions of musicians that facilitated their professional rights and existence. These conglomerates were referred to as *taifa* (a Turkish word that is no longer found in contemporary Albanian). The historian Zija Shkodra, in his book *Esnafët Shqiptarë* (Albanian
As primitive forms of small societies, it is noteworthy to also mention the musicians’ taifas. These groups consisting of 5–10 talented instrumentalists, that remind us of the German and Italian traveling performers, can be found in several regions of our land, as early as the 16th or 17th centuries. Such a taifa was that of the city of Elbasan, made up of six people in the year 1606. In order to entertain the people and army of this city that at the time was prospering, twice a day these performers would play the drums and zurna [an oboe-like instrument]. As a consequence, they were exempt from taxes and other traditional obligations of that time. The traveling taifas of musicians, with the permission of the Turkish administrator, would perform concerts in weddings and other social events. For every concert they were obligated to give a gift to the administrator. These instrumentalists, a good portion of which were of Gypsy origin, played with a remarkable swiftness and confidence, and used instruments, such as: violin, flute, lute, zither, and whistle [Shkodra 1973a:207].

The urban musical dialect as a whole is more musically developed compared to the rest of Albanian traditional music. Instruments are present in every song, with some of the more common ones being the clarinet, violin, contrabass, lute, acoustic guitar, accordion, piano, and tambourine. Most of these are also used frequently in Albanian professional music. In contrast, instruments used in rural dialects, such as the whistle or shepherd’s flute, do not find use in professional music. In general, as a consequence of instrumental accompaniment, melodies in urban music are more arioso and structurally well defined compared to the rest of the musical dialects. In contrast to rural traditional music, in which performers had day jobs and played music as a second trade, in urban music performers every now and then fully dedicated their talents toward their art; performing was their day job and they were referred to as popular artists or folk artists.

Besides the pervasive instrumental accompaniment, there are also other unifying musical features that can be found at the core of each style in the urban dialect. From a structural perspective, urban traditional music can be monophonic or polyphonic. In Shkodër, Central Albania, and Berat, songs are monophonic, while the music of Përmet and Vlorë is polyphonic. Monophonic urban music can be viewed as the “pristine” form of the dialect. On the other hand, polyphonic urban music emerged from rural traditional music in the surrounding regions. From a modal/tonal perspective, urban traditional music can be pentatonic, diatonic, or chromatic. Its meter/rhythm can be measurable or free.

Among the creators of the urban traditional music, let us only mention outstanding composers, such as: Palok Kurti (1858–1920), Isuf Myzyri (1881–1956), Shqyri Fuga (1883–1962), Reshat Osmani (1927–1994), and Bajram Lapi (1945–). Among its performers, let us only mention immortal singers, such as: Bik Ndoja, Luçiçe Miloti, Naile Hoxha (Shkodër); Fërrëte Rexha, Hafiza Ziberi (Tiranë); Albert Tafani, Demir Zena, Medi Zena (Elbasan); Shqyri Fuga, Floresha Debinja (Berat); Xhemal Dalipi (Ersekë); Hafize A. Leskoviku (Leskovik); Sulejman Lame, Jorgo Chulli, Ilia Nasi (Përmet); Reshat Osmani, Kostandin Thana, Melëha Doda, and Kleopatra Dokle — Skarço (Vlorë). Some well-known instrumentalists historically were: Remzi Lela—Çobani (Tiranë); Rustem Serica (Elbasan); Naxhi Berati, Sybi Berati (Berat); Asllan H. Leskoviku, Selim A. Leskoviku, Vangjel Janushi (Leskovik); Medi Përmeti, Riza Meko, Laver Bariu (Përmet); Vasil Mastora (Gjirokastër); and Bilbil Vlora (Vlorë). Finally, among a young generation of gifted instrumentalists, let us mention: Hekuran Xhambali (Tiranë), Sopot R. Serica (Elbasan), Novruz Nure—Lulushi (Korçë), Arqile Chuni (Tepelenë), and Spiro V. Mastora (Gjirokastër).
Notable Musical Styles

There are at least five notable styles of urban traditional music in Albania: the musical style of the city of Shkodër; musical style of the cities of Central Albania (Tiranë, Durrës, Kavajë, Elbasan) and some cities in Kosovo (Prizren, Gjakovë, Pejë); musical style of the city of Berat; musical style of the city of Përmet; and musical style of the city of Vlorë.

Musical Style of the City of Shkodër

As the largest city in Northern Albania and one of the largest in the entire country, the city of Shkodër has served influential economic, social and cultural roles for hundreds of years. Its distinct urban musical style has been well known in Albania for many generations, and today is easily recognized by those familiar with Albanian traditional music.

Perhaps the most striking feature of Shkodër’s style is its high level of arioso melodic sophistication, a consequence of elaborate instrumental performance and fabulous singing. Instruments in Shkodran music are played with a great degree of skill, and the melodies produced bear a complexity that is on par with Albanian professional music. When analyzing melody in Shkodër’s urban music, often one can trace imprints of Albanian professional music, as well as recognize its distinct Shkodran flavor. Depending on the singer and time period, vocals can also sound influenced by other musics. For example, the legendary Shkodran singer of the second half of the 20th century, Bik Ndoja, often sounds completely like a classical music tenor performing Albanian traditional songs.

Most commonly used instruments in Shkodër’s urban style include the clarinet, violin, contrabass, lute, acoustic guitar, accordion, piano, and tambourine. No one instrument is consistently featured over the others in Shkodran music; rather, melodies tend to manifest as a blend that equally incorporates all its instruments. However, there are songs that have distinct features, sometimes in the form of solos of a particular instrument. For example, the songs “In Those Stormy Times” and “Spring Has Begun to Pass” include prominent clarinet solos.

There is a predetermined pattern to which the majority of Shkodran songs adhere. This pattern is a common one and is found in other musics in Albania and elsewhere. First, there is an instrumental introduction that is relatively fast paced and energetic. Toward the end of this part there comes a transition in which instruments become quieter and either continue at the same tempo or slow down, thus facilitating the entrance of the singer. The singer immediately takes the featured role upon beginning, while instruments continue and quietly support as background. In simpler songs, tempo never changes. Many times, after the first verse of the singer, there will be alternating instrumental-only and vocal-containing parts, and after a few iterations the song will finish. Some songs share this pattern, but include an instrumental solo somewhere in the middle of the song. Others are more complex.

After the instrumental introduction the song will drastically slow down either during the transition or as the singer begins. The tempo remains slow during the first verse of the singer, and the meter/rhythm becomes free. Instruments become exceedingly quiet, merely a background whisper, and the singer passionately sings at a high register in a sort of improvised manner and seemingly attempts to reach the most beautiful notes and sounds. After this first vocal-containing verse, the tempo of both singing and instruments speeds up and the meter/rhythm becomes measurable; now the singer switches to a livelier and playful
style, and instruments play a more prominent part in the verse. The three described segments constitute the basic framework of such Shkodran songs. Typically, there are at least two iterations of them. Of course, some songs, while maintaining this framework, may have minor variations like, for example, an instrumental solo.

So what kind of mood do Shkodran songs and melodies convey? In general, they are pleasant, cheerful, happy and lively. Music is made of smooth and pure sounds that impress the listener with their beauty. Singing in Shkodran songs is almost always performed at a high register and made up of one melodic line. Songs can be built on either a diatonic or chromatic modal/tonal structure. As alluded to, meter/rhythm can be measurable or it can be free.

MUSICAL STYLE OF THE CITIES OF CENTRAL ALBANIA

South from Shkodër, in the cities of Tiranë, Durrës, Kavajë, and Elbasan, an urban traditional music is found that, although similar to its northern neighbor, unmistakably has an identity of its own. This is the style of Central Albania. Tiranë is the capital city and modern-day economic and cultural hub of Albania, with about 25 percent of the entire country's population residing there. Durrës, an ancient city over 2,500 years old, lies on the Adriatic coast and has the second largest population in Albania. Established by the end of the Middle Ages, Kavajë, south of Durrës, has a population of 45,000. Located on the Shkumbin River, Elbasan, a city that came into prominence in the Roman period, is one of the largest cities, with a population of about 100,000. It should be pointed out that some of Kosovo’s cities, like Prizren, Gjakovë, and Pejë, as far as their urban music goes, do not differentiate from the cities of Central Albania.

To be sure, the style of Central Albania resembles that of Shkodër in some aspects. A fundamental similarity lies in the structuring of songs. Like in Shkodër, songs in Central Albania open with a relatively energetic instrumental introduction, transition to a verse of singing and, in simpler songs, alternate these two parts for the rest of the song. More complex song structures also exist. Here the singer performs a verse that is slower and facilitates the display of his or her artistic skill, followed by a faster lively verse in which instruments play a more important background role. However, in contrast to similar Shkodran tunes, in these more complex songs the degree of improvisation is more controlled, and meter/rhythm continues in a measurable fashion. Songs of Central Albania can be built on the diatonic or chromatic scale, and singing is always monophonic.

Central Albania also uses many of the same instruments as Shkodër: clarinet, violin, contrabass, lute, acoustic guitar, accordion, piano, and tambourine. But piano is not featured as often, while tambourine finds more frequent use in this style. Usually, the tambourine can be heard in the background, playing a simple, repeating pattern that serves to hold the beat of a song. Melodies are the product of an equal blend of sounds, with no one instrument being featured regularly over others. Overall, melody of the Central Albanian style sounds more rustic, more folklike compared to Shkodër’s style. The cheerful or pleasant mood is retained, and sometimes songs convey a beautiful impression of innocence. Two wonderful, classic songs of Central Albanian music are Fitnete Rexha’s “Dove of Elbasan” and Hafsa Zyberi’s “You Are Looking at Me with a Smile.” In them, one finds a soothing style of singing that touches the listener with a magnificent sense of innocence. Indeed, a number of Central Albanian songs give an impression of a society without problems, in which love is the meaning to life, and life is beautiful. Listening to them today, for someone who lived
them, in the society that created them, it is impossible not to become nostalgic, not to long for this innocent past; but in reality the past was certainly not without its problems, and these were creations of what we wished life could be, not what it was.

**Musical Style of the City of Berat**

Berat is a medium-sized Albanian city of about 45,000 people, located in the south-central part of the country. It is noted for its beautiful architecture, characterized by rows of houses built on a hillside, each row standing successively higher the farther up the hill, making their large windows appear as if stacked on top of one another if viewed by facing the city from afar. The people of Berat have long played a style of urban traditional music that is different enough from other urban traditional musics to be considered a style of its own.

The style of Berat is probably a little less musically accomplished compared to Shkodër or Central Albania. Songs are quite charming here, but overall do not quite reach the melodic sophistication of those in the Shkodran style or the style of Central Albania. Of course, there are single-song exceptions, and the subjective nature of music appreciation inherently challenges this claim. In the meantime, performers of the Berat style have been consistently solid.

Some of the most common musical instruments in the style of Berat are: the clarinet, violin, contrabass, lute, acoustic guitar, accordion, and tambourine. Oftentimes, one instrument clearly stands out over the others and spearheads the song’s melody. The featured instrument can vary from song to song. For example, in “Out Came the Moon, Out Came the Star,” a prominent, playful-sounding violin takes charge of the melody during the introductory instrumental verse, while in “Even the Cobblestones of the Alley,” the featured instrument is the clarinet. The tambourine can regularly be heard holding the beat in Berat songs, and many are notable for having a faster, lively tempo galvanized by the tambourine.

Song patterns are roughly the same in the style of Berat as those described for Shkodër and Central Albania. Songs in which singing alternates from a slower, more artistically sophisticated verse to a faster, simpler and livelier verse do exist, but tempo is always measurable, and the degree of spontaneity in the slower verses is smaller compared to either of the previous two described styles. Relatively unique to Berat, in many songs singing is performed by a chorus that can be composed of both men and women. Vocalists all contribute to one melodic line, making this style monophonic as well. From a modal/tonal standpoint, Berat urban traditional music can be pentatonic, diatonic or chromatic.

**Musical Style of the City of Përmet**

During the 20th century, amongst cities such as Shkodër, Tiranë, Elbasan, and Berat, the town of Përmet emerged as another center of Albanian urban traditional music, with its unique style. Përmet is a relatively small town located in Southern Albania. Today its population stands at about 20,000 people. Although small, Përmet brings to Albania a musical artistic masterpiece, which resonates throughout the country and is loved by many listeners. Përmet’s music has left its mark on musics performed in other towns of Southern Albania, such as: Leskovik, Ersekë, Korçë, Pogradec, Vlorë, Lushnje, and Fier.

