

SINGING THE *VILA*

**SINGING THE *VILA*:  
SUPERNATURAL BEINGS IN THE CONTEXT OF THEIR TRADITIONS**

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A Thesis Submitted to the School of Graduate Studies in Partial Fulfillment of the  
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## **DEDICATION**

Tatjani

Da ti razigraju maštu kao što su meni.

## ABSTRACT

This thesis presents a critical overview of a supernatural being, the South Slavic *vila*, as she figures in the oral traditions of Bosnian, Croatian, Montenegrin and Serbian peasants collected in the 19th and early 20th centuries. The thesis returns to the conceptual frame of older primary texts (here titled survey studies) used by comparative scholars and updates this work with the knowledge gleaned from a century of research and theory in the fields of folkloristics and historical anthropology. These materials are presented in a distributive frequency analysis model such as those often employed by the Historical-Geographic school of folklore research, but the study is built on a foundation informed by the insights of Milman Parry and Albert Lord's researches into the diffusion of oral traditions. These traditions are further refined by focusing on the singers, storytellers and believers who used the *vila* in an emic manner balanced at a nexus point between artistic innovation and traditional dictates. The data is also further contextualized with a focus on the embedded nature of these cultural expressions and a clear portrait of the contexts surrounding their collection and publication in a wider cultural sphere. The aim of the thesis is to present a comprehensive description of the *vila*'s role in oral traditions to serve as a primary source for scholars doing comparative or interpretive work, as well as to provide a clearer picture of the contexts of the materials to refine such research. In doing so, this thesis produces a comprehensive method and model that can be applied to other supernatural beings, repatriates oral arts back to their original purveyors by undoing academic silencing of subaltern voices and returns critical context to inherited traditions once stripped of them by romantic academic theories.

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### LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

HAZU	<i>Hrvatska akademija znanosti i umjetnosti</i> (Croatian Academy of Science and Art)
ZbNŽO	<i>Zbornik za narodni život i običaje Južnih Slavena</i> (Review on Folk Life and Customs of the South Slavs)

### CITATION ABBREVIATIONS

ATU	Aarne-Thompson-Uther Tale Type & Motif Index (Uther 2004 and Thompson 1955-8)
Bog	Bogišić Collection (Bogišić 1878)
DGF	Danish Folk Ballad Collection (Grundtvig and Olrik 1853-1976)
Grimm	Grimm Children's and Household Tales (Grimm and Grimm 1857)
Hör	Hörmann Collection – I (Hörmann 1888), II (1889)
MH	Matica Hrvatska Collection – I (Broz and Bosanac 1896), II (Bosanac 1897), III (Marjanović 1898), IV (Marjanović 1899), V (Andrić 1909), VI (Andrić 1914), VII (Andrić 1929), VIII (Andrić 1939), IX (Andrić 1940), X (Andrić 1942)
Vuk	Vuk Stef. Karadžić Collection – I (Stefanović Karadžić 1841), II (1845), III (1846), IV (1862), V (Herzegovina Collection) (1866)
Vuk Prip	Vuk's Tale and Riddle Collection (Stefanović Karadžić 1897)

## GUIDE TO PRONUNCIATION

Bosnian, Croatian, Montenegrin and Serbian are phonetic languages belonging to the South Slavic language family. The alphabet consists of thirty characters written in Latin by the Croats and in both Latin and Cyrillic by Bosnians, Montenegrins and Serbs. There are three digraphs in the Latin form.

Latin	Cyrillic	IPA	English (or common) equivalents
A a	А а	/a/	as <i>a</i> in father or barn
B b	Б б	/b/	as <i>b</i> in book
C c	Ц ц	/ts/	as <i>ts</i> in cats
Č č	Ч ч	/tʃ/	hard like <i>ch</i> in church
Ć ć	Ћ ћ	/tɕ/	soft <i>ch</i> sound, as <i>t</i> in British tune
D d	Д д	/d/	as <i>d</i> in add (with the blade of tongue rather than tip)
Dž dž (Gj gj)	Џ ѓ	/dʒ/	hard like <i>j</i> in jam
Đ đ (Dj dj)	Ђ ј	/dʒ/	soft <i>j</i> sound as <i>d</i> in British endure
E e	Е е	/e/	as <i>e</i> in best
F f	Ф ф	/f/	as <i>f</i> in far
G g	Г г	/g/	always hard as <i>g</i> in game
H h	Х х	/x/	sounded like <i>h</i> in happy
I i	И и	/i/	as <i>ee</i> in beets
J j	Ј ј	/j/	as <i>y</i> in yes
K k	К к	/k/	as <i>k</i> in kick
L l	Л л	/l/	as <i>l</i> in look
Lj lj	Љ љ	/ɫ/	palatalized like <i>le</i> in French <i>fleur</i>
M m	М м	/m/	as <i>m</i> in mine
N n	Н н	/n/	as <i>n</i> in night
Nj nj	Њ њ	/ɲ/	palatalized like <i>ni</i> in onion
O o	О о	/o/	as <i>o</i> in total
P p	П п	/p/	as <i>p</i> in paper
R r	Р р	/r/	trilled <i>r</i> as in Spanish <i>pero</i>
S s	С с	/s/	as <i>s</i> in sock
Š š	Ш ш	/ʃ/	as <i>sh</i> in shoe
T t	Т т	/t/	as <i>t</i> in table
U u	У у	/u/	as <i>u</i> in rude
V v	В в	/v/	as <i>v</i> as in velvet if softly spoken
Z z	З з	/z/	as <i>z</i> in zebra
Ž ž	Ж ж	/ʒ/	as <i>s</i> in pleasure or leisure

## **DECLARATION OF ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT**

I declare that the content of the research in this document has been completed by me, Dorian Jurić, with recognition of the contributions of Dr. John Colarusso, Dr. Andrew Gilbert, and Dr. Naomi McPherson in both the research process and the completion of the thesis.

## Introduction

This thesis is a reanalysis of the way we talk about supernatural beings, owing to what we know about oral traditions—their forms and enactors, their transference, dissemination and function. This document is a re-working of what I have termed ‘survey studies,’ those texts which aim to outline a single supernatural being, both amongst a single group and cross-culturally, in extensive depth. Most such studies were produced between the 1850s and 1950s (for example Baring-Gould 1865; Đorđević 1952, 1953; Keightley 1850; Murgoci 1926; Murgoci and Murgoci 1929; Summers 1929, 1933), with some notable works produced more recently (such as Johns 2004; Kershaw 2000; Smith 2004).<sup>1</sup> All aim to serve as both case studies and as reference materials for others’ comparative or analytical research in the fields of myth and folklore studies. Here I present a methodology and approach for conducting such studies, which transcends this particular analysis, is repeatable in other contexts, and offers resolution to a number of issues that I believe burden most survey studies of the past and leave their findings imprecise, inaccurate or unhelpful.

My approach here is a simple one. In these pages I have produced a survey study of a single supernatural being in a specific temporal and cultural-spatial context. This study follows a distributive frequency analysis model such as those often employed by the Historical-Geographic school of folklore research, but builds on a foundation informed by the insights of Milman Parry and Albert Lord’s researches into the diffusion

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<sup>1</sup> These modern academic examples also have a lay-counterpart aimed at popular audiences. Such books often take the form of ‘Encyclopaedias’ of monsters. See for example Melton 2011.

of oral traditions. The study isolates the traditional behaviour of one supernatural being by recognizing that such beings exist in the imaginations of certain singers, storytellers and believers who use them in an emic manner both specific to each being and balanced at a nexus point between artistic innovation and traditional dictates. Here I take seriously the comparativist's linguistic model, demanding that comparative work be predicated first on an intensive understanding of such beings in their native context before confident comparison can be endeavoured. Furthermore, the method places particular focus on using historical-anthropological insights to better situate a complete understanding of the contexts of supernatural beings.

For its subject, this work focuses on the *vila* (pl. *vile*),<sup>2</sup> a female supernatural being in South Slavic oral tradition and belief. The *vila* is a more than apposite subject for an exemplary study given the overwhelming number of genres and aspects of oral and ritual traditions she factors into among the Bosnians, Croats, Montenegrins, and Serbs (hereafter BCMS).<sup>3</sup> Like dragons, dwarves, giants, sirens, werewolves, and other supernatural beings, the *vila* has been studied heavily since the rise of the Romantic Movement at the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> century in Europe and, like those figures, she is often considered by many to be already fully explicated and researched; survey studies of such figures are consistently and sometimes unquestioningly returned to as primary sources by

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<sup>2</sup> Throughout this thesis native terms that are employed will be used in their nominative singulars and plurals. To me, this is the best way to convey and retain important aspects of the original BCMS in English without falling into the full complexity of the case system.

<sup>3</sup> This abbreviation will be used in this thesis most commonly to designate the language(s) spoken in this region (formerly known as Serbo-Croatian), as well as, at times to designate those cultural aspects shared amongst the groups. This is not done in an effort to minimize the differences that exist between some or all of these groups, but only to stand as a quick short-hand to more easily facilitate discussion of those aspects which are their shared cultural inheritance.



scholars. Yet, also like those figures, early studies of the *vila* are guided by outdated models of analysis, models plagued with speculative generalizations and anachronistic and decontextualized data often chosen in a manner to support a priori arguments and understandings of what a *vila* is. These studies are often influenced by attempts to draw implicit, and sometimes forced connections to other cognate beings, and pay little attention to aspects of supernatural beings that are influenced by cultural and artistic contexts—genre, performance and the situated role of lore in communities. They are also nearly universal in their erasure of the artists, performers and believers who brought these beings to life. Instead, these studies opt to re-mythologize supernatural beings into an academic narrative paradigm that seeks to make monolithic and static figures of supernatural beings to serve as romantic resonances of ancient pasts and, often, as idyllic and quaint examples of the superstitious beliefs of peasant classes. This thesis offers to rectify these myriad problems by producing a survey study with updated insights on this quarry, grounded in modern folkloristics and historical ethnographic methods and informed by these concerns.

My aims are to promote a model that will, in its largest scope, depict supernatural beings within the contexts of their natural element within the art and expression of oral and ritual traditions as a conservative practice carried by individual tellers, singers and believers. With an eye to temporal change and geographic deposition, this work illuminates variances between core and marginal aspects of supernatural beings, as well as differences between standard and common traditions passed on to the generation of artists and interlocutors in the study as opposed to their innovations that kept the

traditions alive and functioning. By mapping the motifs of the *vila*, I contribute new insights to literature that explores how individual fabulators engage with their traditional arts at the nexus where standard practice meets personal innovation; by presenting this data in its original geographic, generic and performative context, I reverse efforts to polish and re-mythologize the manifold and variable uses of the *vila* by creative fabulators who utilized her songs and tales with purpose in their daily lives; by stressing the role of these fabulators and their connection to their work, I contribute to streams of subaltern studies which aim to return voices to those who have been silenced in historical discourse; and, finally, I labour here to return critical context to these inherited vernacular traditions that have regularly had them stripped by romantic academic theories about how material on supernatural beings should be presented.

Focusing on oral traditions that employ the *vila*, the methodology presented in this thesis can be thought of as a ‘dialectology of supernatural beings’ as the comparison is highly suitable. Like oral traditions in general, the diffusion of those traditional materials that regard supernatural beings, when mapped by use, distribution, core traditions, innovations and temporal shifts, closely resemble models of language distribution. Thus, one may think of this thesis as a presentation of the dialects, registers, and personal vocabularies of the *vila* in the native tongue of her tellers and singers. Once formalized, a complete study of ‘the language’ of the *vila* might help comparative work build better models of supernatural beings in relation to other cognate beings and wider spheres of practice, art, and belief.

### Survey Studies and the Problem with Studies of the *Vila*

The impetus for my research into the *vila* started over ten years ago as simple curiosity to explore the supernatural beings of South Slavic oral traditions. What quickly became apparent to me was the fact that the *vila* showed a number of marked differences in her form and function depending on whether she was used in songs or tales. Though the tale tellers and singers were quite obviously thinking of the same being, the tradition was dictating often drastically different uses of the *vila* and expectations of her role and behaviour. To my surprise, in opposition to these observations, studies that analyze her role in oral traditions or compare her to other supernatural cognates in Europe and beyond make little or no mention of these stark differences. Most studies opt instead to simply agglomerate all aspects they are able to uncover into a single, unrefined depiction. This observation prompted my first foray into this research (Jurić 2010a, 2010b), but the materials with which I had to work were limited and time constraints barred me from making highly definitive statements. Eventually this led to the research informing the present study.

Approaching this second incursion into these materials, I was critically concerned with analyzing these data more rigorously. I wanted to approach the analysis of the *vila* while bearing in mind David Bynum's call to "know the whole tradition as it was at many places in its geographic and historical extent" (1979:66). I wanted to ensure that my analysis of oral traditional material strove to come as closely as possible to the true utterances of the fabulators and undo any 'literary' alteration applied to the materials by collectors and editors. I wanted to understand the collecting process and the effect it had

on the materials, as well as to unearth as much information as possible about the singers and tellers who carried these traditions with them and bequeathed them to collectors. Only then might the tradition be understood in its dynamic, culturally and historically contextualized form, rather than as the decontextualized and timeless tradition as often presented in survey studies of the past.

Born out of early works of European ethnologists and folklorists, survey studies follow a descriptive model that tracks and presents the behaviour, attributes and beliefs associated with supernatural beings in oral and ritual traditions. The vast majority were published around the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century when folkloristics was transitioning from its romantic roots to its modernist scientific form. Most are built from data drawn from a wide range of articles, field reports and regional studies collected in the 19<sup>th</sup> century and collated into a single primary source. Though the theoretical approaches in these studies are dated by today's standards, many scholars regularly return to them for data, as they present an expedient interface for wide swathes of information about supernatural beings.

For the *vila*, the clearest example of this is Tihomir R. Đorđević's extensive *Veštica i vila u našem narodnom verovanju i predanju* (The *Veštica* [Witch]<sup>4</sup> and the *Vila* in Our Folk Belief and Tradition) (1953), although a few other early academic articles also serve a similar function (Kukuljević 1851; Nodilo 2003). Đorđević mined a range of folklore research regarding the *vila* and other supernatural beings in this book and one other (1952) in order to present a definitive overview of these figures. There are,

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<sup>4</sup> A *veštica/vještica/vištica*, is a supernatural being that can be more easily glossed into other languages and falls almost entirely in line with the English term 'witch'. Such a translation would be more than permissible in this context, but feels disingenuous given the arguments being presented (see n. 7 below). Throughout the thesis I will tend to use local terms followed by English glosses.

however, many problems with his analysis and organization of that data. These issues are common to similar early works and are often carried into more modern survey studies (Botica 1990; Zimmerman 1979a), as well as into secondary studies that use such materials for comparative work and derivative analyses (Barber 1997; Pócs 1989).

One of the clearest problems in these works regards format. Survey studies are seldom all-encompassing or comprehensive but rather utilize varying amounts of data to depict the figures of their analysis as novelties. Such studies act as an overview of the figure but read like a perusal through a gallery of curiosities. They often read like a stream-of-consciousness narrative, written as though a figure such as the *vila* is a living being and the author is its biographer, intent on listing everything he or she knows about it. The motifs, stories and uses of the *vila* are piled together haphazardly, devoid of context regarding how those traditions are used or what significance they play in the overall understanding of the being. A text thus produced ambles and wanders; the facts contained within are important and revealing but exist without context or structure. To make competent speculations about what such understandings mean for a wider sphere of dissemination of motifs, genesis and divergence of cognate figures, or the role of such beliefs and figures in human societies, it is imperative to have contextual focus based on the uses and deployment of such figures in their own traditions.

Survey studies and the secondary comparative work that follows them are often further depreciated by presumptuously attempting to suggest or assign comparative cognates *a priori* as though they belong to an intensional understanding of the figure, without first making a case for exactly how and on what grounds they are related. Thus,

depending on the study, a varying range of cognate or presumed cognate figures are presented as equivalent to the *vila* and their functions and motifs assumed to be interchangeable. The zones from which these cognates are derived vary geographically and culturally, either assuming a Balkan territorial equivalence with the Bulgarian *samovila* and *samodiva*, the Macedonian *juda*, Albanian *zâna/zonjë/zëra/zina*, the Romanian *irodia/irodita/irodiada*, *zîna* or *iele* and the Greek *nereids/neraides*,<sup>5</sup> or else a Slavic linguistic equivalence with the Polish *wila*, and Russian *rusalka*. The zone of comparison is just as often expanded to the wider Indo-European or even Eurasian sphere to include such figures as Nordic *elves*, Persian *peris*, Celtic *selkies* and others. The exact roster of beings included is never certain nor explained but only dependent on the whims of the author. Rather than testing the material within the work, the connections are assumed before data is presented. Further, these equivalencies are never questioned for exactly how or to what degree the figures can be seen as cognates. Do all of the motifs, functions and descriptions of the *vila* occur with the Bulgarian *samovila*? Are the same

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<sup>5</sup> Pócs (following Muşlea-Bîrlea and Candrea) suggests that the Romanian and Albanian *zâna* names are related etymologically to *Diana*. *Irodia* derives from the biblical Herodias. Pócs connects both to remnants of Roman and Greek Diana cults in the Balkans (1989:14). Colarusso suggests that *zâna* is better understood as a loan into Romanian and most likely represents a “satem” derivation of IE \*gwen-ā (woman or queen) (cf. Farsi *zām* or Slavic *žen-*) (personal correspondence). See also Dučić who gives the name *Ōra* for Albanian (1931:269).

The *vila* carries a non-local, most likely Slavic title, quite certainly derived from a term for the deceased: Proto-European form of \*wi-l-ā, the \*wi- designating a holy, as well as a more ghostly aspect (The same \*wi- root likely informs the name of the Norse *Vé*, one of *Óðinn*’s brothers, Ger. *Weihe* (holy, sacred one) and may also be the root of the Indic *Viṣṇu*.), while the \*-l- and \*-ā serve respectively as a diminutive and a feminine ending, with the overall meaning of ‘little holy woman’ or ‘little supernatural woman’ (Colarusso, p.c.; cf. Toporov 1985). Máchal derives it from a similar *vel* (to perish) as a cognate with Lithuanian *veles* (2006:91) But also compare with Nodilo who derives the term from the verb *viti* (to twist or wind) (2003:255), or Mansikka’s suggestion that the root is Turkish (Ajdačić 2001:207). The *samovila*, then, is a compound of *samo* (just/only, self or possibly true/real) and *vila* which is oddly reminiscent of the pairing of Thrace/Samothrace (Colarusso, p.c.). The *samodiva* being again *samo-* compounded with *diva*, a term semantically linked to IE \*dyēus in a feminine form, meaning goddess.

rituals used to gain favour with the *iele* in Wallachia as with the *vila* in Dalmatia? Such questions, never broached, ensure that our understanding of these supernatural beings remains confused, unclear and thus unhelpful for a more thorough and representative presentation of real belief and tradition. Moreover, these disorderly presentations colour the suppositions made when scholars who are not specialists of those regions try to use the meta-data to draw wider and further-reaching conclusions.

Thus Đorđević suggests parity between the *vila* and the Greek *neriid* on the first page of his study (Đorđević 1953:57), which is carried through the book as a simple fact. Though his study is focused on the *vila*, when the material proves suitable, *neriid* data is presented to support his original assertion of equivalency. Lacunae are never discussed, nor is data ever presented to contradict this comparison. Even in 1851, Kukuljević Sakcinski recognized the long list of cognate figures that could be compared to the *vila* (87).<sup>6</sup> Though he never elaborated on exactly what grounds the comparisons could be made, the realization should have negated scholarly propensities for easy attribution of cognates.

In more recent scholarship, we find Zora Zimmerman connecting the *vila* to the Greek goddess *Athena* without attempting any explanation (1979a:172) while for Elizabeth Barber the *vila* is so indistinguishable from the Russian *rusalka* that her article only discusses the ur-concept ‘*vily/rusalka*’ (Barber 1997). Éva Pócs would have readers

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<sup>6</sup> He lists Roman *nymphs*, *neriids*, *sirens* and good and bad *genies*; Indian *Bhavanom*; Greek *Muses*, *Hekate* and *Pleiades*; Germanic *Elves* and *Sylphs*; Scandinavian *Vola* or *Völa*, *Norns* and *Valkyries*; Persian *Peris*, Turkish *Huris*; Russian *Rusalky* and Czech *belas*, *lesnas* and *vodni pan*. Cf. Nodilo’s early comparative suggestions, where at least a case is made for the connection of *vile* with *nymphs* and *valkyries* (2003:266-274).

take on faith the idea that “Key analogies allow one to treat the fairy world of the peoples of the Balkans and the Hungarian communities as a comprehensive regional unit” (2018:255-6), before suggesting the “remarkable typological similarities between... Celtic and... Slavic fairy” worlds (256), followed by contrary remarks about the varied and divergent depictions of these beings throughout various regions (256-7). Elsewhere, most English-language texts that use BCMS oral-traditional materials are quick to explain away the *vila* by simply translating her name to *fairy* (Holton and Mihailovich 1997:15; Popović 1988:45) or *nymph* (Foley 1991:75; Petrovich 1972:16) without need to qualify the comparison.<sup>7</sup> Such haphazard practices then lead to secondary comparative work which, adrift in a sea of uncontextualized material, cherry-picks apposite congruencies in an effort to make convincing cases for parity. In other instances, the researchers choose blatantly to ignore those aspects of the beings that complicate their assertions. Thus Pócs ignores the role of the *vila* in traditional songs (1989:9, 67 n.6) and much other lore, focusing only on ‘belief legends’ and less well-defined ‘ritual material.’<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> This act in itself, of translating a foreign supernatural being’s name into a locally understood name is an accepted practice that is never really questioned for the ways in which it clouds analytical understanding with myriad preconceived notions. Compare, for instance, the English *wyrm* in *Beowulf* (also termed *draca* in some passages) who is said to slither and fly, has ‘bone-scales’ and spews fires (Chickering Jr. 1977:187, 205) with the Russian *змеѣ* with twelve ‘trunks’ in *Dobrynya and the Dragon* whose blood is repulsive to man and earth alike and takes Dobrynya into blood-brotherhood (Bailey and Ivanova 1998:84-97), or with the Old Norse *ormr* Fafnir in the *Völsunga Saga*, a fratricide who becomes a dragon, breaths poison, wears a ‘helmet of terror,’ has shoulders, and whose heart and blood confer power to Sigurd (Anderson 1982:80-90). All of these supernatural beings in any study will be immediately termed dragons – which is an apt translation – yet such naming obscures the fact that it is not at all clear that the tellers of these tales had remotely similar creatures in mind. Cf. Evans 2005 for some considerations to this effect in Germanic accounts and Rebel 2013:142 for complementary arguments regarding the further whitewashing of diachronic and tale-specific conceptions of dragons in folklore research. This process is carried out in other languages too, see Šešo (2016:21) for similar supernatural beings being introduced then glossed as *vila*.

<sup>8</sup> This selectivity surfaces elsewhere when she suggests that another being, the *vukodlak*, can only be studied if we ignore his vampire traits (1989:22) and talk about him as a werewolf. Jan Perkowski has convincingly asserted that the vampire traits are the fundamental understanding of the being in use since



For comparative methods often based on a linguistic model, these studies too often put the proverbial wagon before the horse. To compare piecemeal explorations of supernatural beings in search of an ancient ur-figure (the *Stammbaum* model) or secrets of a bygone belief system now only glimpsed in fragments is like trying to construct a proto-language without first understanding the modern languages derived from it. Yet, scholars who would never dare the latter quite regularly and unquestionably perform the former, often blending the traditions as they seem fit. Machal's (2016:91-94) attempt to depict the *ur-vila* very casually dabbles in a number of, often un-attributed, Slavic cognates. Similarly, Barber (1997) bases the entirety of her study on *rusalka* beliefs, only citing a handful of facts about the *vila* whenever apposite to her theories—all drawn from a single source, and many ill-reflective of the core concepts related to the *vila*. To be clear, my intention here is not to suggest that none of these figures are cognates, but rather to ask of such comparisons that they be thorough and exacting in making a case for exactly how, when, why and by whom they have been retained as cognates. The path that cognate figures have taken from ancient pasts to recorded presents are highly complex journeys of travel, influence, overlay, adoption, removal, recollection, retention and forgetting that can only be teased apart in their complexity when studies approach them in equally complex manners.

Survey studies and their descendants also seldom analyze genres or formats of oral or ritual traditions as they relate to supernatural figures. Though a study may mention

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approximately the 16<sup>th</sup> century (2006:351) and that the *vukodlak* has, in the historic period, never represented a werewolf in the Western sense (363) Cf. Đorđević 1952:4.

the genre in which a certain fact regarding the figure is found, discussion seldom moves to what role that genre—and with it its mode, tradition and performative context—contributes to the nature and understanding of the being (cf. Foley 1990:8). In fact, despite all of the intricacies of oral transmission and singer/teller techniques that we now understand, the entire context of culture-specific oral tradition as a systemic confine, birthing ground, and vehicle for transmission of supernatural beings is markedly absent in most comparative mythological and folklore work.

Zimmerman (1979a:168) does lend some consideration to genre and the role of performative contexts in the *vila*'s tradition but never follows through with the idea; opting instead to make a connection between the tones of the songs (humorous, tragic, epic) and the use of the *vila*.<sup>9</sup> Ajdačić (2001) comes closest to analyzing the *vila* with an eye to tradition, but his study only explores a handful of the *vila*'s motifs, abandoning the connections to oral traditions and tellers that this demands, to instead focus on the mythic and psychological meanings suggested by the motifs. To disregard these aspects, is to ignore the roles and contexts of the motifs, story-patterns, traits and epithets of supernatural beings within their traditional, historical, and cultural environment and in their overall matrix of use and belief. This means that core features and ancient retentions of the tradition become indistinguishable from peripheral or novel uses and innovations. Materials thus presented reveal as much about their contexts as a pinned butterfly in a display case can tell one about its habits and conditions in the wild.

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<sup>9</sup> This is not a complete dead-end of academic enquiry, but its use as a categorizing system and its power to analyze the deployment of traditional motifs and story-patterns is less convincing. For a stronger treatment of the role of emotion in cultural understandings of oral tradition see Bynum 1976:50-54. For the important role of generic considerations in the study of oral traditions see Foley 1990.

To ignore the role of these data in over-arching oral traditions is also to ignore crucial connections to the people behind the beliefs; indeed, many studies seem to ignore entirely the fact that there are tellers behind their tales, believers behind their beliefs. Thus Zimmerman tries to understand why the *vila* is not present in the songs of the Kosovo cycle that Vuk Stefanović Karadžić<sup>10</sup> collected (1979a:171). Her conclusion is that the dramatic force of the Kosovo songs is incompatible with the figure of the *vila* (172). The hypothesis is a weak one which ignores many of the facts that become clear when one focuses on the sources of the songs. Vuk's collection presents a very small sample size of Kosovo songs; he only published 9 songs, and 5 song fragments about Kosovo and the fragments were drawn from his own recollection of hearing them in childhood from his father, who was not a singer (Holton and Mihailovich 1997:134, Wilson 1970:23). All but two of the others came from one region and from unique sources (Matthias and Vučković 1999:18).<sup>11</sup> I am not aware of any common decasyllabic epic Kosovo songs with *vile*<sup>12</sup> but there are three *bugarštice* (an older song format in the

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<sup>10</sup> Hereafter 'Vuk' as he is commonly referred to and written about in BCMS scholarship and which, more than anything, saves this author space in place of 'Stefanović Karadžić'.

<sup>11</sup> Aside from one song by Tešan Podrugović and another sent in anonymously from Croatia, all of Vuk's Kosovo songs were recorded by blind female singers, many associated with monasteries in Syrmia (Matthias and Vučković 1999:18-19), and none *guslari*; all recited their texts. This does not tell us much about the lack of *vile*, but only shows further that the sample is small and both region- and gender-specific. Some have also questioned if these songs actually belong to the bardic tradition, asserting instead that they were memorized (Koljević 1980:319-320).

<sup>12</sup> The songs on the Battle of Kosovo found in the *Matica Hrvatska* collection (MH I.57-61) do not include *vile*, but this is still a rather small sample size to draw from. Compare Vuk III where only two of 89 songs contain *vile*, or Vuk V where only six of 362 songs contain *vile*. It is difficult with such small samples to suppose why the *vila* is *not* somewhere.

region) about Kosovo in Bogišić (Bog.21, 29, 33) that contain *vile*. This is more than enough evidence to draw Zimmerman's theory into question.<sup>13</sup>

More troubling is Zimmerman's statement suggesting that to study the *vila* one must only study the songs that Vuk collected as, due to the popularity of Vuk's collection, "subsequent uninfluenced traditions are rare, if they exist at all" (1979a:168). Not only is such a statement politically charged,<sup>14</sup> but also the suggestion that Vuk's singers alone lay claim to these traditions and that all subsequent variants of the songs are derived from their versions ignores the very nature of oral traditions. This perspective disregards the great time-depth and *longue durée* character of traditional storytelling and the methods by which oral traditions travel (both in oral and written form) among largely non-literate singers (Koljević 1980:91; Lord 2000:23, 79, 101). Such a perspective judges the material instead in a literary mindset of ownership and plagiarism. As Lord well said, "In oral tradition the idea of an original is illogical" (2000:101). Even if Zimmerman's assertion were correct, subsequent variants, sung by later singers and catering to audiences who also know some of these tales and know the *vila*, would just as importantly reveal assumed knowledge of what the *vila* can and cannot do in the public imagination, which might never have been present in the original song. There is, however, no evidence to suggest that any of Vuk's singers are the first singers of most of their respective songs

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<sup>13</sup> Song 21 presents three *vile* sisters riding deer who are later revealed not to be *vile* but actually three *Bans* (viceroys); 29 has a true *vila*; and 33 uses a *vila* in its Slavonic antithesis. More on all of these tropes below.

<sup>14</sup> For more shameful politicizations of the folk songs see Koljević 1980:26, 31-33, 52, 300-302; Zimmerman 1986:52-3 claiming the epics belong exclusively to the Serbs (cf. Zimmerman 1986), or Balić 1970:306, 313 for the same argument in favour of Bosniaks. Most unbiased scholars view the practice as originating in the Dinaric regions running from Croatia to Montenegro and un-attributable to any ethnic or religious designation (Bynum 1979:1; Golemović 2008:13; Medenica 1985). Zimmerman contradicts herself later discussing Parry and Lord (1986:6-9).

(with some clear exceptions such as Filip Višnjić [Lord 2000:136]); in fact the majority of research on oral traditions suggests that they would most often not be.<sup>15</sup>

Finally, by ignoring the human transmission of the oral traditions in which supernatural beings are given life, scholars often confuse or ignore the diachronic factors of shifting traditions and the historical contexts within which tales, songs, rituals and anecdotes about supernatural beings surface. This ignorance of changes, influence and time creates one-dimensional depictions of supernatural beings that obscure and simplify, removing beliefs from broader patterns of culture and effectively undermining assertions of continuity. By making monolithic and unchanging figures out of supernatural beings, studies fall back upon romantic tendencies of bygone eras and, in benign ways, coopt the traditions of peasant singers and tellers for their own ends, what Hermann Rebel describes as re-mythologizing (2013:151). It is only through historicizing and contextualizing the materials that they can be properly understood.<sup>16</sup>

In her very thorough but sometimes problematic book, *Fairies and Witches at the Boundary of South-Eastern and Central Europe* (1989), Éva Pócs seeks to understand why Hungarian witches share some aspects with Balkan ‘fairies’ (i.e. *vile* and cognates) without attestation of a fairy figure in Hungary (1989:7-9). Her conclusion rests on a theory that fairies in the Balkans slowly shifted into witches in folk belief. Yet, data for

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<sup>15</sup> Cf. Bynum (1978:20, 322). Vuk, himself regularly cited other multiforms that he had personally heard (Stefanović Karadžić 2006:98 n.107, 253 n.19, 311 n.46, 356-7, 382 n.74, among many). There are also many older collections with multiforms of Vuk’s songs or their motifs. Song 132 in the Erlangenski Rukopis (Gezeman 1925:198) and Bog.43 are multiforms of Vuk II:11 recorded a century before (Bogišić 1878:135); Reljković also published a very close multiform to Vuk II.100 in 1779 (Reljković n.d.:196-9).

<sup>16</sup> See Arvidsson 2006 and Baycroft and Hopkin 2012 for some critique of the ideological baggage of folkloristics and comparative mythology as fields of academic enquiry. See Zipes 1988 and Rebel 2013 for more on the adaptation of peasant traditions.

this temporal transition (ranging from the 16<sup>th</sup> century to the 1950s) are in some instances presented achronologically to support the narrative and readers are specifically told that neither regional variations nor basic chronology of changes will be considered (9). One has to wonder how her thesis can be defended with this caveat. Similarly, Zimmerman ignores the temporal context of the collection of oral traditions by following Vuk's classification of songs by 'age' (that is, age of events and characters in the songs) to discuss which songs are the 'oldest.' In doing so, she ignores the fact that all the songs in Vuk's collection were collected by him and his contributors in the span of a few decades (1979a:170). Though the historical characters in the songs may be situated in different temporal settings, and though some of the motifs and content of their songs may reflect different ages, if two songs were sung and collected in 1822 they are contemporaneous and cannot be categorized as anything else.

These examples clearly illustrate how studies of supernatural beings can greatly benefit from analytical consideration of the context of their use and the singers and tale tellers who employ them in their lore. Of course such work is untenable for studies of supernatural beings that reach into the ancient past<sup>17</sup> but, for those vast stores of material gathered during and after the boom of the Romantic Period, there is much documentation of crucial information about tale tellers and singers whose lack of inclusion into critical consideration is rightly questioned. Despite this, it is common for such works to ignore the tellers and singers of tales, their art and traditions and, importantly, the context of the

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<sup>17</sup> Despite this lack of information, it is still crucial that those documents too are treated with the understanding that they derive from a contextualized circumstance and from a particular singer, teller, chronicler, time, place, purpose, etc. (Lincoln 1999:149-151).

collecting itself.<sup>18</sup> These lacunae obscure the ways that traditions are altered, shifted and passed-down, as well as the aspects of supernatural beings that belong to only certain groups, regions or individual singers as their unique take on the tradition.

The studies thus far critiqued are not anomalous in their problematic aspects; this is not a malady that only affects the *vila*, but rather is the accepted format for studies conducted on supernatural beings.<sup>19</sup> And all of this is not even to mention those approaches which treat supernatural beings with utter contempt, relegating them to simple categories or bit-actors that might be substituted at whim.

The field where the role of supernatural beings in oral narratives has met the most discussion within the structure and practice of oral traditional telling has, unfortunately, been in the reductionist practices of the categorizers of the Finnish School<sup>20</sup> or in the syntagmatic<sup>21</sup> Structuralism of Vladimir Propp. In these studies,

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<sup>18</sup> Included in the collecting context it is also important to explore the analytical context informing collection and analysis. Cf. Anderson 1982; Arvidsson 2006; Dorson 1958; Kershaw 2000; Lincoln 1999; Rebel 2013; Shippey 2005.

<sup>19</sup> Nor do I hope they appear as unimportant studies. They all offer numerous insights with regard to the history and use of the *vila*. For those well-versed in the traditions, however, the faults and misinformation are evident. This leads to further problems when these studies are employed by non-specialists and the misinformation spreads. The only study that I am aware of that comes close to the model which I am suggesting here is Andreas Johns' admirable work on the Russian figure *Baba Yaga* (2004). Although Johns recognizes the role that tellers and singers play in the creation and continuation of the traditions of supernatural beings (6), here too the tellers and singers are often absent. Both Šešo (2016:41) and Kovačević (2006:90-91) have suggested the need for a more comprehensive analysis of the *vila* and the present study is a response to that call.

<sup>20</sup> See Bynum 1978:20-21, 315; Dundes 1997; and Rebel 2013:63-64, 109, 131-132, 139 for very competent critiques of the Finnish method and the ATU motif and tale type index. Hans-Jörg Uther has addressed some of these issues in his latest iteration of the Tale index—introducing more international material (including a solid selection from BCMS regions), excising some redundancies, adding literary sources, updating descriptions and citations and adding material that opens the index up to a modern understanding of how oral traditions work—but most additional material has been added to pre-existing story-patterns with little addition of novel patterns or iterations from wider spheres. In many ways the project feels like adapting old machinery when a new model needs built (See Uther 2004 I:7-15).

<sup>21</sup> As per Dundes (Dorson 1972:36).

supernatural beings are completely bled of their roles, functions and personalities in their traditions. For Propp, supernatural beings, like protagonists, are subservient pawns to the master-workings of tale plots—subbed in at random in the ‘antagonist/villain’ or ‘helper’ categories where any supernatural being will do (Propp 1968:21). While in some Russian tales, an ATU Index 313 ‘Magic Flight’/D672 ‘Obstacle Flight’ might be precipitated by the supernatural beings *Baba Yaga* or *Koschei Bessmertny* this does not mean that, to the traditional teller, those two figures are analogous and interchangeable. *Baba Yaga* has very specific tales that she exclusively takes part in (Johns 2004:303) and, as Bynum has stressed, local tellers are acutely aware of which characters belong in which tales and which do not (Bynum 1978:294-296; 1979:66). While built on good intentions and indispensable at one time, the Aarne-Thompson-Uther Tale and Motif Index has been a cumbersome, redundant and disorganized wastebasket of folklore material for most of its existence. The project was originally completed with a narrow set of data biased to Northern Europe. Expanding in ever widening spheres, the system has required dismantling and reconstructing numerous times (see Uther 2004 I:7-11 for this background). As for supernatural beings in this system, they are treated much the same as Propp’s in Antti Aarne’s Tale Type categories, and treated haphazardly in a rough-shod and imprecise substitution system in Stith Thompson’s Motifs.<sup>22</sup>

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<sup>22</sup> For Stith Thompson, most antagonistic supernatural beings are glossed (in his category G) with the title ‘Ogre’. But the ‘Ogre’ section of his guide is a baffling mess. Within the actual motif category, broad ranges of specific motifs are categorized with specific supernatural beings ‘Ogre’, ‘Giant’, ‘Devil’, ‘Witch’ or ‘Cannibal’ without any logical explanation as to why these titles have been chosen (do not witches often display acts of cannibalism?) and others have not been. As an example of how messy this system gets, in the ‘Witch’ subsection of the ‘Ogre’ category, which contains hundreds of motifs about ‘Witches,’ there are two motifs that use the title ‘*Lamia*’ (A Greek myth figure with removable eyes that kidnaps and devours children [Bell 1991:270-271]) ATU G262.0.1 “*Lamia*” is subtitled as “as witch who eats children” and



Given the poor fate of supernatural beings and the singers, tellers, ‘recounters’ and believers who keep their traditions alive in all of these scholarly works, this thesis presents an updated survey study for the *vila* by starting from the beginning and working forward, employing an understanding of oral traditions that benefits from over 150 years of theoretical refinement.

### What Remedy Does this Thesis Offer?

The objective of this thesis is to stand as a reference work<sup>23</sup> that presents an intensive overview of the *vila* as she appears in a large selection of descriptions, narrative songs, lyric songs, myths, legends, memorates, fabulates, folktales, riddles and other lore, all collected between the years 1815 and 1915.<sup>24</sup> I have mapped these data by region, collection date, collector, singer/tale teller and other crucial information. In doing so, the work presents a model for studying supernatural beings by isolating their genre-, region-, tradition-, and teller/singer-specific motifs, epithets, uses and habits in an effort to elucidate the *vila* as she existed in her emic tradition. Rather than illustrate the *vila* as a static and unchanging constant of folk belief, here I explore her in a specific temporal and

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ATU G262.0.1.1 “*Lamia* devours her lover”. But the shift in supernatural being for the category name makes little sense. The Greek *Lamia* is not a witch per se and witches in other traditions eat children. One would assume that the *Lamia* has been chosen because these motifs are only specific to Greek tales and yet example texts provided include samples from India and Papua New Guinea where the term *Lamia* most certainly does not belong. These titles also obscure the historical shift of the *Lamia* in Greek mythology from a singular myth figure to an all-purpose spook for scaring children, and later to a pluralized succubus-type being (Bell 1991:270-271).

<sup>23</sup> To better assist scholars who may want to pursue these oral traditions further I have been extensive in my citations of unpublished archival materials. I hope that this will relieve others of intensive and time-consuming searches.

<sup>24</sup> Because some of the MSs I worked with spanned a number of years, there are a very small number of materials collected as late as 1934. I have chosen to keep those in the study. When necessary, their later collection dates are noted.

spatial context to elucidate those aspects of her depiction that are intrinsic to her traditions, those that are region-bound, and the ways her fabulators perpetuated and elaborated upon her depiction and nature. By extensively mapping the *vila*, the thesis offers insight into where the tradition of the *vila* ends and innovation of her character begins, thus inevitably shedding light on the ways that supernatural beings shift and change synchronically.

The ultimate goal of this survey is to present a comprehensive but complex model that functions in a manner akin to a linguist's model of a language. Scholars have long made connections between myth and oral traditions and linguistic models. The entire comparative school of mythology functions on a genetic model of linguistic families, diffusion, adoption and synchronic and diachronic influence, often with the ultimate aim of following belief models into prehistory to uncover proto-myths akin to proto-languages.<sup>25</sup> Many scholars, following the findings of Parry and Lord, have also commented on how the transmission of oral traditions function similarly to that of language (Davis 2007:37; Foley 1999:xii; Jakobson 1945; Jakobson and Bogatyrev 1966). I take into consideration these understandings of myth and oral tradition as akin to language but draw the connection to supernatural beings further than the old conception of 'beliefs which belong to language families' into a more nuanced, agent-oriented view of oral traditions and lore about supernatural beings as composed of dialect regions, registers, personal vocabularies and more. Unique tales, songs, epithets, patterns and uses

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<sup>25</sup> This field is far too expansive to append any sort of representative bibliography here. It starts with Müller's solar school (Dorson 1958) and is exemplified in the works of Georges Dumézil (1970a, 1970b, 1973a, 1973b, 1983, 1986; Littleton 1973) and those who follow his methods (Polomé 1996; Puhvel 1987).

found exclusively in specific geographical regions can thus be seen as dialect variations of larger traditions (see Foley 1990:9). Unique uses of supernatural beings might suggest an exceptional retention, akin to an archaism, or a modern innovation whose ability to become a core tenet is dependent on acceptance from a larger sphere of speakers, that is, other oral fabulists and audiences (Bogatyrev and Jakobson 1966). For those genres and modes of oral tradition within which the depiction of the supernatural being shifts or functions differently we may talk about registers of the being.<sup>26</sup> The remainder of the tradition would, like a language, represent a more conservative, yet ever-malleable core, the complete vocabulary and grammar of which no single speaker can claim to be the sole retainer, while the complete tradition of the being in question—the language—represents the entire collection of all of these facets.<sup>27</sup> This thesis explores such a model through the use of the *vila*, her songs, tales and other lore and the unique performances in which her singers and tellers presented her traditions to academic collectors.

As this research project could only cover so much material in a theoretical plan of quite large scope, I conclude with a suggestion for where and how further research could

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<sup>26</sup> Here the metaphoric use of register follows Hymes' description of Halliday's linguistic concept (1964) "major speech styles associated with recurrent types of situations can be termed *registers*" (Hymes 1989:440). Where a linguistic register marks stylistic and morphological characteristics of language in various types of culturally defined discourse, a register of a supernatural being would denote stylistic usages of the being in particular oral traditional contexts (song, tale, ritual discourse, etc.). Such an idea as registers of supernatural beings also helps us explain the bleed-over or genre-mixing that occasionally happens in such tales. Following this model such occurrences would represent the same kind of unconscious mixing of registers in language speakers, or else the playful or functional code-switching of a speaker versed in multiple registers.

<sup>27</sup> Recently, a fairly similar model has been proposed for the study of myth in the work of Finnish scholar Frog (2014, 2015) but couched within a broader and more ambitious project for constructing an all-encompassing system for formal categorization. This work is complex, commendable and complementary to some of the ideas explored here. See also Siikala's use of the term 'dialects of mythology' (2012), or Foley's mention of dialects of a tradition (1990).

expand that knowledge and complete our understanding of the *vila* and other supernatural beings in their native contexts.

### The Materials and their Sources: Folklore Collecting in BCMS Regions

Though the study of Classical Greek and Roman myth has a long history in Europe,<sup>28</sup> the fields of mythology and folklore, as they are recognized today, arose out of a slurry of cross-secting cultural, academic and political movements in Europe in the late 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries. Increasing demand for and ability to produce vernacular print media, and calls for ethno-national self-determination within collapsing empires and kingdoms met with new innovations of linguistic and historical knowledge in the burgeoning field of philology. This convergence produced a new class of academics and reading public desperate to establish a sense of history and rootedness in their cultural identity.<sup>29</sup> Meanwhile, the lives of peasant populations in Europe were being radically shifted due to the upheaval of the industrial revolution and a freshly idealised pastoral and romanticized rural way of life was rapidly being lost. The stage was set for lay and professional academics across Europe and elsewhere to salvage the supposed keys to their ancient histories that lay dormant in the unconscious utterances of the ‘folk’.<sup>30</sup> The

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<sup>28</sup> On early studies of and attitudes toward myth before the Romantic period see Arvidsson 2006:13-123; Lincoln 1999:3-100.

<sup>29</sup> Cf. Anderson 2006; Leerssen 2012; Baycroft 2012; Hobsbawm 1964

<sup>30</sup> See Atkinson 2012; Leerssen 2012:11; Rebel 2013:103; and Zipes 1979 for the ways that early scholars ignored artists and tale tellers as ignorant retainers of ancient traditions and drew their materials out of a context of tradition and artistry. Francis J. Child summarized this mentality very nicely in 1874 writing: “The conditions of society in which a truly national or popular poetry appears explains the character of such poetry. It is a condition in which people are not divided by political organization and book-culture into markedly distinct classes, in which consequently there is such community of ideas and feelings that the whole people form an individual.... [These songs are] an expression of the mind and heart of the people as an individual, and never of the personality of individual men” (Child 1994:214).

individual liberties and ethnic national sentiments that were at the heart of these movements (as well as their more explosive expressions in the French Revolution and the 1848/1849 Uprisings across Europe) hinged upon new understandings of the sanctity of the individual and the unity and ‘brotherhood’ of members of delineated linguistic communities. These philosophical changes, however, only reflected upon the relations between a rising merchant and academic bourgeois and the aristocracy. For the peasants and serfs whose tales and songs had been adopted as the emblem and spirit of that liberty and national unity, recognition of their artistic ability and skill, or any understanding whatsoever of their crafts were decades away. Over the course of the 19<sup>th</sup> century the model of folklore fashioned on Herder’s and Goethe’s forge slowly shifted as folklorists honed their craft in the field and became more scientific in their enquiries.

For most people, the name most associated with the European study of myth and folklore is Jacob Grimm (1785-1863) alongside his brother Wilhelm (1786-1859) and their world famous collection of fairy tales. The Grimms’ collection practices, however, were not as innovative as their theories and most are surprised to learn just how far from any ‘folk’ most of their tales were drawn.<sup>31</sup> It was, in fact, in Eastern Europe where

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<sup>31</sup> While there can be no denying that the Grimms, were generally interested in the cultural materials they were collecting, one of their critical goals was to build a body of research to create a strong Germanic unity in the face of ‘foreign’ (French) cultural influence (Arvidsson 2006:131; Zipes 1988:45, 53, 80). Through the publication of linguistic texts, mythological treatises, and especially their collection of fairy tales, the *Kinder- und Hausmärchen* (first published in 1812 and subsequently republished numerous times), the brothers attempted to outline a unique and descriptive cultural type to define all German speakers—a set of symbols that could act as a cultural repertoire in contrast to other nations. The majority of the Grimm’s tales were never collected from true peasants, but mostly from middle class and aristocratic, young women (Zipes 1988:10). Though the tales themselves most likely derive from peasant oral traditions (Rebel 2013:115-117), the Grimms had great difficulty in obtaining peasant informants (118) and their presentation of the tales in their collection were progressively altered to match the niche that their readership immediately demanded, that of highly edited and censored, didactic teaching material for the moral and educational enculturation of German bourgeois children (Rebel 2013:103-105; Zipes 1988:11-14, 25, 81).

German and English folklore theories were best implemented. While Western Europe was building models and zeal for collecting peasant tales and songs, in the face of widespread extinctions of traditional oral fabulators in their kingdoms, attention was shifted quite early to the still vibrant and living traditions of Eastern Europe.<sup>32</sup>

Thus, Vuk Stefanović Karadžić was able to become the most notable figure of early Serbian scholarship, despite overwhelming animosity towards his language reforms from learned men and notable figures in- and outside of Serbia (Kropej 2013; Wilson 1970:3; Živković 2011:161-2), almost entirely on the back of his collections of Serbian folk songs and tales and the attention and support they garnered throughout Europe (Hajdarpasic 2015:26; Wilson 1970), including from Jacob Grimm himself. Though there were significant political agendas behind Vuk's publications and work (Popović 1973; Rihtman-Auguštin 1989; Žanić 2007:126-7), his folk song collections were his joy and passion and the revolutionary nature of his work set a high standard for the research that would follow him among Serb and Croat folklorists and ethnologists. Due to his pioneering example, the extensive folklore collecting undertaken in the following centuries in BCMS regions became some of the finest in the world.