At its core, the urban traditional music of Përmet originates from rural traditional music. Specifically, it has derived mostly from Tosc dialect music and to a lesser degree also bears imprints of Lab traditional music. Evidence can be found from analyzing modal/tonal
structure, which is identical in Përmet's style to that of the Tosk and Lab dialects. Also, much of the style is structured vocally in the same fashion as Tosk and Lab music; it is polyphonic, being made up of three melodic lines, the taker, turner, and drone. The taker and turner are the main players in such songs, with the melodic line of the turner supplementing that of the taker in an imitative fashion that functions to enrich the vocal product of the song. The modal/tonal structure of Përmet music can be pentatonic or pentatonic-diatonic. Metrically/rhythmically, songs can be measurable, free, or a mixture of both within the same song.

The style of Përmet is relatively young in age. Its beginnings date back to either the end of the 19th century or the beginning of the 20th century, a period of time when instruments such as the clarinet, violin, lute, and tambourine surfaced in Southern Albania. The introduction of these musical instruments in the region led to the birth of bands referred to in Albanian as saze. This word also describes music created by a group of people who play instruments (clarinet, violin, lute, tambourine) and also sing. Sazes became quite popular in Southeastern Albania, as they offered a wide range of expression through voice and instruments, something previously unseen in the region. As was alluded to earlier in the chapter, their development and rise in popularity are thought to be closely linked to the birth of urban traditional music in Southern Albania.

Song pattern in the style of Përmet is fairly basic; most songs are constructed from a few iterations of two alternating parts, an instrumental part and a vocal part. This does not mean that singing or instrumental performance is also basic. A readily distinguishable feature in a large number of Përmet songs is a piercing clarinet sound that stands above the other musical instruments. This is one of the hallmark features of Përmet's style of urban traditional music. Oftentimes, the parts of the clarinet are quite complex, and sometimes two or even more clarinets harmonically complement each other to form the bulk of an instrumental verse. The clarinet performs only during the instrumental parts of songs in the majority of cases. As a given song is transitioning from an instrumental to a vocal-containing verse, in many instances the clarinet quickly becomes very quiet and drops off completely within the first or second line of singing. The singers then assume the featured role. Almost always, singing is quite arioso in the style of Përmet. In a number of examples, singing sounds rather euphoric, giving the impression of a vivacious atmosphere.

The tambourine plays a very important role in the majority of Përmet songs. Oftentimes it is quite prominent, continuing with the same pattern throughout the song, similar to a drum beat in rock music. There are many instances in which the relatively loud tambourine contributes to the lively nature of the song. In other instances, the tambourine is subtler, again playing throughout the song with one repetitious beat. In many songs, another instrument is present alongside the tambourine, performing a simple repetitious part that also serves as background support. The violin, lute, accordion or another instrument can assume this role. Whatever the instrument, it is usually quite subtle, and sometimes it can be hard to discern its identity. In a number of classic Përmet songs, the tambourine and the other background instruments lay the foundation for the featured, alternating roles of the song: the clarinet and vocals.

**Musical Style of the City of Vlorë**

The city of Vlorë is located in Southwestern Albania, along the Ionian seashore. It stands as one of the most highly populated cities in Albania. There is a rich history of patri-
otism surrounding Vlorë; most notably the independence of Albania was declared here in 1912. As the center of a metro area with a large surrounding rural population, the city maintains strong ties with elements of rural culture, including its music. However, over time Vlorë’s inhabitants felt the need to develop a music that embodied an urban flavor in order to better reflect their urban cultural life. This music no doubt bears many elements of rural traditional music, specifically that of Labëri, and in fact was originally derived from the Lab musical dialect. As was the case with the style of Përmet, the development of Vlorë’s style of urban traditional music is closely linked to the birth and rise in popularity of the sazë in Southern Albania, sometime around the turn of the 20th century. Talented musicians and instrumentalists slowly and subtly began to enrich the existing Lab traditional music of the region with new elements in the form of instruments such as the clarinet, violin, lute, and tambourine.

Like Lab traditional music, the style of Vlorë is polyphonic. A distinct taker, turner, and drone can be found in most songs. The melodic line of the turner engages in contrasting the melodic line of the taker in several aspects, including melody, harmony, and meter/rhythm. Modal/tonal structure can be pentatonic or pentatonic-diatonic. Meters/rhythms can vary, sometimes being measurable and at other times free or mixed. Like the style of Përmet, Vlorë’s music gained widespread popularity throughout Albania as a distinct identity of urban traditional music, and its elements can be found in urban music performed throughout other areas of the country.
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PART II
Gheg Musical Dialect: Gheg Songs

1. SHQIPERI, O NANA IME

I
Shqipëri, o nana ime,
T’përshëndes e t’ sjell urime:
Larg të shtrenjtit Mëmëdhe,
Na bjen dielli, nuk na nxeh!
   Deti hallet nuk na i la,
   Malli zemrat na i ka tha,
   Për kët’ tokë me male të larta,
   Ku asht’ balta pori mjalta!

II
Dallgët ne na ka’ shpërnda,
Por nuk ndahet vëllau me vëlla,
Me një zemër si bilur,
Me një gjuhë e një flamur!
   Zani i nanës kur jehon,
   Preh’n e saja na bashkon,
   Njani-tjetrin përqafomë,
   Amanetet s’i harrojmë!

III
Plaga në zemër t’ mërgimtarit,
Eshë të thellë sa shpella e malit:
Se ka mall për nanë e motër,
E për bukën pjetën në voter!
   Kujton fushat tuj lulzue,
   Kujton gurrat tuj burue,
   Kujton dasmat ku ka këndue,
   Loti s’ndahet, rrjedh si krue!

IV
Jam i lumtun e krenar,
Kur mendoj se jam shqiptar,
Nip-stërnipa thellë në zemër,
Do ta ruajmë ne kët’ emër!
Kënga shkon tuj fluturue,
Male-dete tuj kelue,
T’përshëndes e t’sjell urime,
Shqipëri, o nana ime!

The song flows as if flying,
Passing over seas and mountains,
I greet you and send you well wishes,
Albania, my mother!

2. MOJ E MIRA NGA GJAKOVA

I
Mal më mal ty të kërkoja,
Mriz më mriz për ty këndova,
I rashed fushës gjanë e gjatë,
Shumë të prita ditë e natë!
Kurrkund zanin s’ta dëgjova,
Moj e mira nga Gjakova!

II
Karajfilea ti m’dhurove,
Kur t’këndonë, më premtovë,
Besa-besë, do të kujtoj,
Kurre, për jetë nuk të harroj!
Ditë e natë për ty mendova,
Moj e mira nga Gjakova!

III
T’i kujtoj dy syt’ e zi,
Ballin tënd me krenari,
Shtatin tënd pori bjaraku,
Me fustanin kuq si gjaku!
Hapi krahët si shqiponja,
Moj e mira nga Gjakova!

IV
Bora maleve nis e shkринë,
Rritin zemrat dashurinë,
Nis pranvera me luzzue,
Zemrat tona me i bashkue!
Ndjeje këngën që t’këndova,
Moj e mira nga Gjakova!

OH YOU KIND ONE FROM GJAKOVA

I
Mountain after mountain for you I searched,
Grove after grove for you I sung,
I walked the fields corner to corner,
Long I waited, day and night!
Nowhere did I hear your voice,
Oh you kind one from Gjakova!

II
Carnations you gave to me,
When I sang, you promised,
On my deepest word, I will remember you,
Never, in my life will I forget you!
Day and night I think of you,
Oh you kind one from Gjakova!

III
I remember your pretty brown eyes,
Your forehead with grace,
Your figure tall and lean,
And your dress, red like blood!
Open your arms like the eagle,
Oh you kind one from Gjakova!

IV
The mountain snow begins to melt,
Hearts grow full of love,
Spring is in bloom,
Our hearts may it unite!
Feel the song I sang for you,
Oh you kind one from Gjakova!

3. MOJ E MIRE VETULLKUNORE

I
— Moj e mirë vetullkunorë,
Ç’ka po lyp n’oborr qaq vonë?

II
— Po nigjoj nj’ato kumonë,
Që po bijnë bukur e hollë,
N’gryk’ ia marrsha unë të zonë!

OH YOU PRETTY ONE WITH LONG EYEBROWS

I
— Oh you pretty one with long eyebrows,
What are you doing in the yard so late?

II
— I am listening to those cowbells,
That are sounding pretty and fine,
Ah if I could hug their shepherd!
III
— Ku nigjoj zanin e saj,
Me kenë n’bukë, çohem pa ngranë,
Me kenë n’uujë, çohem pa pie!

III
— When I hear her voice,
If eating, I leave my meal,
If drinking, I leave my drink!

4. EMRI YT S’HARROHET KURRE
YOUR NAME WILL NEVER BE FORGOTTEN

I
Dridhet toka, ç’po ushton Malsia,
Në k’to male po lufton djelmnia!
Bashkë me trimat e kësaj Krasniqe,
Me Bajram Currin, o zemërçelik-e!
Bajram Curr, o Bajram Curr,
Emri yt s’harrohet kurre!
Të ka lind-o nanë Gjakova,
S’te harron Kosova!

I
Hey, the Earth is shaking, the Highlands are booming,
Hey, in these mountains men are fighting!
Hey, together with the brave ones of Krasniqe,
With Bajram Curri, the man with a steel heart!
Bajram Curri, oh Bajram Curri,
Your name will never be forgotten,
You were born from mother Gjakova,
Kosovo can never forget you!

II
Na dul trimi në k’to malet tona,
Hej, tym e flakë po i rrjedhte goja,
Luft’ me tradhtarain — Kadri Mehmetin,
Se n’ Dragobi-e, o trimi na mbeti!
Bajram Curr, o Bajram Curr, etj.

II
Hey, the brave one has emerged from these our mountains,
Hey, smoke and flames were flowing from his mouth,
He fought with the trader Kadri Mehmeti,
And in Dragobi our brave one left us!
Bajram Curri, oh Bajram Curri, etc.

5. NE FIERZE KANGA BUÇET FORT
IN FIERZE SONG IS ROARING

I
Sot ka festë në Alpe,
Anembanë Malsisë,
Kudo hidhet vallja,
Për gigand të dritës!
N’Fierzë kënga buçet fort,
Po vlon puna me hare,
Po g’zon e gjithë Shqipnia,
Për kët’ vepër tonë të re!

I
Today there is a feast in the Alps,
All throughout the Highlands,
Everywhere they’re dancing,
For the mighty dam!
In Fierzë song is roaring,
With joy work is bustling,
All Albania is excited,
For this new feat!

II
E fuqishme asht’ kjo kangë,
Si vet’ ujët e Drinit,
Vrulli shtohet për qdo ditë,
Për me ngritë t’madhen digë!
N’Fierzë kanga buçet fort, etj.

II
Powerful is our song,
Like the waters of Drin,
Enthusiasm growing every day,
To construct the mighty dam!
In Fierzë song is roaring, etc.

III
Ja, kët’ kangë të re,
Dhuratë, shokë puntorë,
Për dritën që sillni,

III
Here is a new song,
A gift to you workmen friends,
For the light you are bringing,
Ju lumtë e bardha dorë! Wonderful are your hands!
N’Fierzë kanga buçet fort, etj.

6. MBUSHA UJE TE KRONI

I
Mbusha ujë te kroni,
Larg ishte kroni,
Edhe hana iku,
Copë u bë poliku!

Hej, sa keq, lum nana, hej,
Xhanëm, hej!

II
Morëm uj’t e shpatit,
E ia sollëm fshatit,
Na ndriçon ’lektriku,
Plot me ujë poliku!

Hej, sa mirë, lum nana, hej,
Xhanëm, hej!

I FILLED WATER AT THE FOUNTAIN SPRING

I
I filled water at the fountain spring,
Far was the fountain spring,
Even the moon passed,
My water barrel broke!

Oh, too bad, oh mother oh,
Even so, oh!

II
We harnessed the mountainside’s water,
And brought it to the village,
Electricity is streaming,
Full is the water barrel!

Oh, so great, oh mother oh,
Even so, oh!

7. FRYNI NJI VERI I FTOFTE

I
Fryni nji veri i ftoftë,
Vrik ma msheli synin-o!

— Mos ma mshil ti veri synin,
Se do t’shof unë arat-o,
Me kallij të mbushun-o!

— Mos ma mshil ti veri synin,
Se do t’shkoj unë kodrës-o,
Tokë të re me hapun-o!

II
Fryni nje veri i ftoftë,
Vrik ma msheli synin-o!

— Mos ma mshil ti veri synin,
Se do t’shof unë tufrën-o,
Bjeshkën tuj kullotun-o!

— Mos ma mshil ti veri synin,
Se kam për t’i mbledhun-o,
Me barinjtë e zgjedhun-o!

III
Fryni nje veri i ftoftë,
S’mund ma msheli synin-o:

Shof katundin tem me drita,
Sytë prej tij s’na ndahen-o,
Zemrat mal na bahan-o!

THERE BLEW A COLD WIND

I
There blew a cold wind,
Quickly I closed my eyes!

— Don’t you close my eyes, oh wind,
I want to see the fields,
Full of corps!

— Don’t you close my eyes, oh wind,
I want to see the hillside,
We’ll work new lands there!

II
There blew a cold wind,
Quickly I closed my eyes!

— Don’t you close my eyes, oh wind,
I want to see the herds,
Grazing by the mountainside!

— Don’t you close my eyes, oh wind,
I want to round up the herd,
With the good shepherds!

III
There blew a cold wind,
It cannot close my eyes:

I see my village full of light,
Can’t take my eyes off,
My heart fills with joy!
8. XHAMADANI I TRIMNISE

I
Kërcet topi e gjimon trolli,
Xhamadanin hap Mic Sokoli,
Përmes fushës, kalldram me gzhoka,
Bash si fletët kur hap shqiponja!

II
Ngriti krahët e i tha Vatanit:
“S’na shpon, jo, top’ i Sulltanit!
Zemra jonë ka gjak sa gurra, streams,
Mbi armikun, o, bini burra!”

III
Kaluen ditët, kaloi nji shekull,
Koha gërryeka gurë e hekur,
Erdh nër kohna e ju vesh trollit,
Xhamadani i Mic Sokolit!

IV
E pat vesh’ dhe Selam Labi,
Kur për gryke topin e kapi,
Përmbi tank, kur rrugën skuqi,
E pat vesh’ dhe Vojo Kushi!

V
Shkëlqen djersa e s’njifet loti,
Në kët’ truell me palcë baroti,
Shkrin çeliku e lulëzon molla,
T’gjithë shqiptarët jan’ Mic Sokola!

9. PLASI TOKA, ‘BINI MOLLA

I
Plasi toka, ‘bini molla,
Lin-e, lin e holla!
T’holëñ desha, t’holëñ mora,
Lin-e, lin e holla!

II
Plasi toka, bini dardha,
Lin-e, lin e bardha!
T’bardhën desha, t’bardhën mora,
Lin-e, lin e bardha!

III
Plasi toka, bini pjeshka,
Lin-e, lin e zeshka!
T’zeshkën desha, t’zeshkën mora,
Lin-e, lin e zeshka!

SOIL PARTED, APPLE TREE SPROUTED

I
Soil parted, apple tree sprouted,
Hey-heh, the thin one!
I wanted the thin one, I got the thin one,
Hey-heh, the thin one!

II
Soil parted, pear tree sprouted,
Hey, hey, the pale one!
I wanted the pale one, I got the pale one,
Hey-heh, the pale one!

III
Soil parted, peach tree sprouted,
Hey, hey, the dark one!
I wanted the dark one, I got the dark one,
Hey-heh, the dark one!

VEST OF BRAVITY

I
The cannon fires and the land trembles,
Mic Sokoli unbuttons his vest,
Throughout the fields are cobblestones of bullet shells,
Just like the eagle spreading its wings!

II
Lifted his arms and told his nation:
“The Sultan’s cannons will not pierce us,
Our heart is full of blood like the mountain
You men, attack the enemy!”

III
The days passed, a century passed,
Time corrodes stone and iron,
Over time, the vest of Mic Sokoli,
Draped the land!

IV
It was also worn by Selam Labi,
When he stood in front of the cannon’s throat,
On the tank when he turned roads blood red,
Vojo Kushi also wore it!

V
Sweat now shines and tears are unheard of,
In this land with gunpowder for bone marrow,
Steel is forged and apple trees are blooming,
All Albanians are Mic Sokols!
IV
Nëpër dega t’ mollës,
I çoj fjalë të hollës,
—E holla jam vetë,
Due nji djalë me fletë!

V
Nëpër dega t’kumbullës,
I çoj fjalë së bukrës,
—E bukra jam vetë,
Due nji djalë me fletë!

VI
Nëpër dega t’ dardhës,
I çoj fjalë së bardhës,
—E bardha jam vetë,
Due një djalë me fletë!

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10. MORI LULJA E FRASHNIT
T’ BARDHË

I
— Mori lulja e frashnit t’ bardhë,
Kur e ke ndër mend me ardhë?
— Kur t’vijë dhandri me m’ marre.

II
— Ani, bahem zog-e, hyp në maje të malit,
Sa ta shoh un’ nusen, kur vjen përkrak djalit!

III
— Edhe zog n’ u bafsh, mali ashtë i naltë,
Lule trëndelinë, bletët mbledhin mjaltë!

IV
— Ani, bahem zog-e, hyp në degë të mollës,
Si bilbili ta këndoj kangën, mu në krah të hollës!

V
O, moj nuse, bukur je, of aman,
Përmbë shoqet bake dritë, of aman,
Lae prind’rit që t’ kanë rritë, of aman,
More djalin që t’ ka pritë, of aman!

VI
Po këndoka zogla dhe bilbili,
O, se lum ai djalë nuse miri,
Se kur shkon në punë,
O, ç’ e kanë zili!

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IV
From the apple tree branches,
I send words to the thin one,
— I am the thin one,
I love a brave young man!

V
From the plum tree branches,
I send words to the pretty one,
— I am the pretty one,
I love a brave young man!

VI
From the pear tree branches
I send words to the pale one,
— I am the pale one,
I love a brave young man!

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PART II

I
— Oh you flower of the white ash tree,
When do you think you’ll come?
— When the groom comes to take me.

II
— Now I become a bird, getting to the mountain-top,
Just to see the bride coming with the guy!

III
— Even if you were a bird, the mountain is tall,
Daffodil flowers and bees making honey!

IV
— Now I become a bird, standing on the apple tree,
I sing like the nightingale, over by the tree branch!

V
Oh you pretty bride, oh come on,
Among your friends you sparkle, oh come on,
You left the parents who raised you, oh come on,
You married the boy who waited for you, oh come on!

VI
The little robin and nightingale are singing,
Oh, how lucky is the good boy,
When he goes to work,
Oh, how they envy him!
VII
Po këndoka zogla dhe bilbili,
O, se lum ajo vajzë që na mori trimin,
I pari në punë,
Dhe n'roje t'kuhnit!

The little robin and nightingale are singing,
Oh, how lucky that girl who married the brave one,
The best one at work,
And protecting the borders!

11. O MOJ NUSE, DIL NE LEME

I
O moj nuse, dil në lamë,
Po t’hotë vjehri hijerandë:
“A t’kanë ra petkat taman?”

II
O moj nuse, dil në lamë,
Po t’hotë vjehra prej matanë:
“Ta kam lanë renin çish mramë!

III
O moj nuse, dil në lamë,
Po t’hotë burri syflxhan:
“T’mi dujsh fort, ti, babë e nanë!

When I walked my husband off

I
— Kur përcolla ylberin,
Ktheva, hina n’odë,
Kur ia pashë martiniën vjerrë,
Ia qava me lotë!

II
— Mos e laj me lot, oj zan-o,
Mos e laj me lot,
Se shkon viti i parë, oj zan-o,
Porsi dita sot!

III
— Kur përcolla ylberin,
Ktheva, hina n’odë,
Kur ia pashë sahatin n’ark-o,
Ia lava me lot!

IV
— Mos e laj me lot, oj zan-o,
Mos e laj me lot,
Se shkojnë vitet e kurbetit,
Porsi dita sot!

— I walked my husband off,
And turned back to the house,
When I saw his Martini rifle,
I cried with tears!

— Don’t cry, my bride,
Don’t cry,
For the year before,
Passes like a day!

— I walked my husband off,
And turned back to the house,
When I saw his watch on the table,
I cried with tears!

— Don’t cry, my bride,
Don’t cry,
For the years of the emigration,
Are going to pass by quickly!
**Tosk Musical Dialect: Tosk Songs**

**13. BALLET ME SEDEFE**

*Ballët me sedefe,*  
*Me sërma stolisur,*  
*E shkreta sevda,*  
*Ku paska kolisur:*  
*Me një djal’ të vogël,*  
*Fare të parritur!*

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**14. MOJ LESHDRÉDHURA PAS GRYKE**

*Moj leshdredhura pas gryke,*  
*Tà-ri-na-ni-na!*  
*Laje, krije, hidhe prapa,*  
*Tà-ri-na-ni-na!*  
*Je e bardhë e të nxin vapa,*  
*Tà-ri-na-ni-na!*  
*Si djathi kur del nga napa,*  
*Tà-ri-na-ni-na!*  
*Si sheqer kur del nga karta,*  
*Tà-ri-na-ni-na!*  
*Filli i leshit, fill i arit,*  
*Tà-ri-na-ni-na!*  
*Që ma mban gajtan pas ballit,*  
*Tà-ri-na-ni-na!*

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**15. MBEÇE, MORE SHOKE, MBEÇE I AM LEFT HERE, BROTHERS, I AM LEFT HERE FOR GOOD**

*Mbeçë, more shokë, mbeçë,*  
*Përtej Urës së Qabësë!*  
*Falë me shëndet nënesë:*  
*Të dy qetë të m’i shesë,*  
*T’i japë nigjah së tesë,*  
*Të më shesë kalë e mushkë,*  
*Të më rritë djalë e çupë.*

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**YOUR FOREHEAD WITH PEARLS**

*Your forehead with pearls,*  
*Silver and gold hanging,*  
*Oh, dear love,*  
*For whom she has fallen:*  
*For a young boy,*  
*Still not grown up!*

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**BRAIDED HAIR BEHIND YOUR NECK**

*Braided hair behind your neck,*  
*La-la-la-la-la!*  
*Wash it, brush it, wear it loose,*  
*La-la-la-la-la!*  
*You’re pale and the heat tans you,*  
*La-la-la-la-la!*  
*Like cheese removed from its cloth,*  
*La-la-la-la-la!*  
*Like sugar coming out from its wrapping,*  
*La-la-la-la-la!*  
*Yarn of wool, yarn of gold,*  
*La-la-la-la-la!*  
*Hanging pretty over your forehead,*  
*La-la-la-la-la!*

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**I AM LEFT HERE, BROTHERS, I AM LEFT HERE FOR GOOD**

*I am left here, brothers, I’m left here for good,*  
*Past the Bridge of Qabé!*  
*Send regards to my mother:*  
*She shall sell both my oxen,*  
*And console my widow,*  
*And sell my horse and mule,*  
*And raise my son and daughter.*
16. O JU MALET E SKRAPARIT

O ju malet e Skraparit,
Jini larë dhe zbukuruar!
Armiku iu ka zilinë,
Me dybëi iu ka shikuar!
Pësëmbëdhjetë mars dyzet e dy,
U ngirit Çeta në Dobrenjë,
Për të çliruar Skraparë,
Nga germani dhe tradhëtarë!
Skraparë edhe Shqipërinë,
Dhe na sollën lumturinë!

17. O KURBET I SHKRETE

I
O kurbet i shkretë,
Na le larg shtëpisë,  
Qaj, moj zemra ime, qaj!

II
Me zemër zhuritur,
O, për Shqipëri,
Qaj, moj zemra ime, qaj!

III
Mbetën nënët tona,
Gjith' jetën në zi,
Qaj, moj zemra ime, qaj!

IV
Mbetën gratë e gjora,
Pa bukë në magje,
Qaj, moj zemra ime, qaj!

V
Mbetën motrat tona,
Me lot' përmbi faqe,
Qaj, moj zemra ime, qaj!

VI
Metën buzëplasura,
Shami përmbi vetulla,
Qaj, moj zemra ime, qaj!

16. OH YOU MOUNTAINS OF SKRAPAR

Oh you mountains of Skrapar,
Washed and adorned!
The enemy envies you,
Looking at you through binoculars!
Fifteenth of March ’42,
A squadron was formed in Dobrenjë,
To free Skrapar,
From Germans and betrayers!
Skrapar and the rest of Albania,
And brought to us joy!

17. WRETCHED EMIGRATION

I
Wretched emigration,
Left us far from home,

Cry, my heart, cry!

II
With a burning heart,
Oh, for Albania,

Cry, my heart, cry!

III
Our mothers were left,
Their whole life in sorrow,

Cry, my heart, cry!

IV
Poor wives were left,
Without flour in their pans,

Cry, my heart, cry!

V
Our sisters were left,
With tears on their cheeks,

Cry, my heart, cry!

VI
They were left despaird,
Scarf over their eyes,

Cry, my heart, cry!
18. ZUNE YJTE E PO RRALLOJNE

I
Zunë yjtë e po rrallojnë, o bir,
Bir, bir, Kalem, bir, bir, Koçi!
Bir, Xhafer, o bir, mos shko dhe ti!

II
Zunë kurbetllinjtë po shkojnë, o bir,
Bir, bir, Kalem, bir, bir, Koçi!
Bir, Xhafer, o bir, mos shko dhe ti!

III
Ç'donit ju nê dhe të huaj, o bir,
Bir, bir, Kalem, bir, bir, Koçi!
Bir, Xhafer, o bir, mos shko dhe ti!

IV
Ç'fat më patët që të dy-e,
Bir, bir, Kalem, bir, bir, Koçi!
Bir, Xhafer, o bir, mos shko dhe ti!

V
Mbetët larg vëlezërve tuaj, o bir,
Bir, bir, Kalem, bir, bir, Koçi!
Bir, Xhafer, o bir, mos shko dhe ti!