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<sup>32</sup> Thus the production of the Kalevala in Finland (Anttonen 2012; Wilson 1975) occurred in a very *Ossian*-esque model while the publishers of Greek oral songs like Fauriel stressed the epic and mythological nature of their materials to stoke the fires of the Hellenist dream (Herzfeld 1982, Leerssen 2012: 17-18). For the BCMS regions the fervour is evident in the excitement, translation, retranslation, and multiple publications of the *Hasanaginica* from Fortis' *Viaggio in Dalmazia* (1774) (Franić 1976; Leerssen 2012; Wolff 2001), as well as the inclusion of some of Croatian Franciscan Andrija Kačić-Miošić's songs from *Razgovor ugodni naroda slovinskoga* (A Pleasant Discourse of the Slavic People) (1756)—a literary work mimicking the oral epic—into Herder's *Volkslieder* (1778), and the absurd but successful ruse of Mérimée's *La Guzla...* (1991) with its serious republication by Pushkin, Bowring and Gerhard (Murko 1990:5; Wilson 1970:202).

Most likely owing to the fact that Vuk was peasant-born, his approach to the materials he collected was respectful and competent (Wilson 1970:23). Though he heavily edited his folk tale collections, his song collections were not altered to the degree that was common for the time.<sup>33</sup> Some lewd material was removed, lines were altered to conform to meter, and some material was added or removed for clarity or poetic effect, but Vuk uncommonly retained much of the unique voice of his singers. He offered multiforms of songs, made alterations using traditional diction, and noted the provenance of songs (Foley 1995:70; Wilson 1970:319-23), all methods that were well ahead of their time in the early 19<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>34</sup> He also, quite exceptionally, informally interviewed some of his singers, providing fragments of their biographies and perceptions of their character in his collections.<sup>35</sup> While attribution of folk tales and songs to individual performers in publication only became common practice near the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century (Atkinson 2012; Burke 1978), Vuk was interviewing *guslari* (epic singers)<sup>36</sup> as early as 1833 and interpreting some of their art through their personal biographies and styles.

Vuk's exhibition of these considerations was selective though, and his discriminations had repercussions for subsequent generations of collectors. In short, Vuk left very few traces of the majority of his singers, but focused intently on those singers of

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<sup>33</sup> For a list of Vuk's published collections see Koljević 1980:344.

<sup>34</sup> Credit must also be given to the very early collection work of Sima (Simeon) Milutinović 'Sarajlija' who noted the names and locations of singers (1837).

<sup>35</sup> See the introductions to Books I and IV of the 'Leipzig' collection (1824, 1833) for Vuk's comments on Filip Višnjić, Tešan Podrugović and others.

<sup>36</sup> A *guslar* (pl. *guslari*) is a singer of epic narrative songs in BCMS regions. The name *guslač* was also commonly used. Both names are derived from the instrument to which epic songs were most commonly sung, the *gusle* which is a traditional, single-stringed fiddle made of maple wood and traditionally strung with horse hair. For more on *guslari* see Lord 2000 and Murko 1951:60, 1990:11. For the *gusle* and other instruments to which epic singers in the region sing see Murko 1951:322.

heroic epics whose songs he personally collected and who presented distinctive personalities. Most specifically, Vuk was drawn to the image of blind singers and *hajduks* (bandits),<sup>37</sup> and the singers he presented in his work are almost exclusively one or the other. Moreover, very soon after he began collecting, his efforts shifted to focus predominantly on epic songs,<sup>38</sup> which held most interest for Vuk himself, and drew the most attention from Western European intellectuals who saw in them hints for solving the Homeric Question.<sup>39</sup> Following his example, subsequent folklore collections in the region would be weighted heavily on narrative songs over lyric songs and oral narratives, and collectors would more often collect names, biographies and other information<sup>40</sup> from singers of long epic songs than from singers and tellers of other lore, especially if those singers were brigands or blind.

After Vuk's initial publications, academics and lay scholars throughout the region began with increasing frequency to collect the 'voice of the folk' in their regions. Though

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<sup>37</sup> A *hajduk* is a sort of robber-bandit or highwayman, many of which existed throughout the more tumultuous eras during Ottoman occupation of the Balkans and for some time afterwards. Vuk did much to romanticize these figures into 'Robin Hood' types (Žanić 2007:126), an understanding of them that obtains to the present day. See Hobsbawm 1969:61-71 for a decent, albeit mildly romanticized, overview.

<sup>38</sup> It is revealing of Vuk's realization of outside interest that in his first 1814 collection he added a note of excuse to those who might remonstrate him for publishing 'blind men's songs' (21-22). Find an English language translation in Wilson 1970:94.

<sup>39</sup> The Homeric Question is, in essence, a series of academic discussions and debates on the authorship of the Homeric epics (*The Iliad* and *The Odyssey*), their possible collated nature, historicity, and the manner in which they were composed and recorded. For a brief summary see Parry, A. 1971:x-xxvi; for a more intensive discussion see Wace and Stubbings 1962:234-265.

<sup>40</sup> At the height of collecting following Vuk's work, the items of enquiry placed to and written about singers most often included: name, occupation, location of singer, from whom they learned the song, whether they recited or sang the songs, with or without instrumental accompaniment. Along with this, collectors would often include some judgement on the singer's general character and personality (see particularly the forwards and addendums to the first five MH volumes). Some scholars casually pressed to find exceptionally long songs that might come close to Homeric epics, while secondary analysis of narrative songs was most often aimed at discovering the persons behind heroic figures (see Banović 1921, 1928, 1933, 1953; Maretić 1909:109-90) or comparing epic accounts of historical battles to historical sources (see Koljević 1980:153-158 for some of the early and more recent research into the Battle of Kosovo).



a number of collections of varying quality and size were published in the following decades, the most notable song collections (and most pertinent for the present study) are Kosta Hörmann's two volumes of epic songs collected throughout Bosnia and Herzegovina (1888, 1889) and the 10 volume collection compiled by editors at *Matica Hrvatska*, or Matrix Croatia (1896-1942). The songs in the Hörmann collection are important since they represent the largest collection of narrative songs by Muslim Bosniak singers produced at the time, as well as for the stake they placed in an academic political arena for the status of Bosniaks after the territory was ceded to the Austrian Empire in 1878.<sup>41</sup> The texts, however, only list collection locations for songs, with no information on singers. Subsequent scholarship has gathered some data, but only a few singer names have been uncovered from the source MSs of collectors who provided material to Hörmann.<sup>42</sup>

For the songs in the *Matica Hrvatska* collection,<sup>43</sup> the history is quite different. Having learned from Vuk's example, and also following the shifting trends in folklore collection throughout Europe, the collectors at *Matica Hrvatska* conducted their collection uniquely. They sent out a public call in 1877 to a readership that was already quite enamoured with folklore materials and proud of the heritage outlined in Vuk's and

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<sup>41</sup> See Balić 1970; Buturović 1996; Gross and Szabo 1992:530-536; or Hajdarpasic 2015 for the academic race of Croat and Serb scholars to lay ethnic claim to the Muslim Slavs of Bosnia and their folklore.

<sup>42</sup> Hörmann had intended to publish a third volume with the intention of including names of singers and other information (1889:ix), but such a volume never came to fruition (Buturović 1996:15). The few singers since identified are listed in Buturović's introduction (30).

<sup>43</sup> Hereafter, the full name shall be used for the publishing house while the abbreviation 'MH' shall be used for the published book collections.

others' work.<sup>44</sup> In this way they collected numerous MSs from a range of lay collectors—scholars, priests, peasants, school teachers, students—anyone who knew a singer of traditional songs or who was willing to venture into rural regions in small-scale collection expeditions to gather songs (MH I:x; Primorac 2010:16). These collectors would mail their collections to *Matica Hrvatska* in return for small monetary compensation and the chance to have their materials published. The mass of MSs which filtered in was mined by editors for the songs they found most beautiful and artistic and published in groupings of various categories in all ten volumes of the collection.<sup>45</sup>

Although many collectors of the time still followed an old-fashioned view of the 'folk' as ignorant retainers of traditional knowledge, the editors of *Matica Hrvatska* tried to collect biographical material and other information<sup>46</sup> about singers from their collectors (MH I:xi). Some MSs offer little for critical inquiry, lacking even the barest information about the sources of the songs. Others offer only names or collection locations, which limit scientific enquiry, but still allow for various traditional aspects to be mapped geographically, or else for the repertoires of prolific singers to be compiled

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<sup>44</sup> The work of the early, post-Vuk scholars such as Valtazar Bogišić (1878), Luka Marjanović (1864), Sima Milutinović (1837); Bogoljub Petranović (1867a, 1867b, 1870), and others was well received by a readership eager for more.

<sup>45</sup> Actually only eight of the volumes follow this method. Books three and four are unique collections of Muslim epics planned and compiled by the collector and scholar Luka Marjanović. Having already gathered much material and made many connections in the Bosanska Krajina, Marjanović arranged for a small number of competent Bosniak singers to come to Zagreb where they sojourned on Matica's expense, sang their songs for Marjanović and other collectors and gave performances to local academics and gentry before being sent home with gifts and other sundries. Marjanović's collections are perhaps the most analytical studies into the art of singing epic songs until the work of Matija Murko, and their introductions are quite revealing regarding the singers and the collection project.

<sup>46</sup> One of the more analytical questions to arise out of this work was from whom the singers had learned their songs, a sort of early step toward the more pointed questions of method and style that the next generation of scholars (specifically Murko and Parry) would be asking. In Marjanović's collections we see even further analysis. See for instance the comparison of song length for a song by Ahmed Čaušević with a multiform sung by his brother-in-law from whom he learned it (1898:xxxiii).

and examined. Other MSs provide scraps of biographical information—usually a sentence or two about the age and general personality of the singer, and even self-reflexive comments on the methods employed by collectors. Only a rare few—most often collections gathered by members of families with a tradition of singing—offer extensive biographical material about the singers behind the songs.

Contemporaneous with the publication of the first edition of *Matica Hrvatska*'s folk song collections, the *Croatian Academy of Science and Art* (then Yugoslav Academy) envisioned a more expansive program of folklore and folklife collecting that not only produced a wealth of oral traditional material but also stands as the foundation of anthropological and ethnographic study in Croatia.<sup>47</sup> Their journal, the *Zbornik za narodni život i običaje Južnih Slavena* (Review on Folk Life and Customs of the South Slavs, hereafter *ZbNŽO*), followed a similar grass-roots collecting style as *Matica*'s song collections and aimed to chronicle all aspects of peasant life in the South Slavic holdings of the Habsburg Empire.<sup>48</sup> The aim was to create an intellectual tapestry of knowledge on such topics as tool and plant names, kinship formations, work practices, beliefs and, importantly, oral traditions that would build an ethnographic map of the nation. While the first edition (1896) was edited by Ivan Milčetić and drew from a small number of MSs sent in by an earlier call for materials by the Academy, by the second volume the editorial

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<sup>47</sup> The study of ethnography and anthropology in the BCMS region is notably rooted and interwoven with the study of folklore as well as nationalist political agendas. See Belaj 1998; Čapo Žmegač 1997; Halpern and Hammel 1969; Naumović 1998; Rihtman-Augustin 2004.

<sup>48</sup> All of the original volumes of the *ZbNŽO* are digitized and available as open access texts at the HAZU website (HAZU 2018).

position had been taken over by Antun Radić who brought with him a vision of exhaustive scope.<sup>49</sup>

Radić created an expansive questionnaire, the *Osnova za sabiranje i proučavanje građe o narodnom životu* (Basics for the Collection and Study of Material on Folk Life),<sup>50</sup> which was published in the second edition of *ZbNŽO* (1897:1-88) and available in a cheaper format on its own to be ordered from the Academy. The document consisted of a treatise on the importance of understanding, cherishing and chronicling folk culture (including Radić's famous 'Two Cultures' theory [see Čapo-Žmegač 1995; Jurić in press; Rihtman-Auguštin 1987]), a topic-by-topic guide to help any person become a local ethnographer, as well as guidelines for collecting, transcribing and submitting materials to the journal. Radić worked passionately as editor of the journal<sup>51</sup> and the response to these calls was overwhelming. This great effort produced an abundance of material (both published and unpublished) from which local scholars have drawn ethnographic and folklore material for decades.<sup>52</sup> As an ethnographic experiment, a wealth of data and a remarkably early example of participant observation research, the Academy's project is a treasure trove. Once more, however, the oral traditions published within the *ZbNŽO* and

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<sup>49</sup> Radić is an important figure in Croatian history. After his editorial work for the *ZbNŽO*, he would become the ideologue behind and cofounder of the Croatian People's Peasant Party (*Hrvatska pučka seljačka stranka*) with his brother Stjepan. On both brothers and the HPSS see Perić's dual biographies 2002 and 2003.

<sup>50</sup> See Čapo Žmegač 1997; Perić 2002; Primorac 2010:19-25; Rihtman-Auguštin 2004:35-45 for more on Antun Radić, his questionnaire and their seminal role in Croatian anthropology.

<sup>51</sup> The authors of a catalogue of the archive's materials, *ZbNŽO* 55, found that in less than five years (1897-1902) working in connection with the journal, Radić corresponded via letter and telegram with over 700 collectors, academics and others (Primorac 2010:19).

<sup>52</sup> After Radić left the journal and Dragutin Boranić (1870-1955) assumed his editorial position (1902-1954) the journal continued to present material drawn from the MSS, in sections or sometimes in their entirety (see for example Ivanišević 1905; Lang 1914; Lovretić 1902) until around 1940 when the journal began to shift away from the ethnographic material and to present only academic articles.

the MSs from which its material was derived present their oral traditions in the typical manner for the time—often noting location of telling, but seldom crediting material to particular informants, tellers or singers.

### On Theoretical Paradigms: Returning to Survey Studies with Modern Insights

Despite these rigorous advances in collection, publication and recognition of the importance of oral traditional lore, it was not until the investigative efforts of Slovenian academic Matija (often Matthias) Murko and Harvard scholar Milman Parry that researchers began to fully understand the mechanisms behind oral traditional performance,<sup>53</sup> the methods of bards and tale tellers, and how traditional tellers connect to, model, employ and ensure the continuation of their traditional art.

Murko was a Slovenian ethnographer who taught in Prague and conducted fieldwork in BCMS regions, before and after the First World War,<sup>54</sup> exploring the art and practice of epic singing. He commented at length on the figure of the singer, the art, role, and occasion of singing, performance context, the role of the audience in performance, the role that song books and (non-)literacy played in epic singing, as well as the increasing decline of the practice—all concepts that Harvard scholars Milman Parry and Albert Bates Lord would later explore in more depth, with more analytical proof, and, in most circles, gain more recognition for ‘uncovering’.<sup>55</sup> Murko, in fact, even conducted

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<sup>53</sup> As ever, these scholars only explored singing, and particularly epic singing, but much of the insights they produced are applicable to other oral traditional genres.

<sup>54</sup> His trips were made in 1909, 1912, 1913, 1924 and 1927 (Murko 1990:8-9).

<sup>55</sup> See Murko 1990, and his posthumously published opus *Tragom srpsko-hrvatske narodne epike...* (1951) for more on his contributions to the study. Murko’s lesser recognition is not to suggest anything nefarious

many of the same field experiments for which Parry would later become famous,<sup>56</sup> including collecting field recordings with a phonographic recorder commissioned from the Viennese Academy to compare actual singing with songs dictated for writing (Murko 1990:15).<sup>57</sup> It was Murko, personally, who introduced Parry to the idea of conducting his research in Yugoslavia and offered a philosophical gateway from the theoretical assertions that Parry had been suggesting in his work on Homer to the ethnographic practice where those theories might be tested.

Between 1933 and 1935, Parry conducted extensive field recordings of oral-traditional singers throughout the BCMS region. Equipped with a rigorous set of investigative hypotheses and questions (Lord 2000:ix), a battery-powered, phonographic field-recording device, his student and technical assistant, Albert Lord, and a crew of local guides, collectors, traditional singers<sup>58</sup> and typists, Parry set out on an exhaustive collecting mission that took him across many regions of Yugoslavia (particularly Dalmatia, Bosnia, Hercegovina, Montenegro, Macedonia and Southern Serbia).

Collecting under meticulous field conditions, Parry, Lord and Vujnović recorded narrative songs from a wide range of singers and conducted many experiments with the

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on Parry and Lord's part, who very vocally proclaimed their indebtedness to his work (Lord 2000:280 n. 1; Parry, M. 1971:439)

<sup>56</sup> Murko compared sung versions of songs against printed variants (1990:9), recorded multiple versions of the same song from the same singer to see how each performance changed (16), had one singer re-sing a song that he had sung for publication 20 years earlier for comparison (9), and interviewed singers to learn about the process of becoming a singer (12) among other experiments and analyses.

<sup>57</sup> Sadly, Murko's device recorded onto wax cylinders that could only record song fragments of approximately 30 verses or less (Murko 1990:15) and which have not stood the test of time very well. See Lechleitner and Marošević 2009 for those materials that have survived. This collection of material, pales in comparison to Parry's collection, but is notable for the sheer fact of its existence.

<sup>58</sup> The most important aid being Nikola Vujnović, a lettered *guslar* from Stolac, Hercegovina, who has increasingly been awarded recognition for the critical role he played in the enterprise (Bartók and Lord 1951:255; Foley 2005:235; Parry and Lord 1954:xiii; Ranković 2012)

singers and their songs.<sup>59</sup> By bringing a critical and exhaustive method to many of the ideas that Parry had hypothesized at length, but which Murko had only begun to test, the team sought to understand the practice and art of oral narrative song in the BCMS tradition and the method by which long epic songs were constructed and performed. Though Parry would die in a hunting accident shortly after their collecting expedition in 1935, Lord would continue the project, making return trips to the region on his own and with David Bynum. Lord published these texts and findings in a broad range of materials with the most critical discussion in his PhD thesis and book *The Singer of Tales* (2000). The combined efforts of Parry and Lord also produced one of the finest and largest collections of oral traditional folklore material in the world, The Milman Parry Collection of Oral Literature, housed at Widener Library, as well as a veritable institution of investigation into oral traditional practices at Harvard University. The intellectual work that followed these studies is immense<sup>60</sup> and manifold.

For this thesis, what is most crucial about Parry's and Lord's work is the understanding it produced about the transmission of oral traditions and the role of oral traditional singers as both retainers and creators of their traditional art. Through their research, Parry and Lord were able to show the manner in which a singer engages with and presents a traditional song as an innovative artist (of varying skill) who brings a

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<sup>59</sup> Parry and Lord conducted similar, but more extensive experiments than Murko. Examples included: having singers sing the same song multiple times to compare versions, tracing lineages by recording songs from singers and then from those from whom they had learned the song, having singers hear a song for the first time from another singer and then sing it, etc. Later, when Lord returned to Yugoslavia with David Bynum, further experimentation involved having bilingual (Bosnian and Albanian) singers sing a song in both languages with their unique traditional meters and forms, and recording particular songs from singers that he and Parry had recorded in their original trips (Lord 1965).

<sup>60</sup> A thorough bibliography of much of this work is found in Foley 1985.

personal ability and style to a technique that is otherwise highly conservative and built on an oral palimpsest of tradition handed down over generations and built on formulas and themes.<sup>61</sup> They showed how these units of narrative cluster together through the dictates of the tradition but are elicited variably based on the thrifty employment<sup>62</sup> of personalized repertoires that singers acquire and expand as they learn their craft and engage in performance. Thus every performance is a unique telling of a tale shared across all unique tellings and performers are the retainers of their traditions by innovating and re-creating the tale, which is never fully presented or elaborated in any single telling. “Each performance is the specific song, and at the same time it is the generic song” (Lord 2000:101). Lord produced a landmark position on the mechanics and transmission of oral traditional materials as they contrast to literary practices,<sup>63</sup> insights that ushered in a sea-change in various fields of study that explore oral traditions.

Contemporaneous with and following Murko’s, Parry’s and Lord’s work, local scholars in BCMS regions continued to explore oral traditions with increasing scrutiny and insight. The many scholars who submitted their research to the *ZbNŽO* in its later incarnation, as well as the work of such Serbian scholars as Tihomir R. Đorđević, Jovan

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<sup>61</sup> For more on ‘Formula’ and ‘Theme’ see Bynum 1978:3-18; Foley 1981; chapters three and four of *The Singer of Tales*, and pg. 55 below.

<sup>62</sup> On the ‘thrifty’ see Lord 2000:52-53; on ‘tension of essences’ see Lord 2000:97; Bynum 1978:337, 348.

<sup>63</sup> These concepts must crucially be viewed as techniques that are variously engaged in. Of less importance are Lord’s stark divide between orality and literacy (2000:14, 20, 124-138), his suggestion of an ‘oral mentality’ (138) of illiterate fabulators and his stress on oral poetry as composed in performance (13, 22, 138 despite his own contradictory statements about Sulejman Makić on 26-27). Subsequent critiques of Lord’s work have led to a refinement of these ideas, particularly the relationship and interplay between literacy and orality as well as the role that memorization plays in oral traditional performances. See especially the important, although sometimes misguided and incorrect, early critiques of Ruth Finnegan (1970, 1976, 1977), Lord’s generous response (1995:187), and the refinement of Lord’s ideas in the various works of David Bynum and John Miles Foley (esp. Foley 1991).



Cvijić, and Veselin Čajkanović used the data that had been collected through the 19<sup>th</sup> century to ask increasingly complex and scientific questions about the art forms. During the communist period a renewed celebration of peasant classes and their identity brought interest and resources to a very competent group of Croatian scholars who began a new wave of collection and analysis such as Maja Bošković-Stulli (1959, 1975a, 1988), Dunja Rihtman-Auguštin (1984) and Olinko Delorko (1951, 1969). With this generation we find much refinement of older theories, an increased focus on collecting oral narratives, as well as a shift to a narrative-critical analysis of oral traditional fabulators and much self-evaluation of the ways in which ethnography had been and was then being conducted in the region.<sup>64</sup> Unfortunately, as systems of collection and analysis grew stronger throughout the 20<sup>th</sup> century, widespread literacy (Lord 2000:137), and increasing shifts in social structure, rural communities, and ‘modernization’ with its entertainments (Bošković-Stulli 1967:310-312; Šešo 2016:125-136) rang the death knell for the popularity and traditional transmission form of epic singing in the region<sup>65</sup> and relegated lyric songs and telling of fantastic tales to moribund, half-remembered traditions that still continue in some areas, but which seem increasingly anachronistic to the average singer or teller (Šešo 2016).

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<sup>64</sup> A full survey of this material is beyond the scope of this thesis but a decent introduction in English can be found in Rihtman-Auguštin 2004 and Primorac and Čaleta 2012:149-155. For more background on folklore collection and the study of supernatural beings and oral traditions in the region see Botica 2013; Bošković-Stulli 1983; Bošković-Stulli and Zečević 1978; Dukić 2004; and Šešo 2016:89-136.

<sup>65</sup> The singing lives on in small circles as a practice in some communities, and especially in a cultural heritage/tourist-oriented manner, but the art itself has become a literate enterprise which no longer functions on the methods of the bygone tradition. See Lord 2000:137 and Parry and Lord 1954:13 for how this practice differs, see Golemović 2008, 2012; Primorac and Čaleta 2012; Žanić 2007 for analysis of the modern form of *guslari*, their art and cultural significance, as well as the fate of the art post-WWI.