VI
Mbetët, bir, e s'u këthyet,
Bir, bir, Kalem, bir, bir, Koçi!
Bir, Xhafer, o bir, mos shko dhe ti!

VII
Zunë nënët tu vajtojnë, o bir,
Bir, bir, Kalem, bir, bir, Koçi!
Bir, Xhafer, o bir, mos shko dhe ti!

VIII
Nënët, bir-o, me duar nê gji,
Bir, bir, Kalem, bir, bir, Koçi!
Bir, Xhafer, o bir, mos shko dhe ti!

IX
Zunë nuset t'u kujtojnë, o bir,
Bir, bir, Kalem, bir, bir, Koçi!
Bir, Xhafer, o bir, mos shko dhe ti!

X
Na latë, bir-o, të reja jetime,
Bir, bir, Kalem, bir, bir, Koçi!
Bir, Xhafer, o bir, mos shko dhe ti!

XI
Ç'adeshët ju nê dhe të zi, o bir,
Bir, bir, Kalem, bir, bir, Koçi!
Bir, Xhafer, o bir, mos shko dhe ti!

PART II

THE STARS HAVE STARTED TO FADE

I
The stars have started to fade, my son,
Son, son, Kalem, son, son, Koçi!
Son, Xhafer, oh son, don't join them!

II
The emigrants have started to leave, oh son,
Son, son, Kalem, son, son, Koçi!
Son, Xhafer, oh son, don't join them!

III
What do you seek in a foreign land, oh son,
Son, son, Kalem, son, son, Koçi!
Son, Xhafer, oh son, don't join them!

IV
Both of you, what kind of fate is this,
Son, son, Kalem, son, son, Koçi!
Son, Xhafer, oh son, don't join them!

V
Left far from your brethren, oh son,
Son, son, Kalem, son, son, Koçi!
Son, Xhafer, oh son, don't join them!

VI
Left far, son, and never returned, oh son,
Son, son, Kalem, son, son, Koçi!
Son, Xhafer, oh son, don't join them!

VII
Mothers are crying for you, oh son,
Son, son, Kalem, son, son, Koçi!
Son, Xhafer, oh son, don't join them!

VIII
Mothers, oh son, with hand on their chest,
Son, son, Kalem, son, son, Koçi!
Son, Xhafer, oh son, don't join them!

IX
Your wives are reminiscing, oh son,
Son, son, Kalem, son, son, Koçi!
Son, Xhafer, oh son, don't join them!

X
You left us, son, young and orphans,
Son, son, Kalem, son, son, Koçi!
Son, Xhafer, oh son, don't join them!

XI
What did you seek in a damned foreign land, oh son,
Son, son, Kalem, son, son, Koçi!
Son, Xhafer, oh son, don't join them!
XII
Toka juaj është flori, o bir,
Bir, bir, Kalem, bir, bir, Koçi!
Bir, Xhafer, o bir, mos shko dhe tì!

Your own land is golden, oh son,
Son, son, Kalem, son, son, Koçi!
Son, Xhafer, oh son, don’t join them!

19. FLUTUROI NJE FLUTUR
Përmbi shtëpin’ tonë fluturoi një flutur,
Të keqen kunata, sa qënke e bukur!

Je e hollë, e gjatë, në bel e këputur,
Vetullat të holla, syrin rrush të zi,
Të keqen kunata, ti qënke flori!
Djali ynë është yll, ti më qënke flutur,
Të gijt’ne së bashku, jetojmë të lumtur!
Ne këndojmë si nga mali:
— Të na trashëgohet djali!
Ju këndoni si nga fusha:
— Të na trashëgohet çupa!

A BUTTERFLY PASSED BY
Over our house a butterfly passed,
Says your sister-in-law:— Dear, how pretty you are!
You are thin and tall, with a slim waist,
Your eyebrows thin with eyes black as grapes,
Says your sister-in-law:— Dear, you are gold!
Our son is a star, you are a butterfly,
All of us together living in harmony!
We sing like from the mountains:
— Blessings to our son!
You sing like from the fields:
— Blessings to our daughter!

20. SKENDERBEU TRIM ME FLETE
Seç u mblodh ylemaja,
Me një pe u lidh dynjaja,
Sulltani zaptoi vatanë,
N’Arbëri gjeti belanë!
— Skënderbe, do marr kalanë!
— Kalanë ti s’ e merr dot!
Se k’tu lufton populli fort!
Gjëmon shpata, tundet dheu,
N’Krujë lufton Skënderbeu!
Skënderbe, o trim me fletë,
Turqit ç’i fute në dhetë!

SKANDERBEG, A MIGHTY WARRIOR
The councilmen convened together,
With a string the world was tied,
The Sultan seized the motherland,
In Arbëri he found great trouble!
— Skanderbeg, I’m taking your castle!
— You, the castle cannot capture!
Here, the people fight strongly!
Swords are roaring, Earth is shaking,
In Krujë Skanderbeg fights!
Skanderbeg, you mighty warrior,
Turks, you put them underground!

21. NERENXE, TE PATA THENE
Nerënxë të pata thënë,
Nerënxë!
Mos mbush ujë në çezmën tënë,
Nerënxë!
Se rrugën ta kanë zënë,
Nerënxë!
Nja dy djem, nja dy çapkënë,
Nerënxë!
Pa të marrë nuk të lënë,
Nerënxë!
— Un’ do vij si të kam thënë,
More djalë!
Dashurinë tek ty kam shtënë,
More djalë!

GIRL, I TOLD YOU
Girl, I told you,
Girl!
Don’t fill water at our brook,
Girl!
In your path are waiting,
Girl!
A couple of guys, a couple of studs,
Girl!
Without taking you they won’t leave,
Girl!
— I will come, as I promised you,
Boy!
I have fallen in love with you,
Boy!
22. NE KRUTJE Ç’U NDEZ
SHKENDIJA

I
Me kushtrim’n që dha Qev’ria,
Në nëntor dyzet e gjashtë,
Në Krutje ç’u ndez shkëndija,
Në Krutje të Myzeqesë.

II
Krah dhe djers’ ne i bashkuam,
Lulëzon jeta jonë e re,
Punë e luftë kolektive,
Më të fortë u bëmë ne!

III
I bukur je, o fshati ynë,
Gjith’ të mirat i prodhojmë,
Do të bëjm’ ty si qytetin,
Më shumë do të zbukurojmë!

PART II

IN KRUTJE THE SPARK IGNITED

I
Upon the government’s summoning,
In November of ’46,
In Krutje the spark ignited,
In Krutje of Myzeqe!

II
Arms and sweat we put together,
Our new life blooming,
Collectively work and battle,
Stronger we became!

III
Great you are, our village,
All goods we produce,
We will make you like the city,
Greater yet we will make you!

23. TE RRITY NENA TY YOUR MOTHER RAISED YOU

I
Të rriti nëna ty,
Barkun that,’ o bir,
Djal’ i nënës, shpirt i nënës, bir!

II
Të dha nuse si flori,
Të varfër si ti,
Djal’ i nënës, shpirt i nënës, bir!

III
Atë ditë dasme,
Oh, sec ram’ në zi,
Djal’ i nënës, shpirt i nënës, bir!

IV
Njerzit e k’tij beu,
Seç të vranë ty,
Djal’ i nënës, shpirt i nënës, bir!

V
Se një ditë vjeshte,
I zure pusi,
Djal’ i nënës, shpirt i nënës, bir!

VI
Beun le të vrarë,
Mbi kalin dori,
Djal’ i nënës, shpirt i nënës, bir!
### VII

Nusja mor’ haberin,
Erdh’ tê r’qaqê ty,
Djal’ i nënës, shpirt i nënës, bir!

The bride got the message,
She came and cried for you,
Your mother’s son, your mother’s soul!

### VIII

U mblodh i gjith’ fshati,
Tê mor’ hakên, bir,
Djal’ i nënës, shpirt i nënës, bir!

All the villagers gathered,
To avenge on your behalf,
Your mother’s son, your mother’s soul!

---

24. ÇELO MEZANIT

Ra dielli mbi male e Vilë,
Zbriti Çeluë në Arilë,
Për të shkretën pajgorilë!
Mun te pusi i Sulejmanit,
Pusi e Çelo Mezanit!
Kur na ra martini’ e parë,
Çeluë na ktheu surranë!
Kur na ra martini’ e dytë,
Çeluë gremisi sytë!
Kur na ra martini’ e tretë,
Çeluë u vra me të vërtetë!
Vanë nënës e i thanë:
— E vranë Çelo Mezanë!
— Mos ma thoni këtë fjalë,
Çelon un e kam të gjallë,
S’kam bërë të tilë djalë!

A TRIBUTE TO ÇELO MEZANI

The sun shone upon the mountains and Vilë,
Çelo walked down to Arilë,
For the sad mourning!
Right at the well of Sulejman,
Çelo Mezani was ambushed!
On the first rifle shot,
Çelo turned his head!
On the second rifle shot,
Çelo turned his eyes!
On the third rifle shot,
Çelo was killed indeed!
They went and told his mother:
— They killed Çelo Mezani!
— Don’t you tell me these words,
My Çelo is still alive,
I don’t have that kind of son!

---

25. O PROTOKALJA ME MJALTE

Krevati me bojë arre,
Për’an penxheres e maje,
Përkunderjt keshe dy male,
Nja dy tën’ e nja dy stane,
Keshe një culë dyjare,
Un’ i fryj e tinë qaje,
Nënën nënë e babën shaje,
Që të dhanë në moçale,
Në oda mbyllur me xhame,
U verdhe si protokale,
O protokalja me mjaltë,
Pse s’më dërgove një kartë?!

OH YOU ORANGE WITH HONEY

Your bed made of walnut wood,
Next to the window you kept it,
Facing you there were two mountains,
And a couple of tents and herds,
There was a double flute,
I would play and you would cry,
Mom you cursed and dad you blamed,
For marrying you in the swamps,
Became pale as an orange,
Oh you orange with honey,
Why never sent me a letter?!

---

26. BILBILENJTE TREMBEDHJETE

Për Bilbil e për Resulë,
Shtatë pashallar’ u shkulë!
O ju, të shkretë çapkënë,

THIRTEEN BILBILS

For Bilbil and Resul,
Seven viziers came!
Oh, you poor, brave ones,
February disrupted your plans,
As it threw heavy snow!
Thirteen Bilbils,
Themselves waked to the ropes!
— Come on, Bilbil, hang your rope!
— Wait, vizier, for me to smoke,
I'm not just a bowl of soup,
I'm mighty Bilbil with sword!

27. BEJKÉ, SHASHAQE MELLENJE
— Bejkë, shashaqe mëllënjë,
Më porte të erdha mbrëmë:
Pse s' e keshe lidhur qënë?!  
— Seç më dhimp e zeza këmbë,
O pëlump nëpër shkëmbënë!

28. VAJZE E VALEVE
I  
Vajz’ e valëve,
Zemëra s’ia mban,
Mbi një gurë, anës detit,
Qan e zeza, qan!
II  
Pret atë që pret,
Dhe një dhimbje ndjen,
Gjithë bota ven’ e vinë,
Po ai nuk vjen!
III  
Pranvera arriu,
Një mëngjez të qetë,
Shkojn’ e vinë dallandishet,
Vajza u thërret:
IV  
— Ju të bukur zoq,
Tek ju kam një shpresë,
Ju që shkoni det’ e male,
Dua t’iu pies:
V  
— Mos e patë, ju,
Rron apo nuk rron,
Ndonjë lajm, ndonjë letër,
Vallë, më kujton?!
VI  
— Një jetime jam,
Pa nën’ e baba,
Një që kisha, një që doja,
Iku dhe më la!

LITTLE WHITE SHEEP, PARTRIDGE
— Little white sheep, partridge,
By your door I came last night:
Why was your dog unleashed?!
— My poor leg was aching me,
Oh you dove amongst the crags!

GIRL OF THE WAVES
I  
Girl of the waves,
Her heart cannot bear it,
Sitting by seaside rocks,
The poor one cries, she cries!
II  
She waits for him, she waits,
And a pain she feels,
Many people come and go,
But he does not come!
III  
Spring has arrived,
A quiet morning,
Swallows flying all around,
The girl is calling them:
IV  
— Oh you pretty birds,
In you I have a hope,
You that travel seas and mountains,
I wish to ask you:
V  
— Did you perhaps see,
Alive or dead,
Any news any letters,
Whether he remembers me?!
VI  
— I am but an orphan,
Without mother or father,
The one I had and loved,
Went away and left me here!
VII
Në ëndër seç pa,
Djalin në vapor,
Sikur shkoi dhe i hodhi,
Vajzës një kurorë!

VIII
Letrazeza vjen,
Dhe me të vërtetë,
Djali kishte udhëtuar,
Pa kthime për jetë!

IX
— Vajz' e valëve —,
Thosh i mjeri djalë,
— Merre këtë letër e qamë,
Tjetër vend më pret!

X
— Na u ndamë këtu,
Qielli atje lartë,
Do të na bashkoj,' o djalë,
Prit se vij për pak?

XI
— Lamtumir,' o gur,
Mbeçë me shëndet,
Vuajte dhe ti me mua,
Merrm,' o val' e det!

29. ERDHI PRILLI, Ç'U SHKRI BORA
Erdhi prilli, ç'u shkri bora,
Majave,
Mbani vesh, bie këmbora,
Majave,
O pranvera, vera-vera,
Sa gëzim,
Këndojn' zogjtë nëpër ferra,
Pa pushim,
Gjith' natira ç'u ndrishua,
Dhe ndrishon,
Gjithë toka zbukuruar,
Lulëzon,
Zogjtë di nga di jetojnë,
Në fole,
Çajnë qiellin edhe shkojnë,
Si rufë,
Pashë një bilbil mënjanë,
Pa një shok,
As këndon, po rri e qan,
Qan me lot,
Ishte vajza, vajzë mali,
Si një yll,

APRIL ARRIVED, THE SNOW MELTED
April arrived, the snow melted,
Mountain peaks,
Listen, bells ringing,
Mountain peaks,
Oh spring, summer, summer,
What a joy,
Birds sing in bushes,
Nonstop,
All nature has been illuminated,
Still illuminating,
The entire earth is decorated,
It's blooming,
Two by two birds are living,
In their nests,
They pierce the sky and travel,
Like thunder,
I noticed a nightingale off to the side,
Had no companion,
It doesn't sing, but instead cries,
Cries and cries,
It was a girl, a mountain girl,
Like a star,
30. TREGON GEGO VELIDEJA

I
Tregon Gego Velideja,
Për kohën e shkuarë,
Tregon vajzave të reja,
Si e kan’ martuarë:

II
—Një gurrën burrë më dhanë,
Që s’ë keshë njohurë!
Un’ isha tetëmbëdhjetë,
Aji gjashtëdhjet e një!

III
Më mori grua të pestë,
Katër i kish ndjekurë!
Me para më pati blerë,
Si dhënt’ e pazaritë!

IV
Jargët nga goja i vine
Si qen i tërbufarë,
Lëvon uri e dajaku,
Si në pesë pusetë!

V
Qyqja për ato zakone,
Që na nxinë jetënë,
Po ju sot, bijat e mija,
Lirin’ e fituatë!

31. O TRIMA, FLINI TE QETE

I
Kur të nisa për në çetë,
Bashkë me shokë të tjerë,
Gjer te kroi të përçollë,
Të putha dy a tri herë.

PART II

30. TREGON GEGO VELIDEJA

I
Tregon Gego Velideja,
Për kohën e shkuarë,
Tregon vajzave të reja,
Si e kan’ martuarë:

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Aji gjashtëdhjet e një!

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Katër i kish ndjekurë!
Me para më pati blerë,
Si dhënt’ e pazaritë!

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Jargët nga goja i vine
Si qen i tërbufarë,
Lëvon uri e dajaku,
Si në pesë pusetë!

V
Qyqja për ato zakone,
Që na nxinë jetënë,
Po ju sot, bijat e mija,
Lirin’ e fituatë!

31. O TRIMA, FLINI TE QETE

I
Kur të nisa për në çetë,
Bashkë me shokë të tjerë,
Gjer te kroi të përçollë,
Të putha dy a tri herë.

Oh You Heroes, Rest Assured

I
Saw you off to the brigade,
Together with your friends,
Walked you down to the brook,
Kissed you two or three times.
II
Edhe ti më përqafove,
Të mos qaj, më ngushëllove,
Dhe një fjalë më premtove,
Që, si trim, do të lufoje!

III
Leitrën që kishe dërguar
Disa her' e kam lexuar,
Dhe yllin që kishte brenda,
Në gji e ruante nêna!

IV
Kur të pa nêna të vrrarë,
Të kuqon gjaku te balli,
Aty plumbi të kish marrë,
Aty ku vritet luani!

V
Kaqë vjet shkuan e vanë,
Që nêna nuk të ka parë,
Po ti për Atdhë ke rârë,
Ndaj jeton e je i gjallë!

VI
Amanetin që na latë,
Do ta ruajmë për jetë,
Shqipërinë do ta mbrojmë,
Kush të dojë, le ta prekë!

32. TUNDU, BEJKE E BARDHE,
TUNDU

I
Duke tundur zbret te zalli,
Me shamin' lidhur te balli,
Tundu, bejk' e bardhë, tundu,
Natënë me hënë duku,
Bejk' e bardh' e bor' e malit,
Të ilaç ku çobanit!

II
Gjithë natën e beharit,
Cula dégjohet te stani,
Bëj të fle, gjumi s'më zë,
Cula bie ëmbëlë,
E dégjoj e gëzon xhani,
I biçe djalë çobanit!

III
Kur merr ujë te burimi,
Më duke si lule prilli,
'Tundu, bejk' e bardhë, tundu,

KEEP ON DANCING, WHITE SHEEP

I
While dancing she comes down to the shore,
With a scarf around her head,
Keep on dancing, you white sheep,
On a glowing moon night come,
White sheep like mountain snow,
You are the shepherd's medicine!

II
Through the entire summer night,
Shepherd's flute playing in the pen,
I try to sleep but I cannot,
The flute is playing, sounding sweet,
Hearing it my soul fills with joy,
Being played by a young shepherd boy!

III
When filling water at the brook,
You look like an April flower,
Keep on dancing, you white sheep,
Natënë me hënë duku,
Bejk’ e bardh’ e bor’ e malit,
Ti je ilać i çobanit!

IV
Kopeja na kullot malit,
Ato han’ majën e barit,
Bëj të fë, gjumi s’më zë,
Cula bie embëlë,
E dëgoj e gëzon xhani,
I bije djalë çobani!

V
Kur më bën shkarpa në brinjë,
Aje do nga pusinë,
Tundu, bejk’ e bardhë, tundu,
Natënë me hënë duku,
Bejk’ e bardh’ e bor’ e malit,
Ti je ilać i çobanit!

VI
Në saba, pa dirë mirë,
Do takohem me barinë,
Bëj të fë, gjumi s’më zë,
Cula bie embëlë,
E dëgoj e gëzon xhani,
I bije djalë çobani!

33. ZOGA, KAÇAKE NE MAL
I
Zunë malet e rënkojnë,
Zunë kaçakët dhe shkojnë,
Shkojnë, more shkojnë,
Natënë kalojnë!
— Nënë, do të shkoj dhe unë,
Maleve t’serta me borë,
Kaçake do vete,
Do vete se më kërkojnë,
Këmba-këmbës më gjurmojnë,
Xhandarët e burgut,
Sultanët e turkut.

II
— Bijë, të kam kalamake,
Të kam riturë bonjake,
Bij,’ o bija ime,
O Zoga jetime!
— Nëna ime, mbeç tu mirë,
Se kam nënë Shqipërinë,
Më thërret t’i vete,
Mora shpatën e babait,
Vesha rorobat e vëllait,

ZOGA, THE MOUNTAIN WARRIOR
I
The mountains are moaning,
The warriors are going,
Going they are, going,
During the night they travel!
— Mother, I will also go,
To the mountains rough and snowy,
As a warrior I will go,
I’ll go because they’re looking for me,
Step by step they’re tracking me,
The prison guards,
The Turks’ sultans.

II
— Daughter, you are still a child,
I have raised you fatherless,
Daughter, oh my daughter,
Oh fatherless Zoga!
— My mother, keep well,
I have another mother, Albania,
She is calling me to come,
I have taken father’s sword,
I have put on brother’s clothes,
Nënë, ika natën,
Turkt t’i vë flakën!

III
— O, ju zogj, ju fluturakë,
Ju që piqi me kaçakë,
Mos ma patë Zogën,
Atë trime motër?!
— Zoga jote nëpër male,
Lufton me Turqin’ e madhe,
Mbi gjoksin e shkëmbit,
Për lirin’ e vendit!

IV
— Ju male, të serta male,
Me ju kam të njëjtat halle,
Mos ma patë Zogën,
Që e kam të vogël?!
— E kemi në gjirin tonë,
Lufton me shpatë në dorë,
Ecën fort si i pate thënë,
I dërgon të fala nënës.

V
— O, ju trima, kapedanë,
Ju që piqi me kaçakë,
Më thanë Zogën e vranë,
Po kur u vra Zoga,
Fluturoi shqiponja!
— Nënë, mos ki dëshpërime,
Se vajzën e pate trime,
Dhe e derdhi gjakun,
Për lirin’ e pragut!

II
Tok’ në shkrepat me përrale,
Kemi pas’ e hequr halle,
Në ato male stërralli,
Ngjiten djemtë si sorkadhi,
Djemat-o, trimat-o,
Në ato sheshe tërfili,
Ku ja thot’ këngës thëllëza!

V
— O, ju trima, kapedanë,
Ju që piqi me kaçakë,
Më thanë Zogën e vranë,
Po kur u vra Zoga,
Fluturoi shqiponja!
— Nënë, mos ki dëshpërime,
Se vajzën e pate trime,
Dhe e derdhi gjakun,
Për lirin’ e pragut!

34. BIJ ÇOBANESH NEVE JEMI

I
Bij çobanësh neve jemi,
 Dhën e dhi kullotur kemi,
 N’ato brige, n’ato hije,
 Ku jan’ vazhëzat si yje,
 Vashat-o, yjet-o,
 N’ato male, n’ato rrëza,
 Ku ja thot’ këngës thëllëza!

II
Tok’ në shkrepat me përrale,
Kemi pas’ e hequr halle,
Në ato male stërralli,
Ngjiten djemtë si sorkadhi,
Djemat-o, trimat-o,
Në ato sheshe tërfili,
Ku ja thot’ këngës bilbili!

III
— Oh you birds, flying,
You that meet with the warriors,
Did you see Zoga,
My brave sister?!
— Your Zoga, in the mountains,
Fights the powerful Turkey,
On top of stones,
For the country’s freedom!

IV
— You mountains, you rough mountains,
I share the same pain,
Did you see my Zoga,
My little one?!
— We have her in our bosom,
She’s fighting with sword in hand,
She walks tough, as you told her,
And sends regards to her mother.

V
— Oh you brave ones,
You that meet with the warriors,
They told me Zoga was killed,
But when she died,
The eagle took flight!
— Mother, don’t feel sorrow,
Your daughter was a brave one,
She shed blood,
For her homeland’s freedom!

SONS OF SHEPHERDS WE ARE

I
Sons of shepherds we are,
Sheep and goats we have tended,
By those hills and by those shadows,
Where the girls look pretty as stars,
Girls-oh, stars-oh,
In those mountains in those paths,
Where the partridge sings its song!

II
Together, amongst crags with bushes,
We’ve had and overcome troubles,
In those mountains of rocks,
Climb the boys like deer,
Boys-oh, brave ones-oh,
In those fields of shamrocks,
Where the nightingale sings its songs!
Bij çobanësh kemi qënë,
Kemi fjetur nënë tëndë,
Shiu e bora na ka' zënë,
Herë ngrën’ e her’ pa ngrënë,
Kush guxon ta shkelte vëlë,
Mu në ball’ i kemi rënë,
Hergjelë s’i kemi lënë,
Frë në goj’ u kemi vënë!

Sons of shepherds we were,
Under tents we slept,
Snow and rain we have endured,
Sometimes fed and sometimes hungry,
Whoever dared encroach our land,
We have shot in the forehead,
Not one step could they take,
Muzzles over their faces we imposed!

35. MOJ FTUJE E BARDHE E SHULLËRIT

I
Moj ftujë e bardhë e shullërit,
Ushqyer me majën e gjërit,
Ushqyer me majën e gjërit!

II
Rritur-o pëpara prërët,
Sa more çapin e drërit,
Sa more çapin e drërit!

III
Ta pata shumë silloinë,
Se keshe lerë kërthinjë,
Se keshe lerë kërthinjë!

IV
Po kush u hodh, moj, sa tinë,
Mal më mal e brinjë më brinjë,
Mal më mal e brinjë më brinjë?

V
Maj’ më maj’ e ledh më ledh,
As qëndis, as mëndafsh dresh,
As qëndis, as mëndafsh dresh!

VI
Po djersën e jetës dersh,
Si bleta që lulen mbledh,
Si bleta që lulen mbledh!

VII
Kur shkon te stani, moj vitë,
Pse të veniten stolitë,
Pse të veniten stolitë?

VIII
Hajde të shkëmbëjmë sytë,
Unë të tutë e ti të mitë,
Unë të tutë e ti të mitë!

OH WHITE KID BY THE SUNNY FIELD

I
Oh white kid by the sunny field,
Fed with nothing but the finest,
Fed with nothing but the finest!

II
Held tightly on the lap,
Till like a doe took your first step,
Till like a doe took your first step!

III
I had great concern over you,
You were born a tiny thing,
You were born a tiny thing!