Outside of the region, in the decades following the publication of *The Singer of Tales*, the field of folkloristics experienced a shift away from analyzing oral traditions and other folklore in a text-based manner to a view of folklore in practice that foregrounds context and performance. Much work has been done in analyzing the role of the biography, personality and style of singers and tellers of tales upon their repertoire (Basso 1984; Cruikshank 1988, 1990; Koljević 1980:299-321; Vansina 1985), a topic most often reliant upon narrative and discourse analysis for its insights and increasingly critical of cultural competence in cross-cultural encounters and metacommunication (Briggs 1986; Hymes 1962). This personal and agentive view of the teller of oral traditions has also seen incredible work produced at the junction of history and anthropology where historic discourse, including oral traditions, are explored as recorded social facts and thought materials of subaltern classes whose opinions are often lost to history (Darnton 1984; Ginzburg 1982, 1983; Rebel 2013; Tatar 1987; Taylor and Rebel 1981). Finally, the field of folkloristics itself radically shifted its methods of enquiry in the 1960s when a new cohort of scholars influenced by Dell Hyme's 'Ethnography of Speaking,' Dennis Tedlock's 'Ethnopoetics' and partly by Lord's work, began to focus intensively on the role of performance itself in oral traditions and the way that context, audience-interaction and metacommunicative data influence a clear understanding of oral traditions in their natural environments.<sup>66</sup>

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<sup>66</sup> A competent survey of these materials is impossible here, but some exemplary texts are: Bauman and Briggs 1990; Ben-Amos and Goldstein 1975; Briggs 1988; Hymes 1977, 1981; Tedlock 1971, 1983, 1990. Most of the latter paradigm focusing on the BCMS regions has been conducted by John Miles Foley (Foley 1995; Foley and Kerewsky-Halpern 1976; Kerewsky-Halpern and Foley 1978), though, as Vidan notes, for most of the oral traditional forms in the area the analyses came too late (2003:8).

It is with an eye to this long heritage of theoretical paradigms and insights, and the data required to produce such research, that this thesis approaches the oral traditions of the *vila*.

### On Oral Traditional Art in BCMS Speaking Regions and the Divisions of Genre

At the time of the collection of the folklore materials presented in this thesis, oral traditional practices were highly intertwined in the lives of people in rural and (although to a much lesser degree) some cosmopolitan areas in BCMS regions. It is in fact this rootedness throughout the culture that often causes difficulty in defining genre and ethnographic context for folk singing and storytelling. These materials in their various forms saturated many facets of cultural life and often those contexts and praxes that obtain in the ethnographic field do not represent divisions in the material itself (cf. Zimmerman 1986:30-1).

Although some scholars have debated a possible aristocratic or non-peasant origin for some forms of oral tradition in BCMS regions (Koljević 1980:11-30), there is no definitive evidence to suggest that the oral traditions presented here have ever been anything other than a peasant art form (Bynum 1979:2).<sup>67</sup> In their natural context these

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<sup>67</sup> These ideas mostly stem from analysis of the *bugarštica*, an older genre of short songs (attested from the 15<sup>th</sup> to 18<sup>th</sup> centuries) with long metered line (normally 15 or 16 syllables) that are balladic in tone and interrelated with other forms of singing in the region. While the singing of *bugarštica* had died out by the period explored in this thesis, it had been commonly recorded in older texts (recorded traces are from the 15<sup>th</sup> to the 18<sup>th</sup> century) than the decasyllabic and octosyllabic epics, ballads and lyric songs, which would become the defining material of BCMS oral traditions. To some, the traditions are imagined to be contemporaneous and interrelated while others prefer to see the *bugarštica* as the precursor to the other forms, that have shifted (or for some degraded) as they passed from an artistic milieu to a peasant context. See Bogišić 1878; Bošković-Stulli 2005; Koljević 1980; and Miletich 1990.

traditions were performed most often in domestic, work, and celebratory arenas. The arts were never formalized but rather learned by certain interested individuals in an elective and adoptive manner for personal reasons. Those drawn to the traditions would learn, most often, from their kin who practiced and performed the traditions, developing their own personalized approach through individual practice, performance and listening to other tellers and singers in their families and communities. These traditions were often highly localized, though for some performers, the art (or life's circumstances) led them farther afield where they would have opportunities to encounter other performers and traditions. Whether on foot, or by mouth, songs and tales had a way of traveling throughout the wider region. Though they regularly settled into specific, localized regions where they established themselves and proliferated, taking on unique local forms.

Songs, tales, jokes, riddles and other oral traditional practices were often conducted and performed domestically during family gatherings, feasts, weddings, holidays, work (shucking corn, drying tobacco, washing clothing, etc.) and travel, particularly after harvest and during winter when field work and other duties were suspended. At these times families and friends would gather *na sijelo/silo/selo* (lit. for a sit) to drink coffee, *rakija* (hard fruit brandies) or other beverages, eat and visit. Oral traditions were an integral part of these gatherings as entertainment and as critical modes of transmission for traditional knowledge and cultural memory (Bošković-Stulli 1967:311-312; Murko 1951:343-35). Stories and songs were most often told by single tellers and singers, although some forms of singing were performed in groups or sung in a 'call and answer' method (Murko 1951:259-265).

In the public arena certain shorter lyric (and occasionally narrative) songs were also sung during festivals and gatherings as accompaniment to a form of circle dance most commonly called *kolo* (lit. wheel, IE *\*k<sup>w</sup>el* ‘to turn’), but also in some areas referred to as *horo/oro* (cognate with Grk. χορός) (259-265). For the songs variously called men’s songs, heroic songs or *guslar* songs, there was a unique public arena not afforded other oral traditional forms. In regions of the Dinaric Alps and Littoral Dalmatia, and to the greatest degree in Muslim regions, where strict patriarchal norms obtained into modern times, women were often afforded little public life and males and females seldom intermingled outside the household. In these regions, men’s singing of epic and ballad songs became an institution of coffee houses (*kavana/kafana*), taverns (*gostionica, krčma, mehana*) and occasionally in some traveler’s inns (*han*) where local singers would frequent to entertain the male guests with their songs in exchange for gifts of tobacco (*duhan*), drink and, less frequently, gifts of money (*bakšiš*) (62). In these areas, singers would regularly meet to hear each other’s songs and compete for the favour of the audiences who played an active and engaged role in the singing (Foley 1995:xi-28; Lord 2000:16, 25; Murko 1990:15, 20; Zimmerman 1986:63-4). Performances often lasted through the entirety of the evening and could extend over many days. In the Muslim regions this practice was brought to its pinnacle over the month-long fast and celebration of *Ramazan* (Ramadan) where singers would regularly be hired by café owners to play every evening over the month, or multiple singers would be hired to entertain guests. Those public performers who gained some renown would at times be called upon by Muslim nobility to entertain their households over holidays and during celebrations (Lord

2000:16; Murko 1990:11-12). However, ‘professional’ singers were not a common phenomenon; singers came from all trades and occupations, but only beggars lived off of the art (Lord 2000:18).<sup>68</sup> Other public contexts included fairs and markets (*sajam*, *dernek*, *pazar*) where singers would perform epic and religious songs, although these were more often beggars than those performers who frequented coffee houses (Murko 1951:206-217). While in domestic contexts singers could sing with or without instrumental accompaniment, and some could only recite the songs, in public contexts performance was rare without the accompaniment of a *gusle* (one-stringed fiddle) or *tambura*/*šargija* (a type of mandolin or lute)<sup>69</sup> and many establishments kept one hung on their wall for performance occasions.

Although women often knew the men’s songs, dictates of public life offered women little opportunity to perform them (191). Many could only recite them and those that could sing them to the accompaniment of the *gusle* were exceptionally rare.<sup>70</sup> In lower Dalmatia and the islands off the coast, a particular sub-genre of epic songs seems to have emerged, influenced by the ballads and romantic Venetian traditions, and said to have been better sung by women than men (Coote 1992; Murko 1951:190; Perić-Polonijo

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<sup>68</sup> See especially the comments about epic singers in cafés by the *guslar* and café owner Đemail Zogić in Parry and Lord 1954:238.

<sup>69</sup> The *tambura* name is actually used for two instruments in the region. One is more often encountered in the north (particularly in Slavonia) and similar to a long-necked mandolin. The second is a more recognizably eastern instrument, often also called a *šargija* or *saz*. It is the latter that is used for epic singing and most commonly connected to singers from the Gornja Krajina and Bosanska Krajina regions (See Bynum 1979:15; Murko 1951:322).

<sup>70</sup> Aside from some regions in the mountains of Herzegovina and Imotska Krajina where the practice was more commonplace (Milinović 1859:216; Murko 1951:192), Murko suggests that women who sang to the *gusle* were often of a unique type who lived disreputable lives (190). See especially his mention of a woman who conducted herself as a man—possibly suggesting the practice of sworn virginhood (cf. Grémaux 1996; Young 2001). Contrary to Parry and Lord, Zimmerman stresses that recitation is the critical aspect of epic singing and that the *gusle* is a nearly superfluous addition to the songs (1986:35-41).

1996:13-14), but here too the women sang without the *gusle*. In Muslim regions where social separation of the sexes was strongest, ‘men’s’ and ‘women’s’ songs also saw the most division upon gendered lines, although it is still possible that women knew these songs, only that they were not free to sing them (Murko 1990:14; Vidan 2003:18-20). Although the tone varies, many of the same tales that occur in heroic epics are present in ballads and lyric songs, though here they are truncated and lack violent and militant tropes, instead emphasizing emotion and tragedy over historicity. In all areas, the songs often designated ‘women’s songs’ (now studied as lyric songs and ballads, but also sometimes including epic songs sung by women) were seldom only the purview of women but known to both genders (Coote 1992:333; Stefanović Karadžić 1824:xvii-xix; Vidan 2003:17-19).

Regarding form, epics were most often decasyllabic (*deseterac*) with a small number of shorter octosyllabic (*osmerac*) pieces. For the ballads and lyric songs, decasyllabic and octosyllabic materials were most common with some shorter hexa- and heptasyllables (*šesterac*, *sedmerac*), as well as some rare remnants of *bugarštica* forms (usually trideca- and tetradecasyllabic) and some other rarer anisosyllabic forms (7-7-8-6; 6-8-8-6, etc.). The decasyllable of the epic is a syllabo-tonic line with a firm caesura after the fourth syllable and primary ictus sites at the third and ninth (penultimate) and first and fifth (initial) syllables (Foley 1990:81-106) affecting a resemblance to trochaic pentameter (Lord 2000:37; Zimmerman 1986:28-9). Heroic songs lack refrains and

stanzas<sup>71</sup> and flow in independent, stichic lines that never employ enjambment. In all cases, regular stress in spoken language is altered for oral traditional meter.<sup>72</sup> The forms of lyric songs are numerous, sometimes region-specific and vary more widely than the narrative songs (Bartók and Lord 1951; Vidan 2003), but still most often present in deca-, octo-, hexa- and heptasyllable and often in even stanzas.

As for the various forms of oral narratives (regionally glossed under the title *pripovijetka/pripovetka/pripovitka* in the singular),<sup>73</sup> these have traditionally been presented only in prose form and, to my knowledge, no analysis exists on their presentation format in the manner of Ethnopoetics (à la Tedlock). This is perhaps a fruitful area of further investigation.<sup>74</sup> For riddles (*zagonetke*) presentation styles and riddling contexts are equally under-studied. The materials themselves are often Descriptive Riddles (Archer Taylor's 'True Riddles') (Abrahams and Dundes 1972:131) and take a form similar to older English-language riddles where the puzzle posed is not presented as a question but as a statement.

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<sup>71</sup> Bynum has suggested the Bosanska Krajina region as a unique area where epic songs present a stanzaic form (1979:14-43).

<sup>72</sup> Cf. Bynum 1979; Jakobson 1952; Lord 2000:37-42. See also Parry and Lord 1954:435-467 for analysis of the music and singing by Béla Bartók.

<sup>73</sup> This word, derived from the affix *pri-* (suggesting proximity) attached to *povijest* (history), also has a verb form '*pripovedati/pripovijedati/pripovidati*' and is used for nearly all types of tale telling in the region. In effect it means 'to tell of an occurrence that happened,' and was even at times used as a description for narrative songs (Murko 1951:192)

<sup>74</sup> See Foley 1995 for considerations of the applicability of ethnopoetics to South Slavic oral traditions as well as some analysis of regional charms and incantations in this manner.



### On Divisions of Genre in this Thesis

Genre is always a difficult topic in folklore research. While one can easily identify a very typical song, oral narrative, riddle, etc., placing borders around and between those genres is a notoriously troublesome and contentious practice.<sup>75</sup> Seemingly, the best answer might be to follow the tellers and singers themselves and their emic definitions but, such a suggestion is largely untenable. Even within the songs used in this study there are numerous names applied by singers that reflect regional differences or simply the whims of the singers or collectors for how to describe and delineate their singing.<sup>76</sup> I have tried to stay conservative in my designations of genre and use the most expedient terms based on common folkloristic models tempered by logical divisions in the materials themselves.

Traditional songs from BCMS regions are generally divided into two or three categories. Those attempting to follow traditional analyses or factor in aspects of tone will

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<sup>75</sup> Cf. Abrahams 1976; Ben-Amos (1976a), Dundes (1964:252) on the difficulties of adequately defining genres, Doniger (1985:10) on the (lack of) difference between folktale and myth, or Bynum (1976:44-45) on the pernicious nature of terms like ‘epic.’ See also Briggs and Bauman 1992 for a critical analysis of the concept of genre.

<sup>76</sup> Thus we hear the aforementioned *junačke pjesme* (heroic songs) and *ženske pjesme* (women’s songs) as well as *guslarske pjesme* (*gusle* songs), *tamburaške pjesme* (*tambura* songs), *dječačke pjesme* (children’s songs), *pobožne pjesme* (religious songs), *svatovske pjesme* (wedding songs), *pjesme od kolede* (effectively carols), *groktuše* or *groktališe* (a term among the Bunjevci of Bačka denoting the tremor in their voice when they sing their songs) (MH X:5-6), *poskočnice* or *doskočnice* (from the word to jump and usually indicating short songs to sing while dancing *kolo*) (Stefanović Karadžić 1866:v), *popijevke/popivke/popevke* (see Murko 1951:263), *versi* (used on the island of Hvar for lyric songs) (192), *kajde* (songs with a refrain after each line) (Stefanović Karadžić 1866:vi), and many more. There are also minor divisions within these, such as the epic singers who divide their songs into *ličke/krajine/krajiške pjesme* and *undurske/ungarske pjesme*, that is, songs describing battles of the border men between Gornja Krajina and the Bosanska Krajina and songs set in Slavonia or other Hungarian controlled areas (Bynum 1979:5; Murko 1951:69) even though these songs often employ the same tales, tropes and characters. As Bynum says, “we should not look to oral tradition of any age for words to name its genres, because the literary idea of genre has no true counterpart in oral tradition” (1976:49). Cf. Ben-Amos 1976b for general discussion and Bartók and Lord 1951:35-84 for specific discussion of ‘women’s songs,’ particularly pgs. 82-84 on song names.

present three divisions: (1) ‘men’s/heroic/epic songs’ for those longer songs that are martial and historical in tone; (2) ‘ballads’ for shorter narrative songs, most often sung by women and focusing on (usually dramatic) tone rather than the plot of the tale; and, finally, (3) ‘women’s/lyric songs’ for those very short songs that are sung for dancing, working or that lack narrative progression.<sup>77</sup> Vuk was the first to divide his collection into Heroic and Women’s songs for academic purposes, but the names are misleading in that some heroic songs are not heroic or are sung by women, and women’s songs are equally sung by men. In truth what the two categories mark are heroic epic songs that are sung in a specific androcentric context in opposition to all other songs. This makes them unhelpful for critical analysis.<sup>78</sup> While a more stringent understanding of some of the genres and contexts of songs is important for ethnographic considerations (and will be brought to bear when necessary in this thesis), for content analysis, which is the bulk of this study, I prefer to use the dual division of ‘Narrative songs’ and ‘Lyric songs.’ Although these may not map to the fluid terminology of the singers, nor to the finer divisions of genre used by those who try to strike a balance between ethnography and analysis, these titles serve best at delineating the content into tangible genres and produce

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<sup>77</sup> Here I gloss over the more elaborate set of subgenres that Nikola Andrić created and outlined in the introductions to volumes five through ten of the MH collection. Andrić subdivided men’s and women’s songs further with an ungainly system built on content (*hajduk* songs, harem songs), tone (women’s love songs) and other sub-genres with a more literary focus (farces, romances).

<sup>78</sup> Also see Coote 1992:332-334; Bartók and Lord 1951:247-249; Vidan 2003:12 for more on this problem. Vuk himself spoke to this problem in his 1824, Leipzig edition of Book I (xvii-xx). See also Botica (2013), or Čubelić (1988) for more on genre. It is also clear that certain shorter songs are often simply fragments of longer songs which are easily detectable if one knows the tradition. For more on fragments see Delorko (1951:176-180) or Perić-Polonijo (1988:42) A study like this thesis can help identify such fragments, as well as tropes that mostly belong to a certain subgenre (narrative or lyric) which have then been adapted to the other format; such examples will be discussed below. Coote expresses the same opinion for content analysis as I suggest here (1992:333).

a more substantial division between the materials that bears clearer analytical results (cf. Coote 1992:333).

I also do not fully ascribe to categorizing the very long narrative epic songs encountered among Muslim Bosniaks as intrinsically different from the shorter epics among the Christian populations. Although the art of epic singing in Muslim areas produced a significant number of long songs—the reception and practice of the art form there seemingly facilitated this (Lord 2000:15)—there were still many Muslim singers who sang shorter songs and Christian singers who sang fairly long songs;<sup>79</sup> the methods of producing these songs are the same and the traditional stock of materials that they draw upon are almost entirely shared.

No matter where or how scholars choose to define and divide the songs, they exist on a continuum and there are always materials that are hard to place. I define Narrative Songs here as those songs that tell a story and have more than one sequence of action, events or locations. I define Lyric Songs as those that are more concerned with evoking an emotion or feeling and do not very clearly define any action or only depict a single scene.<sup>80</sup> This division, though placing the line of separation in a detrimental position for the number of lyric songs, seems to produce the clearest distinctions and the easiest

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<sup>79</sup> Compare for instance Old Man Milija's *The Wedding of Maksim Crnojević* which has 1,236 verse lines with the Muslim song *The Two Hrnjicas and the Sixty Hajduks* from Hörmann's collection (Hör II.43) which only runs 169 verses. Luka Marjanović calculated the average length of the Bosniak epics his team collected from the Bosanska Krajina region at 873 verse lines (1898:xi), while Mary Coote suggests that Christian songs average at about 200 verse lines (1978), but sample choice would greatly affect such numbers. See further Lord 1972:310.

<sup>80</sup> Further, lyric songs are the only songs to ever be sung in the first person, although this is not the norm.

separation of motifs.<sup>81</sup> I also feel it conforms to a natural division in the songs. There are those who will disagree with me on this. What is most important here, however, are the traditions themselves. Many may deem fit to ignore the finer divisions in sub-categories presented in this thesis and instead focus on the macro-division between song and tale, the clearest division in the depiction of the *vila*.

For oral narratives,<sup>82</sup> I have taken a traditional folklorists subset of genres. *Myths* (in BCMS scholarship *mitovi*)<sup>83</sup> are those tales “which, in the society in which they are told, are considered to be truthful accounts of what happened in the remote past” (Bascom 1965:4). These are tales that deal with the creation of the universe or other events that occurred at the beginning of time or explain very permanent aspects of the world. Myths are by their nature sacred or at least connected to the sacred, theology or ritual (4). *Legends* (*legende*) are those tales which factor in a before-time not so ancient as myths. Often dealing with heroes, saints and various great figures of a bygone day, they explain how more transient items in life came to be (buildings, lineages, etc.). These tales also carry a truth-value, though one that is sometimes more porous. They can be both secular and sacred. I use von Sydow’s (1977:73-76) subcategories *fabulates* and *memorates* (*predaje*) (without his further subcategorization and as further clarified by Christiansen

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<sup>81</sup> Following this distinction only 23 songs did not fall easily into a category and were thus assigned to the category for which their motif is most common.

<sup>82</sup> I use the term oral narrative for the over-arching category of non-sung oral stories (reflecting BCMS *pripovijetke*, and apposite to the oral tradition’s lack of genre distinction). I find that Bascom’s (1965:3) suggestion ‘prose narrative’ makes untoward connections with written literature and ignores the variances of spoken language poetics that Hymes and Tedlock have stressed. At times I use the simpler ‘tales’ as a synonym.

<sup>83</sup> See Bošković-Stulli 1997:18-20 for a brief but concise outline of oral narrative genres in BCMS folklore discourse.

[1958:5]; Dégh and Vázsonyi [1974]; and Granberg [1969]) as their own categories here, a common practice in folkloristics and suitable for this material. Both of these, in this study, reflect tales of human encounters with supernatural beings—*Fabulates* being those tales which are told with the suggestion that the events are wholly true but involving unnamed or unclear individuals. *Memorates* are the same types of tales but told as having occurred to the teller of the tale or a named person whom they know.<sup>84</sup> Both of the latter are grouped together for analysis since most of their stock traditions overlap. I use *Folktales* (*bajke*) for those more polished and artistic oral narratives that are not told in an attempt to convince the hearers that they are true, but rather as entertainments or fanciful tales. This is a Grimm Brothers *märchen* with evil step-mothers, magic animals that help non-descript protagonist, and other fanciful tropes. I follow Georges and Dundes in defining a *Riddle* (*zagonetka*) as “a traditional verbal expression which contains one or more descriptive elements, a pair of which may be in opposition; the referent of the elements is to be guessed” (1963:116). Though this study offers very little by way of rituals, there is some discussion of them. I default to Victor Turner in describing *Rituals* (*rituali, obredi*) as “a stereotyped sequence of activities involving gestures, words, and objects, performed in a sequestered place, and designed to influence preternatural entities or forces on behalf of the actors’ goals and interests” (1973:1100).

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<sup>84</sup> Many of the oral narratives that I classify under *fabulates* and *memorates* in this text share their story-patterns widely across the region. Many folklorists would deem such formalized tales as ‘legends’ (a clear example is found in Honko 1964) despite the use of (sometimes feigned) familiar names (by the teller) in the story. I have chosen to use their temporality as a defining trope to categorize these genres as it created clearer analytical divisions.

To these traditional genres I have also isolated two of my own categories: *Ritual Tales* and *Topogonic Descriptions*.<sup>85</sup> Ritual tales are those oral narratives that recount various rituals regarding *vile*, but present too many fantastic elements to convincingly constitute truly practiced rituals, rather existing only in narrative form. Topogonic descriptions (τόπος [place] + γέγονα [come into being]) are those accounts and lore which describe supernatural origins for the creation or form of local topographic or geographic formations. In this study these descriptions recount places where *vile* are thought to have lived/live and how their inhabitancy has affected the topography, often serving local practices of social geography.

Finally, due to the way in which the materials for the *ZbNŽO* were gathered following Radić's questionnaire, all of the published and unpublished MS sections on *vile* either contain or entirely consist of descriptions by informants about what a *vila* is. Although this is not a traditional folklore category, but a prompted response, the materials there are valuable inasmuch as they provide a window into the most important aspects of *vila* belief to the informants and because they sometimes elicited unique responses. In a way these texts represent their own novel form of oral tradition. As such, I have created the category of *Description* to present these materials.

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<sup>85</sup> Normally such oral narratives are considered myths, but all of those regarding *vile* seem to be narrated as having occurred in a 'legendary time' or else in the present or recent past rather than a mythic time. For this and other minor reasons it felt suitable to bequeath them their own small section.

## Methodologies and Critical Considerations

In order to map the *vila* across the Balkan peninsula as she appears in various genres of folklore and as she connects to particular singers and tellers of oral traditional lore, this research demanded multiple tiers of analysis. The first task was to identify the *vila* in a large sample of published materials. For songs, I used the following collections: Vuk Stefanović Karadžić's four-volume *Serbian Folk Songs (Srpske narodne pjesme)*<sup>86</sup> as well as his *Serbian Folk Songs from Herzegovina (Srpske narodne pjesme iz Hercegovine)* (1866) which was posthumously published in his name but actually collected by Vuk Vrčević; *Matica Hrvatska's* ten-volume set *Croatian Folk Songs (Hrvatske narodne pjesme)*; and Kosta Hörmann's two-volume *Folk Songs of the Muslims in Bosnia and Herzegovina (Narodne pjesne Muhamedovaca u Bosni i Hercegovini)*.

My intent, however, was to get behind the publications and find out what I could about the singers who performed the songs collected in those volumes. I wanted to undo the editing and arranging of the published versions to see the materials as originally recorded<sup>87</sup> and, whenever possible, grouped within the full recorded repertoire of a singer

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<sup>86</sup> I have chosen to use Vuk's four-volume Viennese editions (1841, 1845, 1846 and 1862) as they are the last editions that he arranged personally before his death. They are also the most complete, and un-edited versions (there are many problems with the later 'State Editions,' complete with Vuk's notes. They are also more readily available to international audiences in reprints, such as Nedić's 1969 and 1976 modern editions as well as the combined collection that I myself use from 2006, edited by Snežana Samardžija.