IV
But who jumped and ran like you,
Mountain upon mountain and hill upon hill,
Mountain upon mountain and hill upon hill?

V
Peak upon peak and bank upon bank,
Neither embroider, nor do you spin,
Neither embroider, nor do you spin!

VI
But the sweat of life you spill,
Like a bee collecting nectar,
Like a bee collecting nectar!

VII
When you go by the pen, oh girl,
Why do you turn pale,
Why do you turn pale?

VIII
Let’s give each other a glance,
Me to you and you to me,
Me to you and you to me!
36. KURVELESHI MAL MBI MALE

I
Kurveleshi mal mbi male,
Vapori i steres me halle,
Bleronjat përmbi stërralle,
Burojnë në këngë e në valle!
Kurvelesh, zemëra ime,
Përvëluar për thërrime!

II
Këtu, që përpara Hënës,
Guri i babës dhe i nënës,
Dhe loton, dhe ia merr këngës,
Këtu, tek aq qan vëndë!
Kurvelesh, zemëra ime,
Përvëluar për thërrime!

III
Këtu, çdo ditë, është një datë,
Këtu, çdo gjurmë, është një shpatë,
Këtu, shkëmbonjat me borë,
Kanë rrëzuar perandorë!
Kurvelesh, zemëra ime,
Përvëluar për thërrime!

IV
Këtu, besa dhe betimi,
Trimëria dhe guximi,
Këtu, i Pari i Çlirimit,
Ku pijëf foshnjat qumësh trimi!
Kurvelesh, zemëra ime,
Përvëluar për thërrime!

V
Këtu, majat s’quhen maja,
Përmbi to janë bijtë e saja,
Këtu, hordhitë e mëdhaja,
Vijnë bejka, dalin llaja!
Kurvelesh, zemëra ime,
Përvëluar për thërrime!

KURVELESH, MOUNTAIN OF MOUNTAINS

I
Kurvelesh, mountain of mountains,
The boat in a well of hardship,
Meadows on dirt and rocks,
Flowing with song and dance!
Kurvelesh, my dear heart,
Suffered much for every crumb!

II
Before the moon ever existed,
These were my forefather’s rocks,
They cry and also sing,
Here the land brims with sentiment!
Kurvelesh, my dear heart,
Suffered much for every crumb!

III
Here every day is a marked day,
Here every footstep is a sword,
Here the mountains full of snow,
Emperors, they have toppled!
Kurvelesh, my dear heart,
Suffered much for every crumb!

IV
Here, word and pledge,
Here, bravery and valor,
Here, the forefront of freedom,
Here, infants drink milk of warriors!
Kurvelesh, my dear heart,
Suffered much for every crumb!

V
Here mountain peaks are not the summit,
On them stand their sons and daughters,
Here large herds of foreign invaders,
Come as white sheep and leave as black sheep!
Kurvelesh, my dear heart,
Suffered much for every crumb!

Urban Musical Dialect: Urban Songs

37. NE ZAMAN T’NJASAJ FURI

I
Në zaman t’njasaj furi,
Vetë ke dashtë me folë me mue,
Fjala jote, moj hyri,
Më ndali vetë!
Ta dishë, ta dishë,

IN THOSE STORMY TIMES

I
In those stormy times,
You wanted to speak to me,
Your words you pretty one,
They stopped me in my tracks!
Know this, know this,
Hallin qi kam, aman,
Tà dishë, ta dishë,
Qi s’la pa t’marrë!

II
Ti ta dishë, moj bukuri,
Unë prej fjalet nuk të dal,
Por në dalsh ti jallanxhi,
Unë rashë në mal!
Tà dishë, ta dishë, etj.

III
Kemi ardhë n’ajri zaman,
Behari vjen tue dalë,
Të lutem, mori sultanë,
Të më rrish në fjalë!
Tà dishë, ta dishë, etj.

My suffering,
Know this, know this,
You will be mine!

II
Know this you pretty one,
My word I won’t betray,
But if you do such a thing,
In the mountains I will fall!
Know this, know this, etc.

III
Now the times are looking better,
Summer is about to leave,
I ask you oh dear one,
To keep the word you gave!
Know this, know this, etc.

38. PRANVERA ME DALE KA FILLUE

I
Pranvera me dalë ka fillue,
Të gjitha lulet po bajnë bejanë,
Zymbyli vjen tue mbure,
Shoqet mrapa i ka lanë.

II
Zymbyli shoqeve iu la fjalë:
“Jam në nisun për me shkue,
Mos vononi ju me ardhë,
Gjith’ ashik’t ju presin ju-e.”

III
I lumi ti more zambak,
Lum kojshija qi t’ka njitë,
Nder ma t’mir’t je n’atë sokak,
Nuri jot rreze po ndritë!

IV
Drandofilja në mashtrapë,
Tue çilë ganxhe ditë për ditë,
Karajfili jep xhevap:
“Jam mehlem për ashikë!”

39. SI DUKAT I VOGEL JE

I
Si dukat i vogël je,
Hajde shpirt e rri me ne,
Na ka dalë nji ganxhë e re,
Era karajfil i vjen!
Hajde, cakrama gotën,

YOU ARE LIKE A PRECIOUS COIN

I
You are like a precious coin,
Come darling, stay with us,
A new bud has sprouted,
It has the scent of a carnation!
Come, raise a glass with me,
Mos më len mue të vorfën,
O hajde!

II
Kur ma luejshe shtatin-e,
Ma shtojshë marakun-e,
Iku nata, zbardhi dita,
Se shikojmë sahatin-e!
Hajde, cakrama gotën,
Mos më len mue të vorfën,
O hajde!

III
Letrat kur m’i çojshe,
Marakun ma shtojshë,
Karajfil ty të vjen era,
Na ka dalë nji kangi e re!
Hajde, cakrama gotën,
Mos më len mue të vorfën,
O hajde!

THE GIRL FROM VALIAS

40. VALIZAKJA

I
O, se shkoj në pyll, o mi lale,
O, s’më pret nagaçja,
O, se më rri mendja, mi lale,
O ke valizakja!
O, moj valizake e lalës, ku je,
O, moj gushbardhake e lalës, ku je?!

II
O, moj valizake, moj lale,
Me lot-o do të qaj,
Do shkoj lala në Peqin,
Ç’mu dogj ky shpirti im!
O, moj valizakja e lalës, ku je,
O, moj gushbardakja e lalës, ku je?!

41. QENKE VESHUN ME TE BARDHA

I
Qënke veshun me të bardha,
Hajde, ja ke lala!
Mu me ty m’ka zan sevdaja,
Hajde, ja ke lala!
Hajde, ja ke lala, e,
Se të dal përpara, e!

II
Qënke veshun me të kuqe,
Hajde, ja ke lala!

YOU ARE DRESSED IN WHITE

I
You are dressed in white,
Come on now, come to me!
I have fallen in love with you,
Come on now, come to me!
Come on now, come to me,
I’m outside and waiting for you!

II
You are dressed in red,
Come on now, come to me!
Ma ke buzën si burbuqe,
Hajde, ja ke lala!
Hajde, ja ke lala, e,
Se të dal përpara, e!

Qënke veshun me jeshile,
Hajde, ja ke lala!
Ma ke zanin si bilbil-e,
Hajde, ja ke lala!
Hajde, ja ke lala, e,
Se të dal përpara, e!

Your lips are like red buds,
Come on now, come to me!
Come on now, come to me,
I'm outside and waiting for you!

You are dressed in green,
Come on now, come to me!
Your voice is like a nightingale's,
Come on now, come to me!
Come on now, come to me,
I'm outside and waiting for you!

42. ZJARR NE MALE, ZJARR NE KODRA

I
Zjarr në male, zjarr në kodra,
Po na vjen-o Pashai me lodra,
Po na vjen Pashai me lodra!

II
Zjarr në male, zjarr në bjeshke,
Do ta djegin-o Martaneshnë,
Do ta djegin-o Martaneshnë!

III
S’un e djegish Martaneshnë,
Shat’ vjeç djali e rrok dyfeknë,
Mu si gjarpni me nan’ krenë!

IV
Mahmut Pasha i rrem dragoi,
Të nan’ malet ç’i kërko,
Martaneshin s’un e shtroi!

V
Martaneshi vend i mirë,
S’duron pash’ e s’duron vezirë,
S’duron pash’ e s’duron vezirë!

FIRE IN THE MOUNTAINS, FIRE IN THE HILLS

I
Fire in the mountains, fire in the hills,
The Pasha and his drums are coming,
The Pasha and his drums are coming!

II
Fire in the mountains, fire in the forest,
They will burn Martanesh,
They will burn Martanesh!

III
They cannot burn Martanesh,
A seven-year-old boy takes his musket,
Like a snake with nine heads!

IV
Mahmut Pasha a dubious dragon,
All nine mountains he searched,
But Martanesh he couldn’t subdue!

V
Martanesh a solid place,
Won’t obey the pasha, won’t obey the vizier,
Won’t obey the pasha, won’t obey the vizier!

43. ÇUPE, THYEJ ATO GJYLPERA

I
Çupë, thyej ato gjylpëra,
Çupë, ç’e do pajën ti?!
Of, aman, aman, aman,
Je e bukur e dynjas,’
Je e bukur e dynjas,
Nuk të lë un’ ty pa marrë!

GIRL, BREAK THOSE NEEDLES

I
Girl, break those needles,
Girl, why do you need a dowry?!
Oh, hey, hey,
You’re the prettiest in the world,
You’re the prettiest in the world,
I will not rest until you’re mine!
II
Se prej gjethes trandafilit,
Një furnat ty do të pres!
Of, aman, aman, aman, etj.

II
Out of the rose leaves,
I will make a dress for you!
Oh, hey, hey, etc.

44. BILBILI QE KENDON MBI RRASA

I
Bilibili që këndon mbi rrasa,
A s'ma fal gushën se plasa,
Gu, moj, gushën-ë!
Jepja gushën, moj xhananit-ë,
Mollë e kuqe e Elbasanit-ë,
Jepja gushën, moj, të mjerit-ë,
Moj llokumja e sheqerit-ë!

II
Bilibili që këndon mbi rrepe,
Asaman, ç'më lige, ç'më trete,
Gu, moj, gushën-ë!
Jepja gushën, moj xhananit-ë, etj.

45. A KANE UJE ATO BURIME

I
— A kan’ uj’ aro burime,
Ti, moj buz-karafilja ime?
O, aman, aman, aman-e,
O, për belin-e,
Për kokën tënde,
Aman, aman-e!

II
— Kujt ia bëje aro naze?
— Ia bëj djalit-o me çapraze!
O, aman, aman, aman-e, etj.

III
— Nëm një uj’ me dorën tënde,
Ti, moj vajza përmetare!
O, aman, aman, aman-e, etj.

IV
— Shihemi, me gojë s’flasim,
Shumë durojmë, si s’pëlcasim?!
O, aman, aman, aman-e, etj.

DOES WATER FLOW IN THOSE FOUNTAINS

I
— Does water flow in those fountains,
My carnation-lipped girl?
Oh, come on, come on,
Oh, for your waist,
Oh, for your face,
Come on, come on!

II
— Who were you playing around with?
— With the playful young boy!
Oh, come on, come on, etc.

III
— Give me some water with your hand,
You, the girl from Përmet!
Oh, come on, come on, etc.

IV
— We exchange looks but do not speak,
How can we bear this without dying?!
Oh, come on, come on, etc.
46. VETULLAT SI NAPOLONE

I
Të martoi babai në Përmet,
Zotrote kërkon në Vlorë!
Të dy sytë e zesë—një lirë,
Vetullat si napolonë!

II
Të gjitha shoqet rrinë në nimë,
Zotrote kërkoje fronë!
Të dy sytë e zesë—një lirë,
Vetullat si napolonë!

III
Të gjitha shoqet pijin' kafënë,
Zotrote kërkon gjikonë!
Të dy sytë e zesë—një lirë,
Vetullat si napolonë!

47. Ç’TË NDRIJNE LESHTRAT, MOJ ESMA

I
Ç’të ndrijnë leshrat, moj Esma,
Jarnane, jarnane, jarnana!

II
Nga kënaja, more djalë,
Jarnane, jarnane, jarnana!

III
Kush ta bleu, moj Esma,
Jarnane, jarnane, jarnana!

IV
Vetë, zotrote, more djalë,
Jarnane, jarnane, jarnana!

V
Ç’të ndrin gusha, moj Esma,
Jarnane, jarnane, jarnana!

VI
Nga florinjtë, more djalë,
Jarnane, jarnane, jarnana!

VII
Kush t’i pruri, moj Esma,
Jarnane, jarnane, jarnana!

VIII
Vetë, zotrote, more djalë,
Jarnane, jarnane, jarnana!

PART II

EYEBROWS LIKE A PRECIOUS COIN

I
Your father married you off in Përmet,
But you madam wanted Vlorë!
Both of your dark eyes—a precious coin,
Eyebrows like a precious coin!