<sup>87</sup> Lord has fully elaborated the ways in which transcribed texts can never reproduce true versions of oral traditions in performance (2000:124-128). Since these texts were all collected before the advent of reliable audio field recording devices, the best that can be done to bring an analysis close to the original material is at least to use the original MSs and remove extra layers of editorial tampering (see Lord 1995:16-18). Materials presented here will be noted as MS or published when required; whenever possible I will prioritize the MS version.

or teller. As mentioned above, for Vuk and Hörmann, many of these traces no longer exist and those that do have been published upon. While Hörmann's MSs offer very little material about his singers, the story for Vuk's collection is slightly more optimistic. Given the historical importance of Vuk himself and his collection, his works were very early adopted into Serbian, and later Yugoslav culture as canons of literature.<sup>88</sup> Because of this, scholars in Serbia have for some time scoured his original MSs and personal writings for additional information. These efforts have produced more data about the singers about whom Vuk did not record any or much biographical information and much of this has been published.<sup>89</sup> The ease of accessing this material is contrasted by the lack of information behind many of the songs in the collection.

The MH collection and the *ZbNŽO* materials are, however, quite a different story. While a few MSs were returned to their collectors, the vast majority of the MSs that informed those editions and journals are intact and well-preserved to this day and, felicitously, held in the same archive at the Department of Ethnology at the Croatian Academy of Science and Art. It is here that the bulk of my research was conducted.

Though the collections in the archive are numerous and daunting, my efforts were aided by the work of a few local scholars and curators. An academic team in Zagreb has compiled a very useful catalogue for the collections, published in issue 55 of the modern

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<sup>88</sup> After World War I, education reforms swept Yugoslavia and gained alacrity under the communists who concentrated their efforts on wiping out illiteracy. These changes had an immensely detrimental effect on oral traditional practice, and encouraged demand for and popularity of small, inexpensive readers of folk songs (Lord 2000:136-137). Vuk's collections were included in school curricula alongside literary works and in many ways were treated more as literature than as oral traditions (Bošković-Stulli 1975b:148).

<sup>89</sup> Most of this extensive work has been done by Vladan Nedić, much of which can be found gathered in Nedić 1990. See also Koljević 1980:306-321; Matić 1954a; or Nikolić 1965.



iteration of the *ZbNŽO* (Batina et al. 2010), which aided navigation of the collection. I was also supported by the personal guidance and advice of three members of this group throughout my time in the archive. I owe a great deal of gratitude to Drs. Klementina Batina, Luka Šešo, and Jakša Primorac for their help.

For oral narratives and descriptions, I used all published editions of the *ZbNŽO* as well as a number of unpublished materials within the Academy's archive. As mentioned above, oral narratives were less abundantly collected in the 19<sup>th</sup> century and proved less easily obtained in the archives. Because of this, I was forced to extend my analysis to a range of published studies (Dučić 1931; Vrčević 1876; and others) which often lacked critical data, and for which no archived originals could be located for analysis. For these collections I kept as my most basic criteria that the materials were collected within my temporal focus and that at least location of collection was noted.<sup>90</sup>

### The Process of Song and Tale Analysis

The first step of this research was to scan through the published collections for all mention of the *vila*. The materials published in the *ZbNŽO* are organized by topic following Radić's guide, so that *vile* are mostly found in sections regarding folklore and belief. For the song collections, it is rare to have a '*vila* songs' section and the MSs had to be explored carefully but efficiently in their entirety to find songs that include the *vila*. All of these songs and oral narratives were then entered into an extensive database which

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<sup>90</sup> This, however, does not apply to riddles which are drawn from Vuk's *Serbian Folk Tales and Riddles* (*Srpske narodne pripovijetke i zagonetke*), the only source I could find with *vila* riddles. For the study, I use the 1897 edition which combines all the material from his three previous publications.

noted crucial information: collection, page number, song or tale number, title, singer or teller name, collector, region of collection, information about the singer/teller, changes to material at editing stage, classification of song or tale genre by collector/singer/teller and by editors, my own genre classification of material, number of verse lines (for songs) and an annotated description of the events that occur in the tale or song. After this, the chart listed *vila*-specific data. The simple data here included such things as: which characters she is connected with in the song, her listed habitat, whether her actions are positive, negative or neutral towards the characters, and more specific questions, such as whether the *vila* flies or has wings. The most important data in this section is my attribution of *vila*-motifs within the songs and tales. This category demanded a regular process of refinement, re-evaluation, and redefinition to determine which materials represented the true building blocks of her tradition given how fluidly such motifs shift within and across oral lore.

Once all the materials from the published sources had been fully analyzed, I then extended the study into the MSs in the archive. For the oral narrative materials derived from MSs contributed to the *ZbNŽO*, I used the catalogue to identify a number of MSs that were listed as including section XI.3 (What Kind of Powers do Some People Have?) and 4 (Human-like Creatures)<sup>91</sup> and which were drawn from an array of various collectors (men and women, Christians and Muslims, low- and high-class, various professions, etc.) and various regions, or were noted as having ethnographic or biographic material on

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<sup>91</sup> In reference to Radić's guide most material for supernatural beings are found in section XI. 'Beliefs' (*Vjervanija*) in subsections 3. 'What Kind of Powers do Some People Have?' (*Kakovu snagu imadu neki ljudi?*) and 4. 'Human-like Creatures' (*Stvorovi kao ljudi*). I would often also search the entire 'Beliefs' section as well as section X. 'Poetry' (*Poezija*) which contains oral traditions. See Radić 1897:65-70.

informants. These choices were aided and augmented by the advice of local scholars<sup>92</sup> based on MSs which they knew to contain more useful material. In total, 46 MSs were analyzed from the *Old Collection (Stara zbirka)*, producing 33 with *vila* material to add to the 16 published sections in the journal. All of the MSs were also studied for information on the individuals who provided materials, although, unfortunately, in this regard the *ZbNŽO* collections are quite lacking. As the MSs were studied, so too were the correspondence materials sent between the collectors and the editors in an effort to glean some information on tale tellers, singers, collectors, as well as any information on collection methods, the general environment that obtained around the endeavour itself, and the connection between the editors and collectors.<sup>93</sup>

Since materials in the *ZbNŽO* and the archive's Old Collection are often presented in long topic pieces that correspond directly to Radić's categories, single citations were often entered into the database in multiple entries based on natural breaks of genre in the prose. That is to say, if a submission by a single collector contains a description of the *vila* followed by a memorate and a topogonic description then that single MS entry became three entries in the database.

For the songs, the published materials in the MH collection acted as a guide for where more *vila* songs might be located and as a means for expanding the repertoire of the singers for whom use of the *vila* in their songs was already documented. Most of the MSs that had *vila* songs published in the MH collections were explored, as well as a

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<sup>92</sup> Most importantly and specifically I am indebted to Dr. Batina for her aid in this exhaustive process.

<sup>93</sup> For more discussion on the collecting enterprise see my forthcoming piece in the *Journal of American Folklore* (Jurić in press).

similar array of MSs from various regions and collectors as per the methods employed with the tale materials. For this portion of the study, I worked through 87 MSs from the *Matica Hrvatska Collection (Zbirka Matice hrvatske)* representing 25,500 pages of handwritten material and 12,200 songs ranging from two to 4,614 lines. These produced a total of 340 narrative songs and 150 lyric songs with *vile*. A separate chart was also created for the 131 songs analyzed that do not contain a *vila*, but mention or use her in abstract, tangential or metaphoric ways.<sup>94</sup> As is apparent from these numbers, the narrative songs are clearly the most well-represented materials in the thesis; this is for a number of reasons.<sup>95</sup> Despite the minor deficit in the lyric songs and the more substantial one in the various oral narratives, there is more than enough data to support the hypotheses and assertions of the thesis. Suggestions for how and whence the material might be enlarged and the study improved will be touched upon in the final chapters. In total my final material numbers for unique oral traditions, including published and unpublished materials, amounted to 305 narrative songs, 147 lyric songs, 42 descriptions, 10 myths, 24 legends, 63 fabulates, 46 memorates, 32 folktales, 10 ritual tales, 2 rituals, 18 topogonic descriptions, 9 riddles, 1 incantation or charm, and 3 sets of proverbs attributed to *vile* though not including them.

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<sup>94</sup> See ‘Non-Vile, Metaphors and Traditional Reflexive Uses’ in Chpt. 2.

<sup>95</sup> As mentioned above, thanks to Vuk’s influence and outside interest, epic (narrative) songs are often over-represented in folklore collections as compared to other materials. There is also the possibility that the *vila* herself is simply more often used in narrative songs than in lyric songs, although some influence can surely be attributed to the line I draw between lyric and narrative, which is more conservative than others. Many of the songs I have here designated narrative, might be considered ballads, lyric or ‘women’s’ songs by others. The *vila*’s under-representation in the oral narratives and other genres has been addressed above.

The very large table thus produced was then duplicated in great number and re-organized to divide materials by genre within which data were analyzed and grouped based on *vila* motifs, regions of collection, and into tables representing specific singers and tellers.<sup>96</sup> I was thus able to explore the distribution of motifs, regional variants and tropes in tale-telling and singing styles regarding the use of the *vila*, as well as personal styles, quirks, novel innovations or individual views regarding depictions of the *vila*.

### On Analysis of Motifs and Terminology

Regarding the finer analysis of oral traditions, I follow Parry in using ‘Formula’ as “a group of words which is regularly employed under the same metrical conditions to express a given essential idea” (Parry, M. 1971:272) and use Lord’s ‘Theme’ which he defined as “a subject unit, a group of ideas, regularly employed by a singer, not merely in any given poem, but in the poetry as a whole” (Lord 1938:410) and again, later, as “a recurrent element of narration or description in traditional poetry. It is not restricted, as is the formula, by metrical considerations” (Lord 1951:73). I follow Foley (1995:2) and Bynum (1978:65) in using Lord’s term ‘Multiform’ to discuss variation among separate singings/recitations/tellings of various formulae, themes, and story-patterns (Lord’s structural integers of oral traditions) rather than Lord’s conflicting use of multiform in place of the common folklore term ‘variant’ (2000:101), due to its literary bias of implying that an original text exists to vary from. For my system, ‘Variants’ are the

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<sup>96</sup> All singers who had more than three songs using the *vila* in the collection were analyzed. Sadly, as mentioned above, the tale tellers are seldom noted, and those names that are recorded do not have enough tales to be able to analyze in this manner.

differing motifs ascribed to a certain story-pattern, plot, song or tale (for instance, the many ways in which a song about the wedding of Marko Kraljević can be told), while multiforms are the variations within particular motifs/themes/formulae, that is, the divergences in structural integers in the telling of a single variant or motival tradition.

I have chosen to employ a structural categorization system, based on Parry and Lord's work, but have not used any ready-made system of content categorization for these data, such as the Aarne-Thompson-Uther Motif and Tale index. My aim has been to first study the tradition on its own merits and to understand the movement of story-patterns, by trying to isolate the emic flows of traditional fabulation in its natural contexts. I approach the material here with an eye to the interface between tradition and artistic expression and with a cultural and historical understanding of the contexts of the material rather than a disengaged, ready-made system of categorization (or one based on another tradition) into which the materials will be fit as appropriately as that system can allow. That said, I am not ignorant of the merits of the ATU Index, or its use to other scholars. As a comparativist's project it represents a secondary stage in my schema that should follow from a nominal, culturally and temporally specific analysis in a survey study. As such, ATU Index numbers are discussed in this work, predominantly in the section on oral narratives, and a list of pertinent Motifs and Tale Types is included in Appendix 4 at the end of the thesis.

It is crucial to understand that tales and motifs in oral lore are living and changing materials—both uniquely presented from the mouths of different tellers and malleable over time, but also conservative and resistant to such change. I do, however, adopt the

common folkloristic term ‘motif’ in my thesis, but for a different purpose. Here, the term motif will less designate Thompson’s use as “simple incidents having a single point” (Thompson 1946:439), although many of the motifs presented here will be simple incidences. Rather, my use of motif will map to a *behavioural* matrix of the *vila* as she is employed in oral traditions. Motifs here, quite simply describe the patterned *behaviour* that the *vila* exhibits in oral traditions.<sup>97</sup> Many have noted the trouble with many of Thompson’s motifs serving also as single narratives—that is the overlap of the ATU Tale index with its Motif index (Dundes 1997:197; Thompson 1946:439). Because of this, I have introduced the terms ‘Dependent’ and ‘Independent’ motifs to account for, respectively, those actions of the *vila* which govern the nature of the song or tale, and those that can be freely inserted into any song or tale.<sup>98</sup> I also use the term ‘Episode’ to account for the smaller events that make up the plot of more elaborate motifs. This term roughly corresponds to Lord’s use of the word ‘theme,’ but on a smaller scale and without the assumption that these are recurrent and codified pieces of the singer or teller’s repertoire and style.

In this manner the attribution of motifs to the depiction of the *vila* is a process that grows more concise as more material is analyzed and a broader understanding of motifs,

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<sup>97</sup> Though I am not the first to play fast and loose with the term motif, my use of this term might be a reasonable point of contention for some scholars. Uther (2004:10) and many others have commented on the intrinsic need for the conception of ‘motif’ to remain a fluid category and it is simply too useful a term to abandon. I have opted to slightly abuse it in place of inventing yet another neologism for the heap that modern scholarship seems intent on producing. By using motif more freely, I am able to engage with the more specific system of analysis constructed by Parry, Lord, et al.

<sup>98</sup> Zimmerman has hinted at a similar analytical lens (1986:61-3).

story-patterns and multiforms comes to light.<sup>99</sup> As extensive an amount of material as this study was able to amass, the understanding of the full use of the *vila* is still incomplete, and a widening of the scope would further cement the assertions presented here. My own attribution of motifs was constantly challenged and re-worked at various steps of this analysis by the creative imagination of the singers and tale tellers. The titles I have chosen to give these motifs are quite arbitrary and other options could certainly be offered. What is most important is the tradition contained in the motif as well as the multiforms that are presented (and attempted) by singers and tellers and are culturally accepted by audiences of such songs and tales as suitable uses of the *vila*.

Thus, the bulk of this thesis is concerned with analysis of motifs and descriptions. By viewing the *vila* with a generic lens and through her motifs, we come closer to an emic view of the traditions that are ascribed to her and constitute her figure. By isolating dependent from independent motifs we can better understand the ways that the *vila* engaged with the larger traditions of songs and tales. By studying multiforms of a single motif we can better recognize the synchronic field of the tradition itself: which traditions are core understanding<sup>100</sup> of the *vila* and which are elaborations or older retentions of

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<sup>99</sup> As Bynum notes, the structure of repetitive complementarity in oral traditions means that patterns and motifs are often never completely represented in a single telling of a fable but rather that their complete meaning only becomes clear over multiple tellings as the multiforms take their place on a spectrum of nominal change. This means that to tease out a true understanding of the traditions requires strong acquaintance with a large amount of material, and also means that those traditions must be understood as dynamic and shifting traditions, ever contingent on the analytical engagement of the fabulators. The traditions are not a single telling of a motif or tale but all of their tellings in an emic context (1978:70, 103-104).

<sup>100</sup> It is crucial to remember that a 'core' motif, tradition, song or aspect need not necessarily represent the oldest. Though the vast majority of such traditions will have spread widely because of time-depth, some tradition can spread quite quickly simply on grounds of mass popularity or other sundry reasons. This incorrect supposition of the Historical-Geographic school was taken to task long ago by Taylor (1959) and finds further support in theories like Colarusso's (1998). This is why I suggest that a complete analysis



unique forms.<sup>101</sup> And by localising regional monopoly on a motif we can suggest that the motif is a regional variant. The motifs here presented are also sorted as ‘regular’ and ‘irregular’ motifs—that is, motifs for which I have found variants and multiforms as opposed to a set of motival *hapax legomena* for which I have not. The category of irregular motifs is not a definitive category and must be understood as a tentative analysis based on the material sample. As more data is drawn into consideration there is more opportunity for irregular motifs to prove themselves to be regular motifs with the discovery of other multiforms. Even if no other multiforms have ever been collected, it may be that the irregular motif is more widespread and that the simple vagaries of history have kept it from our knowledge.<sup>102</sup> This is the unavoidable effect of working with historical materials and, as long as this aspect of the analysis is understood as tentative in this manner, I feel it is safe to suggest the division, if only to illuminate those motifs that are integral and common to the tradition. All irregular motifs are presented here and all carry the equal possibility of one day being proven regular should the data set expand.

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would be multi-generational. Core items which arise again in prior centuries will tell their story more clearly. I would also suggest that referential and ironic uses of traditions might be another indicator of time-depth (see ‘Tradition-Reflexive Uses’ in Chpt. 2).

<sup>101</sup> When encountering *hapax legomena*, there is no certain method to differentiate a novel use of the *vila* by a singer or tale teller from an ancient retention of the *vila* that has fallen into disuse. Both could just as easily be relegated to a single region (either the singer’s version is picked up by local singers or the ancient retention is localised), and without being able to question the singers or tellers any supposition to the exact provenience will be subjective. There are, however, some hints that help make reasonable claims a possibility. Colarusso’s (1998) insights into ancient retentions as disjointed and somehow marked by language, style or oddity within the plot is often borne out in the data, while some aspects of biography, repertoire and narrative analysis can aid in linking novel uses to particular singers and tellers. These concepts will be explored further in the analysis.

<sup>102</sup> This not only includes materials that never reached the ears and pen of a collector, but also those that were heard and never written down. Particularly notable here are the comments by many collectors in their correspondences that they chose not to include a certain song or tale because they were aware that another version had already been published (K.N. 1886; Mirković 1859:5; Odić 1886:1; Primorac n.d.; Šestić 1887:2).

### On Regional Analysis

The distribution of the materials in my sample is an integral aspect of the data and serves a crucial role in mapping the relative distribution or isolation of aspects of the *vila*. Of course, this data, too, must be taken with the caveat that the entire picture depends on those materials that were collected and used in the study. With this data, one can say where a song was sung or a tale was told, but cannot say definitively where it was not. To analyze the regional distribution of the materials, songs and tales were plotted independently on simple regional maps and then grouped by clusters of distribution. Those clusters were encircled and provided a number that was entered into the main database so that regions could be isolated to explore motifs and traits by distribution. For singers who were known to have travelled or learned their songs from another singer from another region, the tales and songs were assigned both numbers as the material can be presumed to be known and told in both areas. For the one or two singers who had very migratory biographies, I assigned the region where they most likely learned the art of singing (as they would have learned many of their songs in formative years<sup>103</sup>), as well as the region where the songs and tales were collected (if the collectors found them there, then it can be presumed that they were known to sing them in the region). Much has often been made of the transitory nature of singers (Koljević 1980:26-7), but many of these assumptions are built on Vuk's collection that was gathered in a time of large political upheaval (299, 318), or by accounting for the famous, but relatively rarer mendicant singers like Filip Višnjić (Stefanović Karadžić 1833:xii). Singing and telling are family

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<sup>103</sup> See Lord 2000:13-29 for more on how, when and from whom singers learn their art.

traditions passed-down, for the most part, within family groups and I have found that the biographies of most singers and tellers reflect very minor and localised movement, if at all. Of course, there is always the possibility that some of these data are skewed and the picture here presented is imperfect. There are certainly singers who would travel great lengths to sing for others and to hear their songs (Bynum 1979:4), but the mapping presents as clear a picture as can be surmised from the data, and some generalizations must be hazarded if we are to say anything at all.

While my regional allotments were based on the clustered distribution of songs and tales, in analysis I have also taken into consideration traditional regions and long-standing geographical borders, which are most often better indicators of regional allotment than those clusters of collected material. The effort to map specific zones is only a product of scientific enquiry to affix location onto songs and tales and test for regional equivalencies between multiforms. Thus songs that clustered in a region around the cities of Slavonski Brod and Požega belonged to two unique regional groupings. These groups were analyzed to determine whether any regional proclivities were evident. However, in lieu of marked idiosyncrasies that were worth considering, most discussion of songs from these two locations will rely on their very close proximity to one another as well as their location within the traditional area of Slavonia and in or near the historical military frontier (*vojna krajina*) as a borderland between the Austro-Hungarian and Ottoman-controlled regions of the Balkans (see Figures 3 and 4 in Appendix 5).

### A Note on Limitations

I have so far hinted at the limitations of my collecting efforts and my ability to draw varying amounts of material for different genres of oral lore, as well as the efforts that I have made to alleviate some of those problems. Chapter 5 of the thesis will also suggest certain avenues that are viable for use in expanding this data set and continuing the work. Beyond this, there are limitations on the materials themselves and on my analysis.

I have tried to use original MSs whenever possible to remove the stylistic changes made by editors, but there is no way of knowing whether the original collectors made any intentional or unintentional changes to the songs while recording them or later re-writing them in clearer form for submission. The difficulties of recording oral traditions by written transcription have been well noted by collectors of the past as well as the ways that the natural flows of oral traditional performance are altered by collection events (Lord 2000:124-128).<sup>104</sup> There is no way of knowing if any of these singers and tellers were able to present their materials in their normal manner and form and, even if they did, whether the collector was able to note the materials at a pace amenable to the tempo of the performance.<sup>105</sup> Thus, none of these materials can be considered perfect representations of natural performance at those times. But they are as close as we can come to such data.

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<sup>104</sup> See particularly Vuk's personal account of recording songs from Starac (old man) Milija, a singer who could not recite but only sing his songs (Wilson 1970:169).

<sup>105</sup> Within the MSs see Ciganović discussing the trouble of coaxing singers, recording songs sung in *kolo* (1885a) and the remunerations required for singers to overcome their "innate shyness" in front of "any kind of intelligent individual" (1885b:2). See also Ciganović and Lukić describing the numerous ways they eavesdropped on singers to collect their songs (Ciganović 1884:155; Lukić 1890-1955:8-13).

As for my own personal limitations, beyond the data sets available to me, my research has involved the reading of several thousands of pages of handwritten MSs and scanning for the word ‘*vila*’ with some celerity. Most of these documents are more than 100 years old, written in idiosyncratic hands of varying clarity and legibility, and many use non-standard and shifting orthographies. If perchance I have missed a song or note or made some minor error in this work, I hope that the diligent and careful reader will be forgiving. Some of the conclusions that I will draw in this work will also require some speculation and interpretation, it will be up to my readers to decide whether these conclusions are convincing or spurious.

#### A Note on Translations and Citation

I have taken various approaches to translation of materials in this text. Very short passages (single words or phrases) translated within the discussion are most often translated as literally as possible to convey clear meaning. Longer passages drawn from songs have also been translated as literally as possible to provide the clearest understanding of the content of the song, rather than express any of the poetry or style. I have offered a small sample of song translations in the thesis’s Supplement which conform to the meter and style of the pieces and attempt to balance the accuracy of verses with representations of the stylistic features that define the traditions. All song passages have been paired on the page with their originals (including original orthographic practices) so that those familiar with the language can also use the original text for various purposes. Oral narratives and informant descriptions have seen more movement

away from literal translation to represent stylistic features, but even for these, I have striven to keep them as accurate as possible. Changes have only been made to amend grammar and syntax which cannot translate into English, and to clarify certain aspects. Despite this, I have tried to keep the original tone of these pieces which were printed in village dialects and in non-standard language. Although a dialect cannot be easily replicated in translation (I deplore translations which seek to use a rural English dialect in lieu of another language's), I have tried to retain the careful balance of high and low language. Effectively, in the originals, all tales and quotes are presented in rural tones, while descriptive passages are presented in literary language, or for many peasant collectors, strained airs of literary standard undermined by dialectical habits. I have tried to use some English words and phrases from the same time-period, and, in some instances, have left some of the more curious grammatical formations in the translation, in hopes that they will read almost as an imaginary English dialect. For informant descriptions, I have made an effort to differentiate the grammar and syntax of the collector from that of the informant when such divisions were clear in the originals. Thus, informant comments, in translation, retain their rural diction and include contractions, run-on sentences and other colloquial markers found in the originals to better reflect reported speech. On the contrary, those passages that clearly belong to the collectors reflect their general tone too. Depending on the collector, this might range from highly inflected dialect masked by a feigned literary tone, to precise and academic writing. Beyond these stylistic considerations, many of the passages taken from the *ZbNŽO* include comments in parentheses. Some of these stem from the collectors and are written

into the original MSs, while others were added in print by the editors. I have left these passages in common parentheses ‘( )’ and use square brackets ‘[ ]’ when adding my own comments. Unless noted, all translations are my own.