II
All your friends sitting on a sofa,
But you madam wanted a throne!
Both of your dark eyes—a precious coin,
Eyebrows like a precious coin!

III
All your friends drinking coffee,
But you madam wanted fine jam!
Both of your dark eyes—a precious coin,
Eyebrows like a precious coin!

OH ESMA, YOUR HAIR IS SHINING

I
Oh Esma, your hair is shining,
Yarnane, yarname, yarnana!

II
From the henna, oh young man,
Yarnane, yarnane, yarnana!

III
Who bought it for you, oh Esma,
Yarnane, yarname, yarnana!

IV
You, yourself, oh young man,
Yarnane, yarname, yarnana!

V
Your neck is glowing, oh Esma,
Yarnane, yarname, yarnana!

VI
From the gold necklace, oh young man,
Yarnane, yarname, yarnana!

VII
Who gave it to you, oh Esma,
Yarnane, yarname, yarnana!

VIII
You yourself, oh young man,
Yarnane, yarname, yarnana!
48. ÇUPE, KUSH TA BLEU FUSTANE

I
Çupë, kush ta bleu fustanë,
U bubu, të keqen-o!

II
Nëneja me gjith’ babanë,
U bubu, të keqen-o!

III
Shumë i ngushtë nënë sqetull,
U bubu, të keqen-o!

IV
Ju thafshin, kush ta ka qepur,
U bubu, të keqen-o!

V
Bandilli do të blej një tjetër,
U bubu, të keqen-o!

VI
Të bukur, të mbështjell në letër,
U bubu, të keqen-o!

GIRL, WHO BOUGHT YOU THAT DRESS

I
Girl, who bought you that dress,
Oh my goodness, look at you!

II
My mother and my father,
Oh my goodness, look at you!

III
Very tight around your shoulders,
Oh my goodness, look at you!

IV
Damn those hands that sewed it,
Oh my goodness, look at you!

V
Your lover will buy you a new one,
Oh my goodness, look at you!

VI
A pretty one, wrapped in paper,
Oh my goodness, look at you!
Musical Notations

Typical Modes

Gheg Musical Dialect

Basic Modes

1.

2.

3.

4.

Compound Modes

1.

2.
Musical Notations

Tosk Musical Dialect
Lab Musical Dialect
Urban Musical Dialect

Basic Modes

1. [Musical notation image]

2. [Musical notation image]

3. [Musical notation image]

4. [Musical notation image]

5. [Musical notation image]

6. [Musical notation image]
Compound Modes

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

6.
1. Shqipëri, o nana ime (Albania, my mother)

Ghegëri, region of

Andante

Hej!

Shqi - pë - ri,

o na - na i - me, T'për - shën -

des e t'sjell u - ri - me:

Larg të shtrenj - tit Më - më - dhe, Na bjen

die - lli, nuk na nxeh! De - ti
2. Moj e mira nga Gjakova (Oh you kind one)

Ghegëri, region of

Moderato

Canto

O mal më mal ty të kër-kova,

O mryz më mryz për ty këndo-va,

O i rash' fushe's ogian' e gia-të,

Shum' të prita o dh' e na-të!

O kurr-kund zë-rin o s'ta degjo-va,
O moj e miranga Gjakova,
O kurrkund zerin o sta degjova,
O moj e miranga Gjakova!
3. Moj e mirë vetullkunorë (Oh you pretty one)

Ghegëri, region of

Larghetto

Canto

O! Moj 6 e

mi - rë moj po 6 ve - tu lle - ku -

no - re, O!

Ç'ka 6 po ly - pë mor po 6 në o -

borr kaq vo - në?
4. Emri yt s'harrohet kurrë (Your name)

Ghegëri, region of

Vivace

Canto

Hej, dri-dhet
toka, ç'po ushton Malësisja,

Hej, nё k'to male po luf-tojnё djelmnja,
Hej, bashk' me trimat

Orch.

Canto
e kë-saj Kras-
niq - c e.

Canto

Me Baj - ram Cu - rrin o ze - mèr - çe - li - ke!

Canto

Baj - ram Curr, o Baj - ram Curr, Em - ri yt s’ha - rrro - het kurr’. Tè ka lind’ o nan’ Gja - ko - va, S’tè ha - rron Ko - so - va! val!
5. Në Fierzë kanga bucët fort (Song is roaring)

Ghegëri, region of

Moderato

Canto

Sot ka fest' në Al - pe,
Part II

22

vall - ja, gij - gand tê dri - tês!

25

Né Fierz' kan - ga bu - çet fort, Po vlon pu - na

28

me ha - re, Po gé - zon e gjith' Shqip - ri - a,

31

Për kë - të ve - për ton' të re!
6. Mbusha ujë te kroni (I filled water)

Ghegeri, region of

Musical Notations
7. Fryni nji veri i ftoftë (There blew a cold wind)

Ghegëri, region of

Animato
Fry - mi nji ve - ri i ftof - të. Vrik ma mshe - li

sy - nin - o,
Vrik ma mshe - li

sy - nin - o!
8. Xhamadani i trimnisë (Vest of bravery)

Ghegëri, region of

Animato

Kërcet topique gjëmon trolli,

Xhamadannin hap Mie Sokoli,

Përmes fushës, kalldram me g'zhoja,

Por si flejtët kur hap shqipornja!

Hej!
Part II

Ngri - ti kra - hët ei - tha va - ta - nit:

"S'na shpon, jo o - top' - i Sull - ta - nit,

Zem - ra jon' ka gjak sa gu - rra,

Mbi ar - mi - kun o bi - ni bu - rra,

Zem - ra jon' ka gjak sa gu - rra,

Mbi ar - mi - kun o bi - ni bu - rra!"
9. Plasi toka, 'bini mollá (Soil parted)

Ghegëri, region of

Musical Notations

### Allegro

#### Women's group

Canto

Plasi toka, 'bini mollá, Lin-e, lin-e

ho-là, Plasi toka 'bini mollá,

t'ho-llen mo-ra, Lin-e, lin-e ho-l-la,

Tho-llen de-sha t'ho-llen mo-ra, Lin-e, lin-e ho-l-la,

Men's group

ho-l-la, Né-per de-ga t'mo-llès, moj, I çoj fjal’ té ho-llès,

Women's group

Né-per de-ga t’mo-llès, moj, I çoj fjal’ té ho-llès! E ho-l-la jam ve-té, mor.

Du nji dja-lé me fle-té, E ho-l-la jam ve-té, mor, Du nji - dja-lé me fle-té!
10. Mori lulja e frashnit t'bardhë (Oh you flower)

Ghegëri, region of

Women's group

Andante

Emoririlulja

frashni-të t'bardhe,

Morilulja e frashni-të t'bardhe,

E kurce ke ndër

mendëme ardh-

ke ndër mendëme ardh-

Men's group

Aniba-hem zog-

moj.
hynëmaje t'imalit, Anibahem
zoge, moj, hynëmaje t'imalit,
Sata shof un' nuseno, kur vjenë përkrakh
djalit! Sata shof un' nuseno
Women's group
kur vjenë përkrakh djalit! Edhe zog n'u
bafsh, or djal', mali asht i naltë,
Edhe zog n'u bafsh, or djal', mali asht i
nal-të, Lule tëndelin', or djal'
ble-tëembledhin mjaltë, Lule tëndele-
lin', or djal', ble-te-temble-dhin mjalm-té!

O, moj nu-se, bukur je, o of a-

man!

Përmbi shqet batke dritte,

o of a- man!

C'po këndonte zo-ga

dhe bil-bili dhe bil-bili

dhe bil-bili, Oh, se lum ai

djali, nu-se miri, nu-se miri,

nu-se miri!
11. O moj nuse, dil nē lēmē (Oh you bride)

Ghegēri, region of

Lento

O moj nu se moj, dil nē

la mē, Po t'hot vje rri moj

hi je rand': A t'kan'

ra o pet kat ta man e?

A t'kan ra o pet kat ta man?
12. Kur përcolla ylberin (I walked my husband off)

Ghegëri, region of

Moderato

Kur e përcołla ylberin,

Ktheva, hinana n’odë,

Kur ia pash mantinë o vjerrë, la lava me lot!

Mos e gaj me lot oj zanto, Mos e gaj me

lot, Se shkon vit’ i par’oj zanto,

Por - si di - ta sot!
13. Ballët me sedefe (Your forehead with pearls)

Women's group

Adagio

Ba - llë - të me se - de - fe moj -

se - de - fe, Me sër - ma

sto - li - su - ré!
14. Moj leschedrehura pas gryke (Braided hair)

Women's group
Animato
Improvisando

Moj leschedrehura pas gryke, Ah-man moj la-moj je

Toskeri, region of
Part II

116

kri - moj kri - je - hi mojë dhi
krië je dhi

mbra - moj mbra - pa, Ta - ri - na - ni -
mbra - moj mbra - pa, Ta - ri - na - ni -

na! Ah - man moj se moj është
na! mo - jë ë - shtë
15. Mbeçë, more shokë, mbeçë (I am left here)

Men's group
Andante
Ad libitum

Toskëri, region of
16. O ju malet e Skraparit (Oh you mountains)

Toskëri, region of

Men's group
Andantino
Ad libitum

Ju o ma - let e Skra - pa - rit, Ji - ni lar'
lar', lar' o dhe zbu - ku - ru - ar

E -

E -dhe ju o ma - c

E -

e

ma - ma - let o e Skra - pa - rit
Musical Notations

A-po ji-ni lar'

lar', lar' dhe moj zbu-ku-ru-ar'
17. O kurbet i shkretë (Wretched emigration)

Men's group
Andante
Improvisando

Toskëri, region of
Musical Notations

10

zem - ra
i - zem - ra
i - me.

zem - ra
i - zem - ra
i - me.

13

qaj!

qaj
për
Shqi - pë - ri!
18. Zunë yjtë e po rrallojnë (Stars are fading)

Women's group
Andante
Ad libitum

Zu-në yjtë e po rrall-ojnë, o bir,
Bir, bir, Ka-le-me-ne.

ho ho ho ho ho ho e
bir, bir, Ko-çi-e-ne.

Glissando
u o e!

bir, Xha-fer, o bir, mos shko dhe ti!
19. Fluturoi një flutur (A butterfly passed by)

Toskëri, region of

Women's group
Andantino

Permbi shtëpi në tonë moj fluturoi një

flu tur moj fluturoi një flu tur

Te ke qen kuna ta moj, sa qen ke c

qen kuna ta moj, sa qen ke c
bukur moj, sa qenke e bukur!
bukur moj, sa qenke e bukur!
20. Skënderbeu trim me fletë (A mighty warrior)

Toskëri, region of

Men's group
Andante
Ad libitum

\[\text{Music notation} \]
21. Nerënxë, tè pata thënë (Girl, I told you)

Men's group
Andante
Improvisando

Toskëri, region of

Glissando
Musical Notations

Sheet music notation with musical notes and text in a foreign language.
ho ho ho, ho ho ho,
ne re

22. Në Krutje ç'u ndez shkëndija (The spark ignited)
Toskeri, region of

Musical Notations
Canto

17 - haj-de, Me Kush-trim qē

trim qē

E

21 - o qē dha Qev-ri-ria, Nē nēn-

o qē dha Qev-ri-ria, Nē nēn-

o qē dha Qev-ri-ria, Nē nēn-

o qē dha Qev-ri-ria, Nē nēn-
Part II

ze - Je!

ze - Je!

ze - Je!
23. Të rriti nëna ty (Your mother raised you)

Women's group
Largo

T'rri - ti në - na, ty,

Bar - kun that', o bir, o,

Djal' i në - nës, shpirt i në - nës.

Djal' i në - nës, shpirt i në - nës.

E
Part II

bir! o, Djal' i nê-nês,
bir! Djal' i nê-nês.

spirí i nê-nês, bir!
spirí i nê-nês, bir!
24. Čelo Mezanit (A tribute to Čelo Mezani)

Toskëri, region of

Men's group
Andante
Ad libitum
Canto

è me - ne, Ra di e llam e Vi lè, èè,

Zbri ti Ce lua nè A

è,

rrilè,
PART II

e, Për tê shkretên pajgori-

a, a-man, a-man, a, Për tê

a pajgorilê, c, e-

shkretên, c, pajgori-

e moj pajgorilê,

e
25. O protokalja me mjaltë (Oh you orange)

Labéri, region of

Musical Notations

LAB MUSICAL DIALECT

Vivace

Krevati me bojë arre, Përan penxhres e maże.

Krevati me bojë arre, Përan penxhres e maže.

Krevati me bojë arre, Përan penxhres e maże.

Krevati me bojë arre, Përan penxhres e maže.

Women's group
26. Bilbilenjtë trembëdhjetë (Thirteen Bilbils)

Men's group
Allegro assai
Improvisando

\( \text{Për Bil-bil, përm Bil-bil, përm Bil-bil e} \)

\( \text{bil, o ho, përm Bil-bil e.} \)

\( \text{Për Resulë, Për Bil-bil,} \)

\( \text{o ho, përm Resul', o ho, Për Bil-bi, o ho,} \)

\( \text{përm Resulë o, Për Bil-bil,} \)

\( \text{përm Bil-bil, përm Bil-bil e, përm Resulë.} \)

\( \text{përm Bil-bi, o ho, përm Bil-bil e, o ho, përm Resul', o ho!} \)

\( \text{përm Bil-bil, ë, përm Bil-bil e, përm Resulë.} \)
27. Bejkë, shashaqe mëllënjë (Little white sheep)

Men’s group
Allegro
Improvisando

Tempo giusto

Labëri, region of
28. Vajzë e valëve (Girl of the waves)

Labëri, region of

Men's group
Vivace
Improvisando

Ze-mé-ra s'ja mban,
Ze-mé-hë-ra-ha-ha s'ja ha ha mban he he a,
Ze-mé-ra s'ja mban,
Part II

Mbi një

Mbi një hé

Mbi një

Mbi një

Gur änës sé dëtit, Qan e i zë

Gur ähänës hé hé dëtit, Qan he he zë hë he

Gur änë̈sé dëtit, Qan e zë

Gur änë̈sé dëtit, Qan e zë
29. Erdhi prilli, ç'u shkri bora (April arrived)

Men's group
Vivace
Improvisando

Erdhi prilli, ç'u shkri bora maja

Tempo giusto

Mbanëvesh, bie kë

Mbanëvesh, bie kë

Mbanëvesh, bie kë
ma-jave!

ma-jave, hi e he, hi e hi e, he, he!

ma-jave!

ma-jave!
30. Tregon Gego Velideja (Tells aunt Velideja)
Labëri, region of

Mixed group
Vivace

Tre-gon Gego Ve-li-de-ja, Për ko-hën e shku-a-rë,

Tre-gon Gego Ve-li-de-ja, Për ko-hën e shku-a-rë.

Tre-gon Gego Ho Ve-li-de-ja, Për ko-hën e shku-ha ha-rë, o ho!

Tre-gon Gego Ve-li-de-ja, Për ko-hën e shku-a-rë.

Tre-gon Gego Ve-li-de-ja, Për ko-hën e shku-a-rë.
31. O trima, flini të qetë (O you heroes, rest assured)
Labëri, region of

Mixed group
Vivace

Kur të ni-sa për ne çe-të, Bashkë me sho-kë të tje-rë,

Gjer te kro-i të për-co-là, Të pu-tha dy a tri he-rë!

dy a tri he-rë!
32. Tundu, bejkë e bardhë, tundu (White sheep)

Labëri, region of

Mixed group
Presto

Canto
33. Zoga, kaçake në mal (Zoga, the warrior)

Labëri, region of

Mixed group
Vivace

Zuinë malet e rënkojné,

Zuinë kaçakët dhe shkojné,

Zuinë kaçakët dhe shkojné,
Part II

\[ \text{Shkoj\text{-}në, mo\text{-}re, shkoj\text{-}në,} \]

\[ \text{Shkoj\text{-}në, mo\text{-}re, shkoj\text{-}në,} \]

\[ \text{Shkoj\text{-}në, mo\text{-}re, shkoj\text{-}në,} \]

\[ \text{Shkoj\text{-}në, mo\text{-}re, shkoj\text{-}në,} \]

\[ \text{Na\text{-}të\text{-}në ka\text{-}loj\text{-}në.} \]

\[ \text{Na\text{-}të\text{-}në ka\text{-}loj\text{-}në.} \]

\[ \text{Na\text{-}të\text{-}në ka\text{-}loj\text{-}në.} \]

\[ \text{Na\text{-}të\text{-}në ka\text{-}loj\text{-}në.} \]
Part II

Kaçake do vête, Kaçake do vête ho, Kaçake do vête, Kaçake do vête.

Do vête se mê kërkojné, Do vête se mê kërkojné, Do vête se mê kërkojné, Do vête se mê kërkojné.
Sull'antanët e tur--kut!
Sull'antanët e tur--ho kut!
Sull'antanët e tur--kut!
Sull'antanët e tur--kut!
34. Bij çobanësh neve jemi (Sons of shepherds)

Labëri, region of

Mixed group
Improvisando

Bij çobañesh neve jemi, Dhen e dhi kullo tur ke mi,

 Tempo giusto

Bij çobañesh neve jemi, o ho, Bij çobañesh neve jemi, Bij çobañesh neve jemi, Bij çobañesh, neve jemi.
35. Moj ftujë e bardhë e shullërit (White kid)

Mixed group
Allegro vivace
Tempo giusto

Laberi, region of

Moj ftuj' e bardh' e shu - llë - rit,

Ush - ayer me me ma - jën e gjë - rit,
Moj fluj' e bardh' e shu-lle-rit,

Moj fluj' e bardh' e shu-lle-rit,

Moj fluj' e bardh' e shu-lle-rit.

U-moj-ush-qy-er me ma-jën e gjë-rit, a-man,

U-moj-ush-qy-er me ma-jën e gjë-rit, a-man,

U-moj-ush-qy-er me ma-jën e gjë-rit, a-man.
Ushqyer me me majën e gjërit!
36. Mal mbi male (Mountain of mountains)

Labëri, region of

Mixed group

Allegro

Kur-ve-lesh o mal mbi ma-le, Vap-ori ste-res me ha-llle,

Ble-ro-njat për-mbi stë-rra-lle, Bu-rojn’ në këng’ e në va-llle!
37. Në zaman t'njasaj furi (In those stormy times)

Shkodër, city of

Andante

Canto

Në zama

Në zama

Fjala jote, moj hy

Fjala jote, moj hy
38. Pranvera me dalë ka fillue (Spring is passing)

Shkodër, city of

Allegro moderato

Canto

Andante

Pran - ve - ra me dal ka fi -

llu -

o -

ka fi -

Orch.

ka fi - llu!
Musical Notations

15
17
19
21
23
25
27
29
31

Canto

T'giji - tha lu - let po bajn' be - - - -

jan', 5 5

o - - - - - - -

3

po bajn' be - - - - jan'!

Zym - by - li vjen tu - e mba - ru - - e,
Shoqet prapa i ka lan!

Zymbyli vjen tuema re,

Shoqet prapa i ka lan!
39. Si dukat i vogël je (You are like a precious coin)

Shkodër, city of

Allegro

Canto

Si dukat i vogël

je,

Hajde shpirt e rrimene,

Si dunez-

Nakadal nji gansh'ere

E-ra
PART II

29. ka - raj - fil i vjen!

33. Haj - de, cak - rra - ma go - tën,

37. Mos mě len mu - e tě vor - fěn,

41. O, haj - de!
40. Valizakja (The girl from Valias)
Central Albania, cities of

Andante

Do shkoj la la n’Ka

Orch.

vaj.

Canto

Me lot to

Orch.
do t’a gaj.

O se shkoj në pyll.

O mi la le.

O s’më pret
41. Qënke veshun me të bardha (Dressed in white)

Central Albania, cities of

Allegro

Canto

O qën-ke ve-shun-o me tê

bar-dha, Haj-de ja ke la-

c, Haj-de ja ke
42. Zjarr në male, zjarr në kodra (Fire in mountains)

Central Albania, cities of

Musical Notations
43. Çupë, thyej ato gjylpëra (Break those needles)

Berat, city of

Allegro moderato

Çu-pë, thyej a-to gjyl-pë-ra.

Çu-pë, thyej a-to gjyl-pë-ra.

Çu-pë, ç'e do pa-jën ti.

Çu-pë, ç'e do pa-jën ti?

Of, a-man, a-man, a-man, Je e bu-kur e dy-njas!

Oj, a-man, a-man, a-man, Je e bu-kur e dy-njas!

Nuk të le un' ty pa t'marr!
44. Bilbili që këndon mbi rrasa (Nightingale sings)

Berat, city of

Allegro

Canto

Improvisando

Bilbili që këndon mbi rrasa.

A s'mafal moj gushën se pla-se pla-sa.

Gu-moj gushë-në!

Tempo giusto

Jepja gushën moj xha-na-ni-të.

Moll'e kuqe moj El-ba-sa-mi-të!
45. A kanë ujë ato burime (Does water flow)

Përmet, city of

Allegro moderato

---

Canto

A kanë ujë ato burime.

Ti, moj buz-kara-fil-ja-ime.

A kanë ujë ato burime.

Ti, moj buz-kara-fil-ja-ime?
Ti, mej buz - ka - ra - fil - ja i - me,

O! A - man, a - man, a - man - e,

O, për be - lin - e, Për ko - kën tén - dc,

A - man, a - man - e!
46. Vetullat si napolonë (Eyebrows like a coin)

Përmet, city of
li - rē, Vētu - llat si na - po -
li - rē, Vētu - llat si na - po -
lo - nē!
lo - nē!
47. Čtě ndrijně leshrat (Your hair is shining)

Vlorë, city of

Allegro

Canto
Men's group

Čtě ndrijn' leshrat, moj Esmá, e
Čtě ndrijn' leshrat, moj Esmá, e

Jar - na - ne, jar - na - ne, jar - na - na, o - po
Jar - na - ne, jar - na - ne, jar - na - na, o - po
Part II

Č'te ndrijn' lesh'rat, moj Esmara, e

Č'te ndrijn' lesh'rat, moj Esmara, e

Jar - na - ne, jar - na - ne, jar - na - na!

Jar - na - ne, jar - na - ne, jar - na - na!

Women's group

Nga këna - ja, mo - re djal'e

Nga këna - ja, mo - re djal'e

Jar - na - ne, jar - na - ne, jar - na - na, o po

Jar - na - ne, jar - na - ne, jar - na - na, o po

Nga këna - ja, mo - re djal'e

Nga këna - ja, mo - re djal'e
Jaranne, jaranne, jaranne! - - -
48. Çupë, kush ta bleu fustanë (Your dress)

Vlorë, city of

Moderato

Çu-pë, moj, kush ta ble-u fustanë,

Çu-pë, moj, kush ta bleu fustanë,
Notes

Chapter One

1. It is no wonder that this song centers around Moré—the Peloponnesian Peninsula, a region in Greece. Historically, Albanians have immigrated to the Hellenic lands, especially during the first half of the 14th century. Then, when Moré was captured by the Ottoman Empire (1460), a great number of Albanians left for southern Italy (Sicily).

Chapter Four

1. Krasniqe is a region in Northern Albania, district of Tropoja.
2. Bajram Curri (1862–1925) was a legendary warrior, an unwavering active participant of the Albanian patriotic issue, and an opponent of the King Ahmet Zogu (1895–1961). He is considered to be a hero of Albania.
3. Gjakova is a region lying in both northern Albania and Kosovo. There is also an Albanian city named Gjakova in today’s Kosovo.
4. Kadri Mehmeti was an army officer who played a special role in capturing or killing Bajram Curri. He is regarded as a traitor.
5. Dragobi is a place in northern Albania, district of Tropoja.
6. The eagle, a very typical bird of Albania, here is understood to mean this country.
7. Gjeto Bashe Muji is Sokole Halili’s brother, one of the two main fictitious characters of the Albanian legendary heroic epic.
8. Sokole Halili is Gjeto Bashe Muji’s brother, one of the two main fictitious characters of the Albanian legendary heroic epic.
9. Harapi is a fictitious character of the Albanian legendary heroic epic, a half-human and half-beast mythological monster, representing the enemy.
10. Jutbinë is the central place where the Albanian legendary heroic epic was born and developed during the Middle Ages; however, Albanian scholars and international ones alike have not been able to precisely define its geographic location.
11. Krajleviç Marki is a fictitious character of the Albanian legendary heroic epic, representing the enemy.

Chapter Six

1. Bridge of Qabé is a place in Asia Minor. Since Albania was part of the Ottoman Empire (1468–1912), Albanians were asked to serve in its armed forces in Asia Minor and other parts of this vast empire.

Lyrics

1. Mic Sokoli (1839–1881) was a distinguished warrior of the so-called Albanian League of Prizren (1878). He is considered to be a hero of Albania.
2. Selam Musai (1857–1920) was a legendary warrior of the War of Vlorë (1920), against Italy. He is considered to be a hero of Albania.
3. Vojo Kushi (1918–1942) was a distinguished guerrilla fighter during the first years of the National Liberation War of Albania (1939–1944). He is considered to be a hero of Albania.
4. Gjergj Kastrioti—Skanderbeg (1405–1468) is considered to be the national hero of Albania. He was able to fight against Turkish-led Ottoman Empire armies for about a quarter of a century.
5. Çelo Mezani (?)—was a well-known Cham mountain brigand against Turks. He was killed treacherously.
6. Bilbil [Sako] (?)—is the head warrior, and the group of warriors takes on his name—Bilbils.
7. Resul [Sako] (?) is a member of the group of warriors, Bilbil’s best man.
8. Kid refers to a young goat and here represents a young girl.
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