Songs and tales in this thesis are variously cited by page number (Author date:pg#) or by song/tale number (Author date.##). This system is used to facilitate ease of cross-referencing with other publications and with searches in original MSs. Though there are mixed examples, generally oral narratives take a page number and songs a song number. Multiple citations for both examples are separated by a comma (Author date:2, 15), (Author date.2, 4, 7). Verse lines are cited with a lower-case l. (line) or ll. (lines): (Author date.3 ll. 45-7). Song or tale numbers in citations which lack author and date will still retain their point (.4).

### This Thesis

This thesis is structured in a specific manner to address the vast amounts of data used for the study and the various aims of the text. The main text of the thesis is focused almost exclusively on the data itself and outlining the distribution of traditions, motival patterns, and the particular approaches to the motifs that various fabulators employ. The broad text serves as a simple reference work of motifs and transmission patterns. This data is then further complimented by and put into dialogue with a broad range of footnotes which use the core data as springboards into tangential topics about the biographies of important singers and tale tellers, explanatory context for broader cultural phenomena that arise in the oral traditions, further explication of minor details in the

tradition, and comparative mythological resonances which suggest directions for further study that are revealed through the data. In this way, the footnotes are not exclusively pedantic clarifications and special interest topics aimed at a particular group of scholars (although some are indeed this), but also active participants in the discussion.

The chapters of the thesis are broken into generic divisions. Chapter 1 presents an overview of informant descriptions of the *vila*. Materials in this chapter are outlined in brief to give a general overview of the *vila* and to introduce how common people imagined the *vila*. These materials need not be explored in depth as they mostly consist of brief descriptions of the material depicted in full in the proceeding chapters. Chapter 2, the longest chapter, explores the *vila*'s deployment in traditional songs, starting with narrative songs and then moving into lyric songs. The chapter concludes with some discussion of abstract and metaphorical uses of the *vila* in songs. Chapter 3 explores the *vila* in oral narratives (myths, legends, fabulates, memorates, folktales, and ritual tales) and reflects upon how this depiction differs from her use in songs. Chapter 4 analyzes the motifs found in a much smaller range of minor traditional lore—sayings and expressions, riddles, proverbs and charms. Chapter 5 offers a short critical analysis regarding a few of the larger issues explored through the bulk of the thesis, including generic uses of the *vila* and the tensions that exist between traditional dictates and artistic innovation. This chapter also suggests how the study might be further bolstered and the service to which the work can be put. The thesis then concludes with some useful appendices, maps and a small supplement of selected song translations.



## Chapter 1: The *Vila* in Informant Descriptions

The description category is an important one, as it functions as a competent introduction to the *vila* from a wide range of informants. Tale tellers and singers follow a traditional model within their genres—what I have termed here registers of the *vila*—that is dictated largely by the tradition itself as passed down through generations. Many of these strictures most certainly have ancient precedent and reveal much about the *vila*, but they are the purview of a select few who engage in those art forms. While it is likely that many of the informants who provided descriptions of the *vila* to collectors were fabulators skilled in song and tale telling, the description category is an egalitarian one in which other *believers* and commentators might be able to present their views. Furthermore, the descriptions reveal what informants found most important, notable or descriptive about the *vila* and their knowledge of her. It should be noted, however, that the way in which the collectors of this material presented *vila* descriptions often acts to obscure the informants. Most are not mentioned by name and no mention is made of how many informants contributed or if their responses were collated. The descriptions are often written in a single prose account that obfuscates just what material was provided by informants and what comments, if any, came from the collectors themselves. Some accounts, however, do make this distinction clear, if only in subtle uses of language. This is also not to suggest that the opinions of the collectors are not valuable. Many collectors lived in or near villages and a number belonged to the peasant classes whence these materials derived.

Because many of the motifs described in this material will surface again and in their full breadth and scope of multiformity in the ensuing sections, most analysis here will be kept to a minimum. This section, more than anything else, acts as an introduction to the *vila* herself, and to her analysis in this thesis.

### Regular Motifs

Of 42 collected descriptions of the *vila*, 21 note her exceptional beauty; she is described as a beautiful woman (10% of descriptions) or, more often, as a most beautiful girl (50%). Her youthful countenance is given finite description by two informants who suggested a human age equivalent for her—the idyllic, “A *vila* is a 16-year-old girl...” (Novaković 1903-4:1040) and the slightly more troubling response that Luka Lukić collected from an unnamed respondent in Klakar, “...they are exceptionally beautiful, like a 12-year-old girl” (1911-2:4). Her ethereal beauty is compared to that of angels (Bartulin 1898:269), such that the collector Mate Zorić suggested that the *vila* is, after God and priests, *the* model-being to peasants (1896:230). Another of Lukić’s informants, Luca Pitlović, who claimed to have personally seen *vile*, told him that “she couldn’t get enough of looking upon them, how beautiful they were and dressed in white” (1911-2:4). The *vile* are almost always described as dressed in white garments (29%), the fabric of which is sometimes described as unique in nature.

*Vile are women, beautiful as angels, dressed in one white, thin outfit.*  
(Bartulin 1898:269)

*Vile are just maidens, the most beautiful at that, always dressed in white.* (O. Nedić 1898-1902:252)

*...vile are extremely beautiful maidens dressed in some sort of shining clothing, which is hard to look upon... (Ardalić 1917:302)*

Despite the common consensus, there existed other informants (5%) who suggested that *vile* wear no clothes at all (Hovorka 1897-8:2; Kotarski 1918:51). Descriptions of *vila* beauty are completed by reports of their exceptionally long hair, variously described as black (Novaković 1903-4:1040; Praidic 1898:20) or, more commonly, golden (Filakovac 1905:144; Ptašinski 1890-9:209; Žuljić 1904-11:554), and as braided (Filakovac 1905:144; Ivanišević 1905:254; Žuljić 1904-11:554) or unbraided (Bartulin 1898:269; Ivanišević 1905:254; Žuljić 1904-11:554), but always noted as worn let-down (29%).<sup>1</sup>

*They have long hair which they don't braid like women do now... they let it down, strewn about them below their shoulders... (Bartulin 1898:269)*

*...their braids are like gold and run along their backs nearly down to their legs. (Filakovac 1905:144)*

*...they have thick, unbraided hair all the way down to the ground, while some braid their hair in long braids which fall below their shoulders. (Ivanišević 1905:254)*

Despite this unparalleled beauty, the *vile* are consistently described as marred by a singular physical deformity—their bestial legs. *Vile* are said to have hooved feet (24%), their legs variously described as those of an ass (Ivanišević 1905:254; Nuić 1897-8:171; Petković 1899-1904:5; Zovko 1901:145), a goat (Bosnić 1911:693; Praidic 1898:20; Zorić 1897:269), a mule (Ardalić 1917:302), an ox (Bartulin 1898:269), or a horse (Banović 1918:194, 197) and most often said to shift from human to beast at the knees.

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<sup>1</sup> Long, unbraided and un-fastened hair is, of course, a powerful symbol for sexual potency, youth, vitality and reproductive capacity (Leach 1958), all concepts that are deeply ingrained in the tradition of the *vila* and other beings like her (Barber 1997).

They are said to be ashamed of these legs, and accounts from Dalmatia and Herzegovina suggest that to look or comment upon them is dangerous (7%).

*If someone catches sight of vile, or stops to talk with them, or if they ask him what he sees, he must never say that they have hooves, or else they might dig out that man's eyes. (Banović 1918:197)*

This physical dichotomy and combination of beautiful and bestial reflects an equally bipolar temperament that is integral to depictions of the *vila* and an overarching theme that shall regularly surface below in descriptions of her behaviour.

*Vile* are said to be invisible or else to hide themselves from view, unless they choose to reveal themselves to humans (12%) (Filakovac 1905:144; Lukić 1911-2:3, 4; Praidic 1898:20; Zorić 1896:230; Zovko 1901:145). They are also said to have wings and to fly (10%).

*They have wings and can fly whither they please. (Ivanišević 1905:255)*

*When they leave you don't see them walking, it's more like they fly about the ground, or they slip away like a shadow or shade. (Filakovac 1905:144)*

*They are thin about the waist and they're light as feathers, they can even fly through the air like a bird. (Bartulin 1898:269)*

Their flight provides them the ability to travel great distances quickly and in some accounts descriptions of this travel borders on something akin to teleportation.

*She can disappear from one place and reappear in another a great distance away in the blink of an eye. (Zorić 1897:269)*

*Whither you wish, they can go, not only they, but also those people and horses to whom they wish to give such power. (Žuljić 1904-11:555)*

Within the definitions, *vile* are said to reside in a number of natural locations.<sup>2</sup>

**Table 1 Description Locations by Number of Occurrence**

Habitat			Habitat		
Cave	<i>Pećina</i>	8	Bosket (Grove)	<i>Boška</i>	1
	<i>Špiljan, špiljetina</i>	2	Meadow	<i>Livada</i>	1
Mountain (High) <sup>3</sup>	<i>Planina</i>	6	Cloud	<i>Oblak</i>	1
(Low) <sup>4</sup>	<i>Gora</i>	5	In the Air	<i>U Zraku</i>	1
Water	<i>Voda</i>	6	Sea	<i>More</i>	1
Forest <sup>5</sup>	<i>Šuma</i>	4	Earth	<i>Zemlje</i>	1
Cliff	<i>Stina</i>	2	Fire	<i>Oganj</i>	1
	<i>Pola</i> <sup>6</sup>	1	Sun	<i>Sunce</i>	1
Chasm	<i>Jama</i>	1	Midden	<i>Smetlišće</i>	1
	<i>Ponor</i>	1	Well	<i>Bunar</i>	1
Hill	<i>Brdo</i>	2	Washing area	<i>Kupalo</i>	1
Field	<i>Polje</i>	2	Underground holes	<i>Rupe pod Zemljom</i>	1
Ash heap <sup>7</sup>	<i>Pepelinca</i>	1	India <sup>8</sup>	<i>Indija</i>	1

The gregarious *vile* are noted particularly for their mellifluous singing (10%) (Ardalić 1917:303; Novaković 1903-4:1040; Praidic 1898:20; Voćinkić 1898:26) and for their propensity to gather in groups to dance the *kolo* (lit. wheel) circle dance (44%), often to music played by humans or some kind of fantastic piper (5%). Some collectors

<sup>2</sup> In these numbers I include those accounts that supply adjectival epithets of the *vila* rather than explicitly naming locations (i.e. *šumska vila* – forest *vila*, rather than explicitly stating ‘*vile* live in the forest [*šuma*]’). For the sake of pedantry, the adjectives in this final count include two *vile* listed as *vodena* (water), and one each of the following rarer suggestions: *zemaljske* (earth), *ognjene* (fire), *šumske* (forest), *sunčane* (sun), *poljske* (field), and *gorske* (low mountains).

<sup>3</sup> The BCMS languages have two words for mountains, *planina* for high and craggy, rocky, or snow-capped mountains and *gora* for smaller mountains that are usually tree-covered and green. The words *planina*, *gora*, *brdo*, *brijeg*, *brežuljak*, in that order, denote a diminishing gradation from large mountains to small hills. The best I can do to capture this in English is to use the terms high and low mountains when such differentiation is needed.

<sup>4</sup> With one account specifically listing that *vile* live in low mountains beside water (Horvat 1896:231).

<sup>5</sup> With one account specifying that they live near pools in forests (Ptašinski 1890-9:210), and another stating that they are seen on the edge of forests (*na okraju šume*) (Filakovac 1905:144).

<sup>6</sup> Here specifically in red cliffs (Banović 1918:194).

<sup>7</sup> A second MS also cites the ash heap as the feeding area of *vračevi* (warlocks or folk-healers) who are described in connection with *vile* (Lovretić 1902:122).

<sup>8</sup> Like Egypt, England, Malta and Cyprus, India (*Indija*, *Indija*) is often mentioned in the tradition to serve as a distant and fabulous land. Due to the singers’ general lack of knowledge about these regions, they are often referred to as cities, ill-described, and have various titles ascribed to their leaders (cf. Matić 1954b).

suggested, however, that their singing is too beautiful to be listened to or is unintelligible to humans (7%) (Ivanišević 1905:254; Voćinkić 1898:26; Zuljić 1904-11:554).

*Some people say that they have seen vile and their kolo, while others have heard them singing. They say that they have a fine voice and beautiful melodies, just that their words are unintelligible. (Voćinkić 1898:26)*

*...when they sing, it is so beautiful one cannot listen to it.<sup>9</sup> (Ivanišević 1905:254)*

When they dance at night in meadows or farmer's fields they leave circles of trampled grass<sup>10</sup> called a 'vila's kolo' (*vilinsko kolo*),<sup>11</sup> 'vila's playground' (*vilinska igrališta*, *vilinska igrište*) or sometimes a 'vila's threshing-floor' (*vilinsko guvno/gumno*) (5%).

*In meadows and farmer's fields circular tracks made by hooves are found. Vile danced there. (Ivanišević 1905:255)*

*The next day their vila playgrounds are visible, especially on a yet uncut meadow—a large circle of trampled grass can be seen and in its center an impressed spot where the piper stood. Around the ring on the grass a white foam can be seen, which people say is the vile's spit [vilovska pljuvanka]. There's also some kind of rusty, soft mucus, which the people say is the vila's phlegm [bljuvotina vilovska]. (Filakovac 1905:144-145)*

Informants agree that *vile* are also prone to leisurely combing their hair (7%) either after a rainfall when the weather clears (Ardalić 1917:303; Petković 1899-1904:5) or as they sit among Bolle's poplars (BCMS *jablan*, *Populus alba* 'Pyramidalis') (Sajvert-Pokupska 1897-1905:555). They are also said to be drawn to fires (5%)

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<sup>9</sup> This is, perhaps a trait linking the songs of *vile* to the dangerous music of beings like Greek Sirens (Odyssey Book XII ll. 37-233). There are other notable connections between sirens and *vile*: In their earliest depictions sirens were imagined as bird-women and Pliny the Elder, in his Natural History, noted that a certain Dinon insisted that Sirens live in India (Book X.LXX)! See also, in a Scandinavian context, the enticing song of the elves of *Elvehøj* (DGF 46).

<sup>10</sup> Comparable to English 'Fairy/Elf Rings/Circles'; German *Hexenringe*; French *Ronds de Sorciers*, Scandinavian *Elfdans*, etc. See Keightley 1850:81; Menefee 1985:8; Morgan 1995:30.

<sup>11</sup> More rarely, one finds the term '*vrzino kolo*', the first term based on the reflexive verb *vrgnuti se* (to turn/throw oneself around, to turn around, to turn back/return, to twist or wind).

*It's stablehands who see them most often, when they pasture their horses by night, especially when a large fire is burning, then the vile come to warm themselves... (Praidic 1898:20)*

*Vile* are said to give birth just as human women do (7%) and to baptize their children. All three descriptions that suggest this also state clearly that *vile* can only give birth to female progeny.

*Vile don't have male children, only female: from a vila is born a vila. (Ivanišević 1905:255)*

*However, they were never able to give [men who consort with them] male children; since, if they were able to give birth to males, the vile would entice the whole world and take it over. (Zuljić 1904-11:554-5)<sup>12</sup>*

In Dalmatia, both in Poljica and farther north in the hinterland area of Bukovica, *vile* are said to sustain themselves on *nika* or *nijekovi*, that is, on 'denials.'

*Vile can take money out of a bag, too. Some people can never save any money because the vile take it all away. And those who deny having any but have money (when someone comes to them asking to borrow money, and despite having it they say that they do not), then they take their abundance away. They call that 'denials.' Wednesdays and Fridays vile go out to collect denials. That's why, if you ask someone, they'll never tell you that they don't have it, rather, that they do, but that they have to give it to others; that it's not even going to be enough for them after they've settled their debts. Or else they say that they can't give any—some, say they dare not because of their wife, some because of their son, some because of their brother. And they guard their denials like a man guards himself during a thunderstorm. (Ardalić 1917:305-6)*

*Vila* descriptions commonly convey the sentiment that *vile* are products of an ideal past that no longer obtains. Accounts commonly mention that *vile* left humanity at a certain juncture (26%) to live in mountains and deep forests (Ivanišević 1905:255) in the

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<sup>12</sup> This stands in contrast to many common suggestions that the greatest heroes were born of *vile* (see Chpts. 2 and 3 below)

ocean (Bartulin 1898:270-1), or simply hid themselves from humans. The cause of their exodus is regularly attributed to the loud noises that humans make. *Vile* are said to have left when churches got bells (Hovorka 1897-8:2), shepherds began to blow on horns incessantly (Korenić 1896:144), coachmen began to crack whips (Horvat 1896:231), people began to beat drums (Kotarski 1918:51), or when the contrabass and clarinet (which they could not stand) supplanted their beloved *gusle* among the folk (Lang 1914:138). Other explanations for their leaving included the concerted effort of priests and the Pope to chase them away (Ivanišević 1905:255; Zorić 1897:270), or because humans made the world foul when they began to lie, betray, blaspheme and sin (Bartulin 1898:270-1; Praidic 1898:20; Sajvert-Pokupska 1897-1905:555).

*You don't see vile anymore, they say because the saintly father, the Pope, damned them, seeing as how young Christians act too licentiously and sinfully with vile, because they tempt them. It is said that vile are even today in the mountains and water...* (Ivanišević 1905:255)

One collector, Nikola Praidic, recounted the explanation he received from an informant in the village of Jukinac for the disappearance of the *vile*.

*'That's how it once was,' one old woman said to me, 'but now they're not around anymore because you young people act like you're wiser than your elders.'* (Praidic 1898:20)

In their interactions with humans, *vile* serve both positive and negative roles within descriptive accounts. In their positive roles they are beneficent aides to humans, bequeathing knowledge, wealth and assistance to them, and bounty and health to their crops. *Vile* are said only to have dealings with honest and good people (10%) and to do good deeds for those people of whom they are fond (22%).



*They are the best and most noble maidens, whose only purpose is to help the folk... I have never heard among the folk that vile did any evil to any man. The folk love them and only those who are completely without sin may see them. (Mikac 1934:196)*

*...only those who are clean of soul and body may come to them...*  
(Kotarski 1918:51)

*[The folk] hold that they have some power and can help them in times of need, and that belief remains even from antiquity. (Rubić 1899:1)*

*By night, they say, vile would come to good and God-fearing people, to their homes, gardens or fields and help them to finish many of the tasks which they had not accomplished. They would gladly come to good widowers who were left with young children. The vile would look after his children, wash them, brush their hair and get them ready as their mother would have. More often the vile would take fruits or vegetables from someone's field. If the people are not angry about that, if they did not curse them, but rather offered good will, then the vile would leave that home, garden, field, or wherever they had been, greatly blessed. (Lang 1914:136-7)*

Indeed, many informants agreed that having *vile* around meant luck and bounty for a region (12%).

*While vile were walking the earth, there were immense harvests; there was all sorts of luck in the field. (Ivanišević 1905:255)*

Collectors also relate that *vile* give great wealth to those of whom they are fond (7%).

*Vile rewarded people's good acts with foliage or coals from trees. And those to whom they had given the gifts, ignorant of the worth of their burden, would toss that coal or foliage. Having arrived home, afterwards, they would find a little remainder that had transformed into gold. (Hovorka 1897-8:3)<sup>13</sup>*

As female beings, *vile* have a particular connection to men in popular belief and informants and collectors suggest a number of these links. *Vile* are said to be helpers to

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<sup>13</sup> This comment, as many others here, is a direct reference to a specific *vila* motif. All of these will be clarified below.

great heroes (10%) of a bygone era such as Smiljanić Ilija, Banović Sekula and particularly to the most popular hero Kraljević Marko.<sup>14</sup>

*Vile are also helpers to some. Everybody knows how Marko and other old heroes called them for aid. (Banović 1918:196)*

*In Istria there are a number of tales about vile especially in songs about Kraljević Marko... (Ptašinski 1890-9:209)<sup>15</sup>*

*Vile* are also said to give men strength and special abilities (7%).

*A man can sing like a vila if the vile give him that power. Vile reveal all sorts of plants and medicinal herbs; they most often give power with herbs. They can give herbs to a man who has given himself over to them. Then, if his children get sick, they will give him herbs and his children will get well. (Žuljić 1904-11:555)*

*Vile are maidens and women and whoever suckles from a vila, there's no one faster or stronger than him. (Murgić 1898:126)*

*Vile* are said to abduct certain men, taking them away to dance with them in their *kolo* (10%), to teach them secret knowledge of herbs and other arcane matters (34%) and also to breed with them (7%).

*Vile are known to pick certain fine men for themselves and then he must do their bidding but they also give him all sorts of powers and luck. Whether it be in wealth, in standing, or in hunt—whatever he may wish. (Sajvert Pokupska 1897-1905:555)*

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<sup>14</sup> Readers unfamiliar with the oral epics might be overwhelmed by the numerous names of heroic personages presented in this thesis. Some names will arise throughout the thesis but most are not important to retain. While some characters have specific story-patterns dedicated to them, many heroes can be substituted by type (with certain songs demanding a young, middle-aged or elderly hero, or specific traits or roles such as a strong-man character or a standard-bearer as companion). Non-specialists should only keep stock of Marko Kraljević, who is the most popular hero of the Christian epics, as well as to note whether the hero mentioned is Christian or Muslim which bears strongly upon the plot and often, though not always, indicates the religion of the singer of the song. For Marko Kraljević see Kostić 2002 or Popović 1988, for many others see Banović 1921, 1928, 1933, 1953; Koljević 1980; Samardžić 1988.

<sup>15</sup> Ptašinski's description section is rare in presenting a number of plot summaries for narrative songs involving Marko Kraljević and *vile*. I have skipped presenting those here as they will be explored in much greater detail in the following chapter with examples drawn from the songs themselves rather than such summaries.

*...they believe that there are people that go with vile, whom the vile take away... that they tell him [secret knowledge] and that he guesses and knows more than others when he returns back from the vile. (Bosnić 1909b:99)*

*And with herbs the vile beguile those people, who are more apt to be drawn to them, so they can sleep with them [that is, have sexual intercourse]. Now one man goes to one vila, but then others [vile] are fond of him, then they attract and entice that lad with herbs, then it happens that that one man is passed around amongst many vile through the night. What that man did that night, it wouldn't harm him, rather [it would be] as if he had slept the whole night: the vile would give him some kind of herbs so that it doesn't harm him. (Žuljić 1904-11:555-6)*

There are special names for those men who are taken into the *vila*'s patronage: they are referred to in various regions as *vilenjak* (pl. *vilenjaci*),<sup>16</sup> *vilovnak*, *vilovnjak*, *vilaš*, *vilenik* (Đorđević 1953:117-9).<sup>17</sup> In some descriptions, in place of *vilenjaci*, informants used other terms for sorcerers and warlocks (*vrač* and *coprnik*), such that it seems any human known to have arcane knowledge of any kind was assumed to be connected with or to have learned his craft from *vile*.

*Vilenjaci go with vile, they tramp about mountains, they fly across the sea, they don't work at all but acquire heaps of gold like pebbles on the coast; the vile give it to them. (Ivanišević 1905:239)*

The allure of fraternizing with *vile* is, however, also dangerous and opinions varied regarding the experience of becoming a *vilenjak*. While many informants stressed the powers and abilities that come with becoming dear to the *vile*, others related the

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<sup>16</sup> This form also has a verb *povileniti se* (to become a *vilenjak*) and noun derivative *povilenjivanje* (the act of becoming a *vilenjak*). In modern parlance *povileniti se* is used idiomatically to mean 'to react explosively'; something akin to English sayings like 'flip one's lid,' 'go nuts,' or 'lose/blow one's cool.'

<sup>17</sup> There is also a name for women who engage with *vile*, *vilenica* although the term is rarely found in oral traditions and has a stronger ritual significance (Čiča 2002a, 2002b). Female witches (*vještice*) and sorceresses (*vračara*, *coprnica*, and other variant names [see Đorđević 1953:5]) are also occasionally connected with *vile*.

process as a frightening and gruelling one which separates a man from society. In many of these accounts a functionalist approach would hint at a peasant explanation for aberrant behaviour in the mentally ill.

*It is not easy to become a vilenjak (povileniti se) and it demands a lot. Nor can everyone become a vilenjak, only those whom the vile, when they are at a gathering, find is worthy. I wouldn't easily agree to become one. No way. When they want someone to become a vilenjak, first they force that man to leave from other people and he will not go anywhere where people recognize him. He wanders alone, all night long, about hills and mountains and always babbles to himself and then replies to himself. He gets very thin and wrung-out like a wet rag. The vile already control him and entice him about with them, and he follows them blindly, without himself knowing whither, nor whom he follows. When that has all been and happened thus, then he first meets one vila, the eldest, and the first of all vile. He swears to her that he will always be friend and companion to the vile. She already knows whether or not what he swears is true. If he will not [join them], then she slaps him on the cheek with her hand and that leaves a mark on him—marking that they will not have him in their kolo; let him return, instead, whence he came. If he will [join them], then she allows him [to enter] and after a decent amount of time he meets another vila. She teaches him all the herbs and which medicines are made from which. After that he meets a third [vila] after an equally long amount of time. That one teaches him how different medicines are made and to whom he may and may not administer them. After that, to finish everything, they come to a large vila kolo, with all the vile in attendance. They all meet him and accept him and talk with him, instruct him on everything and teach him. Along with this there is much celebration and singing since they've received another in their kolo.<sup>18</sup> (Zovko 1901:147)*

*Those whom the vile... choose, he must serve them, that is, he must be a vrač or she a vračara. If he will not, then they beat and batter him until he complies. If he really won't obey, then they beat him to death. (Voćinkić 1898:24)*

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<sup>18</sup> Note that the *vilenjak*'s initiation follows a complete *rite de passage* with separation, liminal status and re-incorporation with new-found status. These ideas are not fanciful, but linked closely to an ancient ritual practice in the region (See Chpt. 5 below; Čiča 2002a, 2002b; Ginzburg 1983:142-3; Petreska 2008; Pócs 1989:47-8).

Vilovnjak: *that is a man whom vile have enslaved in his youth and who then must serve them by night until his death. It is even said that vile ride them like horses.* (O. Nedić 1898-1902:252)<sup>19</sup>

The beneficent side of *vile* is truly matched by their dangerous nature, and informants agree that they can be unpredictable, vengeful, and hazardous. To this effect *vile* are given the epithet *nedobrvice/nedobre* (no-goodniks) in two accounts from Syrmia (*Srijem/Srem*) (Filakovac 1905:144; Lovretić 1902:122<sup>20</sup>). *Vile* are said to harm those that they do not like or who betray their confidence (17%). Most often *vile* demand that those with whom they have dealings never speak of their interaction with them (7%); those who break this promise are beaten until they die. They are also said to harm those who happen upon their dances and celebrations (10%).

*...woe to him who obstructs them during their festivities or dance, they hound him and wound him in his arm, leg or heart, such that he dies very soon.* (Ptašinski 1890-9:210)

*Vile* are said to cause illness to those *vilenjaci* who betray or leave them (7%). “There is no cure for those that the *vile* attack” (Ivanišević 1905:255). Sometimes this illness is voiced as an inevitable and unintentional consequence of interacting with the *vile*. In these circumstances some are said to eventually recover, while for others it proves fatal (O. Nedić 1898-1902:252)

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<sup>19</sup> This note about riding men like horses is a common occurrence in oral traditions about witches as well. The motif has been attested in Europe at least since Medieval times and carried into North America and other regions (Hand 1980:227-36; Sharpe 2013. See ATU G241.2).

<sup>20</sup> Interestingly, Lovretić considered his hometown of Otok as part of Slavonia and named Syrmia as a nearby region (1897:91, 95). The town is very clearly a part of Croatia’s holdings in the traditional region of Syrmia and I have classed it as such.

*But some would die, and without giving confession, and without any kind of contrition or repentance. Then they wouldn't even bury him in the cemetery, they'd bury him outside it. (Žuljić 1904-11:556)<sup>21</sup>*

Stumbling into the *vile*'s dances, stepping into their playgrounds after they have left, betraying them, or simply consorting with them as *vilenjaci* do, are all said to cause madness or to leave the hapless victim an imbecile (12%). A common phrase used to describe such victims is to say that *vile* "swept his mind" (*smesti mu pamet*).

*They happily bring naïve men to their kolo and are prone to sweep his mind. (Horvat 1896:231)*

*Vile* are also said to blind men (5%), with one account suggesting that *vile* blind all men who dance with them (Praidic 1898:20).

In more benign examples of negative connection between *vile* and humans, two accounts in Herzegovina and central Bosnia suggest that *vile* steal women's dresses to wear (5%).

*Every vila has, and must have, her own dress... they don't have a single way of getting them, but rather secretly steal them from unlucky women so that the women don't know what happened to their dress and whence it [the theft] befell them. Every second day they [vile] must, even if their eyes burst, have a different dress. Not a one can stay alive if she doesn't change her dress every second day. The easiest for them is, by night when everyone's asleep, to take [a dress] from someone's chest while no one is the wiser, wear it for an hour or two and then return it to the chest where it was. While wearing it they guard it as if it were their own, not letting anything, no matter how small, fall on it. When they take it off, they fold it exactly as it was. Not even the wisest [woman] would be able to detect, even a little, that it had been worn at all... (Zovko 1901:146)*

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<sup>21</sup> See Barber (1988:34, 55-56) and Žuljić (1904-11:556) for the exclusive rights to hallowed ground that are withheld from the unclean dead.

*Vile* are also said to take horses (12%) in the night and to ride them hard for mysterious purposes (O. Nedić 1898-1902:252).<sup>22</sup> They leave the horses with braids in their manes, but such horses become ornery and difficult (Sajvert-Pokupska 1897-1905:555).

*Vile loved to ride horses. In the morning the owner would find his horse sweaty and it would already be cleaned and fed. It was vile who had ridden the horse the whole night and tended to it in the morning out of gratitude. Woe to the owner who would try to keep his horses guarded from the vile. Then that horse would become thin and perpetually hungry and thirsty.*  
(Hovorka 1897-8:3)

Such a horse is sometimes referred to as a ‘*vilovnjak* horse’ or by the adjective *vilovit* (*vila-y*, *vila-like*).

### Irregular Motifs

Beyond these common descriptions, there are a number of aspects mentioned by informants and collectors for which no other attestation was found. As mentioned in the introduction, this does not mean that they are not characteristic of the wider tradition of the *vila*, or at least of a regional tradition, but only that their inclusion into the regular motifs is tentative without further material to support them. The implications of this will become more apparent as this study progresses, since a number of these irregular descriptions are indeed well-attested in the other registers of the *vila*.

*Vile* are said by one informant on the island of Cres not only to be thin and able to fly, but also to be light as a feather (Bartulin 1898:269). An informant in Vareš, Bosnia explained to collector Mijo Žuljić that, rather than being dressed in white, *vile* dress, sing

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<sup>22</sup> Cf. British-Isles’ ‘fairy-ridden’ (Kinahan 1881:102).

and dance like Turks (Žuljić 1904-11:554).<sup>23</sup> Rather than living away from humans, one account suggests that *vile* “live with them, like a sister with a brother” (Bartulin 1898:269). Their singing is variously said to put men to sleep (Ardalić 1917:303), to make men waste away when they hear it (Novaković 1903-4:1040), or to sound like the buzzing of bees (Ivanišević 1905:254). One account suggests that once a man had heard *vile* sing he could no longer hear the voice of a human “for the *vila*’s voice shook (*potresao*) him” (Ptašinski 1890-9:210). *Vile* not only sing, but are also said to play instruments and to force shepherds to play music for them (210). Beyond surviving on ‘denials,’ an account from Poljica suggests that *vile* eat “honey, lard, young lambs and piglets” (Ivanišević 1905:254), while another from Ljubuški explains that all of the food they eat is green in colour (Zovko 1901:145). Beyond their normal punishment for transgressive acts or betrayal, one account suggests that *vile* harm all humans who are able to see them (Lovretić 1902:122) while another offers that *vile* like to harm sleeping men (Ardalić 1917:303). One account suggests that *vile* cause bad luck in general (Duić n.d.:1), while they are said by others to be wonder-working (Zorić 1896:230), to grant wishes (Petković 1899-1904:5), and to keep mildew from crops (Hovorka 1897-8:2).

As a clear demonstration of the tentative nature of irregular motifs, there are a number of description materials provided only in single accounts that shall be revealed in later materials to be, in fact, core aspects of oral traditions of the *vila*. *Vile* are said to

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<sup>23</sup> With no information about this informant, it is difficult to competently surmise the connotations of this comment. If the informant was a Muslim Bosniak, it may or may not imply a sense of foreignness and would likely suggest a sense of prestige. If the informant was a Christian, then this would likely have strong negative connotations and would stress the foreignness of the *vile* (similar to the attribution of India as the homeland of *vile*). Compare this to the common attribution of fair, Jewish or European origins, complexions, and features to the Jinn in Palestine (Rothenberg 2004:102-120).



grant sight to the blind as easily as they take it away (3), to be able to transform into snakes (Ptašinski 1890-9:209), to poison wells (Sajvert-Pokupska 1897-1905:556), and to be good builders (Mikac 1934:196). They are said in one account to take children away to raise them, although the same account comes with the unique suggestion that if the child escapes, the *vile* exact revenge upon him.

*Vile and vilenici can take a weak child with them. They raise it amongst them. Thus the saying remains: 'Let the vile take you to the red cliffs [crljene stine]. ' In some places a man, that the vile had raised, would escape back home, but then the vile would completely destroy him. (Banović 1918:197)*

One account sounds confusing outside of the context of traditional knowledge, but for those situated emically inside the culture and privy to the metonymic resonances of the tradition, the comment is clear. It relates a general summation of the 'Swan Maiden' motif that will be explored further below.

*Vile can even marry with a mortal man, but in this case the man would do well to guard her shirt [košulja] because the vila would, after some years, easily escape, even if they'd had children. (Hovorka 1897-8:3-4)*

Other accounts, however, are very odd or unique and speak to what can only be local traditions or fanciful interpretations of belief in the *vila* by particular informants. An account from Bukovica in Dalmatia relates that *vile* cannot be harmed by guns, knives and other weapons and the special rites that must be performed on a weapon to make it efficacious against the supernatural (Ardalić 1917:304). Another from Zaoštrog explains how *vile* are trapped in red cliff sides where they celebrate noisily and fire-off guns (Banović 1918:194). *Vile* are also said to baptize their babies under trees near villages (Filakovac 1905:145), to fatally attack people on their arms, legs and heart (Ptašinski 1890-9:210), and to steal gold from Turks (Zorić 1896:230). In Otok, in Sirmia, it is said

that if a goose lays two eggs and one vanishes, it was eaten by the ‘king of the *vile*’ (*vilovski kralj*) (Lovrečić 1902:139).<sup>24</sup> Two accounts take a negative, religious approach to understanding *vile*, describing them variously as ‘hellish enemies’ (*neprijatelj pakleni*) (Žuljić 1904-11:554) and as descendants of Cain<sup>25</sup> (Ivanišević 1905:254), while other accounts imbue the *vile* with uncommon socio-cultural characteristics. From Poljica in Dalmatia, Frano Ivanišević presented the suggestion in his description that

*To speak quite truthfully, vile are not all of one complexion or colour; there are four types of blood [races] among them: white, blue, yellow and black. The white-complexioned are Catholic [kršćanske] and won't do harm to our people, blue are Orthodox [rišćanske], yellow are Jewish [žudinske] and black are Gypsy [ciganske]. (254)*<sup>26</sup>

In one very odd account collected by Ivan Zovko in Ljubuški in 1892, *vile* are said to come on-order from India and every country is said to have a specific quota of *vile*.

*Every country, every city has its specific number (of vile), as many as they need. They may have neither less nor more, if the number is twelve, then they have twelve. If something unforeseen should happen to one of them, their elder [starešica], who is above them all [i.e. their leader] sends another from India to take her place. As soon as (the first vila) is again as she was [i.e. able to resume her position] they immediately call back the one who took her place. They have a system about them just as people do. Well, and what are they but people when they work and do things like people do! (Zovko 1901:144).*

Although Zovko does not name the source of this information, he presents these descriptions in a sort of question and answer format that most likely reflects a dialogue he has had with an informant. When asked how many *vile* there are in Bosnia and Herzegovina this probable informant replies,

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<sup>24</sup> See Chpt. 3 for more on rarer accounts of male *vile*, or *vila*-like figures.

<sup>25</sup> Here the *vila* is presented in a list of animals (wolves, dogs, snakes) and monsters (*vile*, *morine* [*mòre*, *Mare*], *pepeljušine* [a type of serpent], *čarovnice* [sorceresses]) all belonging to that cursed lineage.

<sup>26</sup> Compare this account with the Jinn in Palestine (Rothenberg 2004:51 n.5)

*There may be no more and no less than 12... they just say that, some of the older people, that there were 14, or more than 14, in Alipaša's<sup>27</sup> time, but that's doubtful. I bet someone without a job said that and people took it to be true and that's why they think it, that in that time there were the most vile. There can't be any more or less than 12. Where would they get enough for the other lands and cities if there were so many in Bosnia and Herzegovina?! (144-5)*

*Vile* are also connected to or confused with certain other supernatural beings in some descriptions. In an account from Klakar in Slavonia the *Suđenice* (a supernatural trio akin to the *Moirai* of Greek myth or Nordic *Norns*)<sup>28</sup> are said to be *vile* (Lukić 1911-2:4).<sup>29</sup> In another from Visočane in Ravni Kotar, *vile* are said to become *vještice* (witches) when they marry (Zorić 1897:270). Conversely, an account from eastern Slavonia treats a common epithet of the *vila*, *dobre* (or *dobrice*, 'goodnicks,' 'good ones'),<sup>30</sup> as a unique type of supernatural being, but gives little explanation about what separates them.

*Dobre, those are the same in appearance as vile, but they're not true vile.*  
(Voćinkić 1898:26)

Although my collection sample holds few examples, the idea of *vile* who live in water sometimes extends to the concept of mermaids, which in the language are more often titled *sirena* as a borrowing from Greek (Bošković-Stulli 1997:326; Đorđević

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<sup>27</sup> This is footnoted by the editors as a reference to Alipaša Rizvanbegović Stočević (1783-1851), or *galib* (victor) Alipaša, who was a Stolac native, Ottoman captain, Vizier of the Herzegovinian Eyalet and loyalist leader during the 1831 Bosnian Uprising. His reign was known as a time of bounty, high quality of life, economic flourish and new imported goods (Zulfikarpašić et al. 1998:17 n. 16).

<sup>28</sup> For more on the *Suđenice* (also *sudaje*, *usude*, *orisnice*, or *rođenice*) see Čajkanović 1994 V:247; Kulišić, et al. 1970:293.

<sup>29</sup> Colarusso suggests that referring to *sudēnice* as *vile* might be some retention of a more adjectival sense of the term *vila* as meaning 'holy' (personal correspondence).

<sup>30</sup> Compare with the English, Scots and Irish epithet for fairy folk, 'the good people' (Kinahan 1881:109).

1953:59). A description, drawn from informants on the island of Cres, discusses the *vile*'s flight from humanity as a descent into a new life in the sea.

*But when people began to blaspheme there began to be less of them.  
Soon after they disappeared, when people began to betray them. This made  
them unbearably sad, they didn't want to help people anymore but fled to the  
sea where, they say, that still in some places they live in the form of a fish and  
woman together. (Bartulin 1898:271-2)*

## The *Vila* in Topogonic Descriptions

As outlined above, I use the term topogonic descriptions (τόπος ‘place’ + γέγονα ‘come into being’) for those accounts which describe supernatural origins for the creation or form of local topographic or geographic formations, as well as landmarks. Most of these are descriptions of local caves, springs or other formations associated with *vile*. Some even include short fabulates and memorates regarding local villagers’ interactions with the locations, and various discoveries they make in the locations which prove that *vile* once lived or gathered there.

Of 18 topogonic descriptions in this survey, most describe caves where *vile* live(d) (33%) and springs (22%) where they gathered or bathed. Other sites include chasms (5%), large rocks that are carved or rubbed smooth (11%), built structures (17%), undefined water bodies (5%), or undescribed locations which are simply said to be places where *vile* gather to dance or hold their meetings (17%).

There are various aspects of these locations that act as proof of the *vile*’s association with them. Caves are the most common sites, said to be used by *vile*, as homes. These caves are most often very deep (Kukuljević 1851:97; Zorić 1896:230), and often contain stalactites (Kukuljević 1851:99; Zorić 1896:230). Oddly shaped colloidal mineral formations in caves were said to be the stone furniture of the *vile*, and accounts of such caves often contain descriptions of the *vile*’s stone tables, chairs, chandeliers, and more (Hovorka 1897-8:2; Zorić 1896:230). Kukuljević Sakcinski relates an account that suggests that the *vile*’s furniture and buildings first appear to interlopers as gilt, crystalline and bejewelled finery (see ‘Fancy Home’ in Chpt. 3), but quickly begin to fade to stone in

a cascade that leads people to their doom at the labyrinthine depths of the cave as they follow the fleeting opulence (1851:97). Other signs that *vile* have lived in a nearby cave include impressions in the stone made by their hooves (Bartulin 1898:271), a fount of fresh water springing from the cave (Kukuljević 1851:97), the out-of-place growth of an orange tree above a cave (the *vile* planted it there) (97), or the fact that gold is found in the cave. On this last note, Mate Zorić suggests that *vile* use caves to divide the gold that they steal from Turks (1896:230), while Kukuljević Sakcinski relates a short fabulate he acquired from one Chaplain Žužel about finding gold in the *vile*'s caves:

*A few years ago they found some Roman money in that cave; notably, it is known that there was money from Marcus Aurelius. The folk say that some herdsman, searching for his lost hog, he came to that cave and found all sorts of other money, but that, fearing the vile, he didn't take any more with him, save for the amount that he could conceal in the palm of his hand. (1851:99)*

The smooth stones that *vile* dine upon are not restricted to caves. Ivan Zovko suggests that all large stones that have been carved or rubbed smooth have been used by *vile* for dining tables (1901:145), and it seems that large smooth rocks were often thought to be polished by *vile* (Vrčević 1876:89).

The springs which *vile* frequent are remarkable due to their flowing out of caves (Kukuljević 1851:97), their constant flow despite droughts and seasons (Ivanišević 1905:255), or their running hot in the winter and cool in the summer (Kukuljević 1851:104). One *vila*-spring near Stubica in Croatia is said to have a white stone formation below it that is considered to be the wash basin of the *vile*. A spring in Mosor Mountain in Dalmatia is said to run all year round but to dry up every day at noon, because the *vile* drink from it at that hour (Ivanišević 1905:255). These caves and springs are often called

generically ‘*vila*-cave’ or ‘*vila*-spring,’ while others carry unique names that are derived from the *vila*’s name—‘Vilenjak’ (Zorić 1896:230), ‘Vilendočić,’ or ‘Vilovitica’ (Ivanišević 1905:255).

For built structures, Vuk Vrčević relates the location of a small church in Montenegro which is said to have been built by the *vile* (1876:89), while Jakov Mikac of Brest describes how

*Every large, old tower, for which peasants don’t know the history, they call ‘gradeč’ [a location name derived from the word for city] and say that vile built it. If in the centre of any large field there is a large rock, they say that it fell from the vile’s aprons when cocks crowed for the third time. By the folk’s understanding, vile only have the power to build between 11 o’clock and four o’clock in the morning (only the villagers don’t calculate time by hours, rather by times of cock crow: first cocks crow around 11 o’clock, the second at two o’clock after midnight and the third around four o’clock in the morning). Vile have the ability to build only from the first to the third cock crow. In this time, they carry rocks from a great distance and in one night they are able to build a tower. If on the way, while they are carrying stones, they are caught by third cock’s crow, their aprons, in which they are carrying stones, tear and the stones fall from the aprons. The vile fly off to high mountains so that the day does not catch them. (1934:196)*

In both of these accounts, standing stones near stone structures are taken as a sign that *vile* created the building. Finally, Josip Ptašinski relates that peasants in the city of Pula in Istria considered the Roman colosseum there to have been built by *vile* (1890-9:210).

## Conclusion

The wide range of behaviours and actions of the *vila* expressed in the descriptive accounts is plentiful and intriguing, but when one examines the various oral traditions of this figure, one finds that there are concrete divides between a number of these descriptions. Most of the survey studies being critiqued here use a similar style of data presentation as has been employed in this short chapter, but this analysis has already proven more refined by separating regular from irregular descriptions and providing data on frequency of occurrence as well as consistent attribution of location, interlocutor names and other crucial contextual data. The careful reader will have already noticed that some descriptions hint at specific tropes or motifs from particular oral traditions—the well-spring of informant knowledge about the *vila*—but which flow in specific currents of thought and use. In the following chapters I venture into depths of analysis that are seldom explored in surveys of the *vila*'s tradition. When the generic registers of the *vila*'s belief are separated, we find that certain motifs belong specifically to one or another, while certain others bridge this gap. Moreover, we find specific uses that are unique to certain regions, innovate upon the stock tradition, or retain oddities that seem to reflect the detritus of older tropes, mostly forgotten. The following chapters will explore these motifs of the *vila*'s registers to add contextual depth to her analysis in order to fully elucidate her traditions.



## Chapter 2: The *Vila* in Song

The depiction and use of the *vila* in song is not so far removed from her depiction in other registers as to be unrecognizable, and yet there is a wide range of motifs and certain aspects of depiction and deployment in songs that stand in stark contrast to her form in other genres. In general, the *vila* presented in the various descriptions in Chapter 1 owes more to her role and use in oral narrative, with only a small number of recognizable tropes drawn from her behaviour in songs. This is logical, as the art of singing is the purview of a smaller group of artists and tradition-bearers than is tale-telling. This fact is particularly true of the semi-formalized epic songs that make up the bulk of the narrative songs. Even the narrative songs that sit in interstitial positions, and would elsewhere be categorized as narrative ‘women’s songs’ or ballads, owe much of their content and style to the purely epic forms perfected in the male-dominated spheres of coffee houses and the semi-formal artistry of the *guslar*. This is most likely at the root of the unique motifs and traits exhibited by the *vila* in song.

## The *Vila* in Narrative Song

The *vila* of narrative song is presented most often as a mountain-dwelling, warrior woman, capable of flight, and thus often ornithomorphic. Of the 305 narrative songs in my sample, her habitat is overwhelmingly named as high mountains (*planina*), including a number of real and imagined named mountains,<sup>1</sup> (55%) or low mountains (*gora*) (23%).

**Table 2 Narrative Song Locations by Number of Occurrence**

Habitat			Encountered at/in		
Mountain (High)	<i>Planina</i>	58	Mountain (High)	<i>Planina</i>	106
(Low)	<i>Gora, Gorica</i>	48	(Low)	<i>Gora, Gorica</i>	31
Cloud	<i>Oblak</i>	3	Cloud	<i>Oblak</i>	23
Water (undefined)	<i>Voda, Dunaj voda</i> <sup>2</sup>	11	Well	<i>Bunar</i>	3
Mountain Lakes	<i>Jezero (u gori)</i>	8	Mountain Lake	<i>Jezero (u gori)</i>	2
River	<i>Rijeka</i>	5	Grove/Holt	<i>Lug</i>	2
Well	<i>Bunar</i>	2	Water (undefined)	<i>Dunaj voda</i>	1
Manor	<i>Dvor/Dvorac</i>	2	Spring	<i>Izvor</i>	1
Cliff	<i>Stijena/Stina</i>	4	High Hill	<i>Brdo visoko</i>	1
Cave	<i>Pećina</i>	4	Beech stump	<i>Bukov panj</i>	1
Sea/Seaside	<i>More/Primorje</i>	2	Fir Tree	<i>Jela</i>	1
Spring	<i>Izvor</i>	1	Whirlwind	<i>Vihar</i>	1
House/Blockhouse	<i>Čardak</i>	1	<i>Vila</i> Playground	<i>Igralište</i>	1
Dawn	<i>Zora</i>	1	Horse's mane <sup>3</sup>	<i>U grivi</i>	1
India City	<i>Indija grad</i>	1	Zadar prison	<i>Zadarska tavnica</i>	1
			Church	<i>Crkva</i>	1
			Karlovac (city)	<i>Karlovac</i>	1
			Above Senj (city)	<i>Više Senja</i>	1
			Pastureland above Udbina (city)	<i>Rudina poviše Udbine</i>	1

<sup>1</sup> In my sample this list includes: Ablan, Alatuša, Avala, Bakonja, Cer, Cim, Crvaća, Derviš, Gradina, Janjin (Lamb's), Javor/Javorje (Maple), Korana, Košutica, Kotar, Kunar, Madriš/Modriš, Maruša, Maša, Miroč, Nevaljaša, Ogorjelica/Ogorjelisa, Orlova (Eagle's), Osik, Ozdren, Papuk, Prolog/Proložni, Radnička, Rujeka, Stolov, Tirole, Troglava, Urvina, Velebit/Velebić, Vrana (Crow), Vučjak/Vukova (Wolf's), Zavelim; with Prolog, Kunar and Velebit occurring with the most frequency.

<sup>2</sup> The 'Danube water' in BCMS traditional songs is a common trope, sometimes denoting a river, sometimes a lake, and often not explicit about exactly what type of water body is being described. There also seems to be no bounds on geographical region where it can be located in the songs.

<sup>3</sup> When it is at all clear, *vile* are most often depicted as a similar size to humans, but there are a small number of songs, such as this one (which is explored in depth below), which seem to suggest that *vile* are small beings (cf. Hör II.57 ll. 927-31; MH II.48).

All other habitats and zones of encounter make up a markedly small number of her appearances in the narrative songs:

Beyond the description of the *vila* as white in colour (*bijela/b'jela/bela/bila*) (84 of 305 songs) or more than/too/exceptionally white (*prebijela/pribijela/prembijela/predbijela*) (23), she is most often given epithets or adjectives describing her habitat: low mountains – *gorska* (3) *gorkinja* (1) or *gorica vila* (1) – all ‘low-mountain *vila*’; *zagorkinja* (16), *nadgorkinja* (1), *nagorkinja* (5), *pogorkinja* (1), *prigorkinja* (3), *podgorkinja* (2), *prigorka* (2) – all ‘on/about/below/etc. low-mountain *vila*’;<sup>4</sup> *bjelogorka* – ‘white low-mountain *vila*’ (1); high-mountains – *planinkinja* (24), *planitkinja* (3); water *vila* – *vodenica* (1), *vodarica* (4); coastal *vila* – *primorkinja* (1); cloud *vila* – *oblakinja* (1); or *podnepkinja vila* – below-the-welkin *vila* (1). Some *vile* are given epithets or names based on their roles in particular story traditions: *vila brodarica* (4)/*brodarkinja* (2), the ‘*vila* boat driver’, or ‘collector of boatman’s fee’ (*brodarina*); *vila đumlugdžija* (MH I.35), the ‘*vila* tariff collector’ (*dumruk*); and *vila jasačkinja* (Kurtagić 1908-34.1), the ‘*vila* bodyguard’ (*jasagdžija*), which belong almost exclusively to the ‘Water Guard’ motif described below, although the more common versions of these names do creep into other *vila* motifs.<sup>5</sup> The *baždarkinja vila*, the ‘*vila* who collects a tariff’ (*baždarina*), appears in two very disparate tales from lower Dalmatia (MH I.65; MH II.20)<sup>6</sup> and is semantically linked to the ‘Water

<sup>4</sup> In MH II.2 (l. 49) she is referred to as “*od gorice banica gospoja*,” that is, the *banica* (wife of a *Ban*, or a female *Ban*) and lady/mistress of the mountains.

<sup>5</sup> Though the name implies a *vila* that drives a boat, the *brodarica* and *brodarkinja* names are never used for the *vile* that drive boats in my sample.

<sup>6</sup> A number of these citations represent multiple citations that have been truncated to de-clutter the page. See Appendix 3 for full citations.

Guard’ names, but does not appear in that motif (cf. Đorđević 1953:84). The *vila* *čolaska/čolaskinja*, the ‘one-handed/armed *vila*’ (MH I.53) and the *čoravica vila*, the ‘blind-in-one-eye *vila*’ (Milas 1884.6) are found only in the ‘Save Character from Dangerous Lake’ motif. The ‘Cause Rift between Brothers’ motif usually involves a party of *vile*, one of which is simply noted as the elder or leader of the others, but in one instance she is given the name *vila starješnica*, ‘elder *vila*’ (MH I.46). Other *vila* epithets include the *bjelogrla vila*, the ‘white-throated *vila*’ (Vuk III.6), *vidarica vila*, ‘healer *vila*’ (Vuk II.11), *pomoćnica* ‘helper’ (Vijolić 1887a.34), and *troglavkinja* ‘Three-headed.’<sup>7</sup> There are also a small number whose meaning is obscure, *vila bililkinja* (Miošić-Kačić 1886.87), *kolaruša vila* (Šestić 1889.286), *samohita vila* (Hör II.48).<sup>8</sup> In one song a *vila* inhabiting the river Cetinje is named after it *Cetinjkinja vila* (Ostojić 1880-3b.336), while the name *slovinkinja* or *slavonkija vila* (Slavic *vila*) shows up in three different songs.<sup>9</sup> The *vile* are also occasionally given proper women’s names:

<sup>7</sup> The Three-headed *vila* belongs to a fairly poorly constructed song. The *vila* is named after Troglav Mountain, the highest peak of the Dinaric Alps, and so might not be envisioned as a three-headed *vila*, but only a denizen of the mountain, though it is possible that the singer is blending her with the more well-known ‘three-headed Arab’ villain found in a number of songs (Nodilo 2003:54-5).

<sup>8</sup> *Bililkinja* seems to reflect some derivation of the word *bila* (white), possibly *biljenje* (whitening/bleaching) attached to the common *-kinja* a feminine demonymic suffix (cf. *srpkinja* [Serbian female], *posavkinja* [female from the Posava region]). It might also be drawn from the word *biljka* (plant). The *kolaruša vila*’s name may denote her habitat (there is a river in Serbia as well as a forest in central Slavonia with this name), although this song was most likely collected in modern day Kraljeva Sutjeska in Bosnia, which makes proper recognition difficult. *Samohita* is a vague compound of *samo* (only/just, self, real/true) and *-hita* which most likely derives from *hitar* (swift), although might also suggest *hitac* (shot). For more on *vila* names see Đorđević 1953:82-87.

<sup>9</sup> A song collected from the singer Nikola Anđelinović from Sućuraj on the island of Hvar (Nališ 1885.46) is a fantastic example of the political tones that so often underpin folklore research. The song includes a *vila slovinkinja* and when reviewing the MS for possible publication, one of *Matica Hrvatska*’s editors underlined the name *slovinkinja*, writing a suggestion that they alter her name to the ‘*vila hrvatica*’ (Croatian *vila*), “seeing as how Vuk would replace it with Serbian” (Nališ 1885:79).

Ravijojla/Rafiola/Rovijojla/Radviojla<sup>10</sup> (5), Nadanojla (3), Mandalina/Manda (4), Magdalena (Pajić n.d.4), Anđelija (3), Andesila (MH I.75), Arajela (Marjanović 1877.4), Breberija (Marjanović 1877.46) and, in one very unique song, Ana from India (MH I.65).

Singers also have a small number of stock formulae<sup>11</sup> that are used to fulfill the metrical conditions of sung verse lines. Thus, lines such as ‘*do tri bile vile*’ (8) or the dialectic variant ‘*do tri b’jele vile*’ (three white *vile*) (2), as well as other formulae employing the same poetic use of the preposition ‘*do*’<sup>12</sup> – ‘*do tri vile moje*’ (my three *vile*) (MH VI.6 l. 67), ‘*do trideset vila*’ (thirty *vile*) (Milas 1884.6 l. 159), ‘*do dvje svoje/moje vile*’ (his/my two *vile*) (Pletikosić 1889.9 ll. 265, 266), ‘*do tri gorske vile*’ (three mountain *vile*) (2) fulfill the requirements of the second colon of a decasyllabic line after the caesura. The formulae ‘*do tri vile, do tri sestre moje*’ (three *vile*, my three sisters) (Ostojic 1880-3b.21 ll. 78, 81), ‘*bila vilo posestrimo mila*’ (white *vila*, my dear avowed sister<sup>13</sup>) and ‘*tri su vile bile doletile*’ (three white *vile* descended/flew down)

<sup>10</sup> Though other *vila* names are sometimes used for Marko’s *posestrima vila*, the name Ravijojla is the most common attributed to her and, to my knowledge, is never found in the tradition connected to another hero.

<sup>11</sup> This formulaic phrasing is most common in narrative songs, but does appear in lyric songs. Five of the examples here are drawn from lyric songs; I have included them as the matter need not be treated twice.

<sup>12</sup> The preposition ‘*do*’ is cognate to English ‘to’ in both a proximal as well as temporal sense but also acts as a counting prefix; it always takes the genitive. In its usage it most often translates as ‘next to,’ ‘beside,’ ‘up to,’ ‘prior to,’ ‘until,’ or ‘as far as.’ As a preposition attached to numbers and quantities it means ‘as much/many as,’ or ‘no more than’. The usage in this formula is common to the epic songs (particularly along the Dalmatian coast) but unique grammatically. See for instance “*do trideset druga*” (l. 206) “*do sedam pušakā*” (l. 545), “*do sedam ranā*” (l. 546) in Ljubidrag 1892.18. Although it is used occasionally as an intensifier, in most traditional singing it acts simply as a poetic device to fill out meter. See Alexander 2006:54; Maretić 1907:101; Stevanović 1989:299-300.

<sup>13</sup> The terms *pobratim* (blood-brother or brother-by-oath) and *posestrima* (blood-sister or sister-by-oath) will occur regularly in this thesis. I have left them mostly untranslated since the practice is integral to the social relations of the characters in the songs and oral narratives. The terms are akin to our understanding of blood-brother/sisterhood and in real-world contexts represent this practice (often involving the mixing or drinking of blood [Čajkanović 1994 III:50]). In the songs, the practice is usually martial and no mention is made of any sanguinal sharing. Most often characters simply declare their intention to create this bond with a fellow and are bound by their declaration and word of honour. Because of this, I prefer to gloss this practice as avowed- or oath-brother/sisterhood. *Vile* who are not antagonistic to heroes and heroines in

(Banić 1885.4 ll. 78, 81) fulfill the full line requirement of a decasyllable while Kate Murat's '*do tri vile, tri sestrice*' (three *vile*, three sisters) (Murat 1886a.87 l. 9; Palunko 1886.192 l. 9) fulfills a full octosyllabic line.

When presenting theriomorphic tendencies the *vila* of the narrative songs will most often transform herself into or appear in the form of a bird—an eagle (MH II.20), ducks (MH II.20; Ljubidrag 1892.10; Marković 1892-3.11), a pigeon (MH IV.40), or black ravens (Hör I.9)—as well as exhibiting a number of other indirect connections with birds.<sup>14</sup> She is said explicitly to fly or have wings in a large number of these songs (29%). While birds are the most common form, two songs contain a *vila* who transforms herself into a snake (MH I.74, 65).<sup>15</sup> The connection of *vile* to snakes also manifests in a number of indirect ways that will be explored below. It is clear that snakes are as deeply connected to *vile* in the minds of informants as are birds.<sup>16</sup>

The *vila* is often depicted in a martial fashion—wearing armour (MH II.3), firing a bow and arrow, or engaging directly or indirectly in the battles of humans. This suits the

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songs regularly form this relationship with them and vow to protect them in battle. See further Halpern and Kerewsky Halpern 1972:121-2.

<sup>14</sup> See also: MH II.41 where a *vila* and her daughters manifest as birds in a premonition, MH V.162 where *vile* act as and with carrion birds, Banić 1885.85 where she wears a feather suit (*perje i poperje*) and flies with it, Prčić n.d.45 where a *vila*, unable to dance *kolo* without her wings, compares herself to a bird that cannot fly, Hör I.2 where she is grouped with birds, Hör II.48 where a *vila*, reminiscent of the *valkyrjur* in the *Hrafnsmál* (Davidson 1988:87), knows how to interpret raven's calls, and Hör II.68 where a *vila* is confused for a cuckoo.

<sup>15</sup> The *vila* is also said to transform into a shepherd girl in one song (MH I.46), though, given the appearance of *vile*, it is unclear what this would entail beyond a change in wardrobe. She also takes the form of an old woman in one unique song (MH II.20).

<sup>16</sup> I concur with Barber (1997) who draws a connection between snakes and birds as beasts which lay eggs (the ultimate symbol of fertility potential) and the conception of the *vila* and the Russian *rusalka* as spirits of dead, childless maidens who died with unspent fertility. There are many problems with the finer points of Barber's argument. The conception that *vile* are dead maidens is one of many explanations for her origin and is only pertinent to the register of the *vila* in oral narrative and ritual tradition. Barber's argument also often obfuscates a true understanding of the *vila*, deferring to the *rusalka* whenever the data (or lack thereof) does not suit. Despite these issues, her main thesis, when contextualized, is a convincing one.

content of the songs, which are, in the vast majority, only about battles, ambushes and sieges or weddings that often include battles and ambushes.<sup>17</sup> Her dualistic nature is well presented in the narrative songs where she can be a guardian and aide to characters (in 40% of songs she is introduced as or becomes a *posestrima* [avowed sister] to a character) or conversely a fearful nemesis, predator or aide to an enemy.

In reading this chapter, the reader is reminded that the motif titles presented here are mostly arbitrary decisions on my part to give a name to these traditions. For some, different titles have been given by other scholars at different times; what is most important here is the core tradition that the singers were engaging with and how they chose to engage with them. Following Parry and Lord, this thesis does not seek to discover a true, original or oldest form in the manner of the Historical-Geographic school, or Francis J. Child's work on English and Scottish ballads (1882-98), but rather views the tradition as a dynamic and ever-changing process to which each unique singer brings his or her own outlook, opinion and style. However, what is discoverable in each motif is a core tradition, or cluster of ideas that, in this particular time and place, was viewed by all singers as integral to a truthful retelling of each motif. This core is discernible through the myriad of multiforms, each at once a single performance/recitation and the tradition itself. By providing the conservative core of the tradition, the discussion can continue onto innovation and the ways that particular singers navigated their own use of the *vila*.

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<sup>17</sup> For weddings in songs and practice see Appendix 1.

## Regular Motifs in Narrative Songs

### **Musa Battle**

7% of Nar. Songs (21 songs). Wide distribution. Independent Motif.

This motif is named after the most famous story-pattern in which it occurs, the story of Marko Kraljević's battle with the villain Musa Kesedžija (lit. Moses the bandit), although it is used in other songs with different heroes and villains.<sup>18</sup> In this motif two heroes engage in a heated battle. Most often they have shattered all their weapons (usually a spear, a mace and a sword) or worn them down to nubs and are now wrestling to the death on the ground. Quite regularly they wrestle for an epic amount of time (a day and a night or two days) before it comes to a point where the antagonist is covered in foam, or foaming at the mouth, while the protagonist is covered in foam and blood, signalling that he is losing the battle. At this point, the protagonist will call to his *posestrima vila* (always perched in a cloud or on a mountain) to aid him. The key to the motif is that the *vila* can never intervene to aid her *pobratim* (avowed-brother) but must offer advice as a substitute.

In the oldest recorded version, dictated to Vuk by the singer Tešan Podrugović (Vuk II.67), the *vila* reminds her *pobratim* Marko Kraljević of how often she has informed him that she cannot fight on Sundays. She also adds that it is unfair for two opponents to face off against one.<sup>19</sup> These explanations are the most widely presented by

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<sup>18</sup> There are, in fact, variants of the 'Water Guard' motif which employ this stock battle but in which the hero's enemy is another *vila*. See 'Water Guard' below, as well as Klarić 1887.17; Strohal 1883.53; Trnski 1890.6; and Vrbanić 1878.7.

<sup>19</sup> These responses from the *vila* are regularly quite flippant and sassy. The singer, Petar Kajmić from Prišac in Slavonia stresses the *vila*'s disapproval by having her reprimand both combatants (Ilić 1878b.8 ll. 331-5). Martin Grgašević has his *vila* berate Marko with all of the poor decisions that have drawn him into his



singers. It is unclear if the publication of Vuk's work highly influenced the subsequent tradition elsewhere, or if the tradition was already well-established and Podrugović was simply telling the most common form. In songs collected by Glavić (MH II.42), Ilić (MH II.43), Ivanić (1886.14) and Miošić-Kačić (1886.65) the *vila* tells the protagonist that she cannot fight on Sundays or that he should never fight on Sundays because he will always lose.<sup>20</sup> In another song (Kraljević 1886.3), it is the unfair advantage alone that the *vila* cites. There are, however, other responses in the tradition. In some, no reason is given (Delić 1877.21, Kamenar 2013.5), while in others the *vila* simply states that she cannot help (Banić 1885.3), reprimands the protagonist for not heeding her advice about the danger of his journey (MH II.2) or simply tells the protagonist not to worry (Glavić 1887c.121). In southern Slavonia and Syrmia, the collectors Luka Ilić and Josip Lovretić collected three versions of the Marko and Musa song which reflect a local variant. In the songs of Martin Grgašević (Ilić 1878a.5), Antun Bošnjaković (.6), and an unknown singer from Otok (Lovretić 1885.5), the *vila* cannot help because she is looking after her newborn baby, or has just put the baby down to sleep and does not want to wake him.

<i>Što bjesedi posestrima vila,</i>	What his <i>posestrima vila</i> said,
<i>Da mu mlada pomoći nemože,</i>	That she cannot be of aid to him,
<i>Jer joj j' čedo na krilu zaspalo,</i>	Because her baby had fallen asleep on her lap,
<i>Lipo spava i o Marku sanja,</i>	Sleeping beautifully and dreaming of Marko, <sup>21</sup>
<i>Da ga budit mladjana nemože,</i>	That she cannot wake him
<i>Jer bi s' čedo mlado proplakalo,</i>	Because the little baby would begin to cry,
<i>Proplakalo, majku razcvililo.</i>	Begin to cry and make his mother cry.
	(Ilić 1878a.6 ll. 248-54)

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present predicament (Ilić 1878a.5 ll. 599-605), while Antun Bošnjaković's *vila* aids Marko but then adds, "But you, Marko, refuse to listen / So now you will die foolishly" (.6 ll. 145-6).

<sup>20</sup> The pagan *vila* often proves to be devoutly religious (both Christian and Muslim) in various songs and oral narratives.

<sup>21</sup> That the baby is dreaming about Marko is a charming addition that only appears in this multiform.

In Bosnia, a separate tradition obtains where the *vila* informs the protagonist that she cannot help because his enemy also has a *vila* with whom she is busy fighting. In two songs collected by Mirko Šestić in Central Bosnia, the *vila* is busy fighting the opposing *vila* (Šestić 1889.275, 289), while in a variant sung by Mustafa Mujkanović in Stolac, Herzegovina the *vila* shames her *pobratim* by informing him that while he has only one opponent (a mountain *hajduk* [bandit]), she is fighting the *hajduk*'s three *vile* and they have already broken her wing<sup>22</sup> (Kurtagić 1943a.3).

With the *vila* so indisposed, her only recourse to providing aid is through advice. In most variants of the song, the *vila* will remind the protagonist of secret knives or daggers he has hidden upon him,<sup>23</sup> which he will then use to disembowel his opponent who has pinned him on the ground.<sup>24</sup> The 72-year-old *guslar*, Marko Vujičić from Popovići, told an inventive multiform of this song where a *vila* aids a female protagonist in such a battle. In a careful reflection on the continuity of the song, the *vila* draws her duelling *posestrima*'s attention to a shard of her own broken sword, left from an earlier stage of the battle, which she then uses to vanquish her opponent (Glavić 1887c.121). Rather than secret knives or sword shards, in Mujkanović's song (Kurtagić 1943a.3), the *vila* suggests a wrestling technique to the protagonist to free himself from his foe's grasp

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<sup>22</sup> In Šestić 1889.289, the *vila* also incurs damage, claiming that her opponent has tied her braids together and nearly broken her shoulder.

<sup>23</sup> Oddly, the *vila* will often refer to the knives as snakes (*guje iz potaje*) (MH II.43 l. 402; Vuk II.67 l. 245; Kraljević 1886.7 l. 3), thus reinforcing her connection to that animal in the tradition. In some songs the knives are said to be gifts from the *vila* (MH II.43 l. 403; Ilić 1878a.6 l. 244), or from Marko's mother (Ilić 1878a.5 l. 338), while in most, their source is not mentioned.

<sup>24</sup> This disembowelling often triggers a final episode in the motif where the hero finds three hearts in the villain, one that is tired, one that has just begun to pump and a third with a sleeping snake on it. The snake informs the hero that, had it woken in time, he would not have fared well in the battle. This news will often cause the hero to mourn having killed a finer hero than himself/herself. For example, MH II.26, 42, 43; Vuk II.67.

(with a little help from the *vila*<sup>25</sup>). This same technique is mirrored in Šestić 1889.275, but without the *vila*'s instigation.

Finally, in some variants it is not the *vila*'s advice that most aids the hero, but the diversion of talking to the *vila*. Thus, in a version of Marko and Musa's battle, sung by the peasant fisherman and *guslar* Ivan Dušilo at Luka on the island of Šipan (Glavić 1887f.186), Musa's attention is diverted to see with whom Marko is speaking and Marko exploits the opportunity to slay him. In a variant collected from Ivan Pranjić in Bisko (Banić 1885.3), the hero, Ivan of Senj, tricks his enemy after his discussion with the *vila* by plainly yelling "But look up to the clouds / Where a *vila* is breaking the wings of an eagle" (ll. 72-3), distracting his enemy and gaining the upper hand.<sup>26</sup> In Grgašević's multiform this distraction remains, but is no longer attached to the *vila*. Here, Marko turns Musa's attention to the sun, which he says "...is turning in blood / [And] which will kill us first" (Ilić 1878a.5 ll. 610-11).<sup>27</sup>

### **Direct Aid in Combat**

2% (6 songs) Wide Distribution. Independent Motif.

This motif mirrors the situation of single combat in the 'Musa Battle' motif, but here the *vila* directly engages in the battle to aid her compatriot. The manner in which she engages varies, but always reflects common traits of *vile*. Perhaps the most curious aspect of this motif is that, despite the ethics the *vila* displays in the 'Musa Battle' motif, in this

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<sup>25</sup> This song blends both the 'Musa Battle' motif and the 'Direct Aid in Combat' motif and is discussed in that section below.

<sup>26</sup> This idea of the *vila* breaking an eagle's wing seems to be a small kernel of traditional material that resurfaces in various songs. See, for instance Vuk I.665.

<sup>27</sup> This aspect of directing the antagonist's attention to the sun is quite prevalent in this motif, as well as in those versions of the 'Water Guard' motif where a *vila* wrestles with the protagonist in the same fashion.

one, no stress is placed on the unfair advantage the *vila* provides. The hero or heroine who is saved is never marked in the songs as weak, cowardly, or unprincipled for relying upon the *vila*. Although singers will often exploit the protagonist's trouble in combat for comedic effect, the aid of the *vila* is treated soberly and speaks to an understanding of the true life-or-death nature of combat.<sup>28</sup>

In the oldest collected example of this motif, sung by Starac (Old man) Raško to Vuk St. Karadžić, the *hajduk* hero, Starina (also Old man<sup>29</sup>) Novak, has decided to ambush the wedding party of Grčić Manojlo (Manojlo, the Son of the Greek) in an effort to abduct Manojlo's young bride to give her in marriage to his own son. Manojlo proves more of a threat than anticipated and works his way through the heroes of the attacking party before reaching Novak. Manojlo nearly kills the old hero and forces him into retreat, calling to his *vila posestrima*. She convinces Novak to return and engage Manojlo, promising to aid him. Upon return, the *vila* transforms herself into a young maiden and wraps herself in embrace around Manojlo, clouding his vision and providing Novak the opportunity to kill his opponent. A version of the same song recorded in Popovići from

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<sup>28</sup> It should be kept in mind that the BCMS regions saw many wars and border skirmishes over the centuries preceding these collections. Most men of age, and so most accomplished epic singers, had experienced war and violence firsthand, many on multiple occasions. See for instance the biographies of Tešan Podrugović (Wilson 1970:107), Filip Višnjic (Nedić 1990:41-5), Salih Ugljanin (Parry and Lord 1954:63-4), Avdo Međedović (Međedović 1974:4).

<sup>29</sup> Vuk left very little information about Old Man Raško. We know he was born in Kolašin in Montenegro and that he left Ottoman-controlled areas to join the Uprising against the Dahije in 1804. He later settled in the village of Sabanta (Stef. Karadžić 1833:xvii) and distinguished himself in the Battle of Lipar (1804) and the Battle of Deligrad (1806) (Nedić 1972:339; Popović 1964:152). Vuk tells us that Raško regularly sang his songs for one of the First Uprising's critical leaders, Petar Teodorović 'Dobrinjac' in a camp at Deligrad (Stef. Karadžić 1833:xvii-xviii). Both Raško and the character Novak, coincidentally, have common variants of the same nickname which can be applied to any older male as an honorific, a mild insult, or simple descriptor of age. For more on Raško see Nedić 1990:114-22. For Starina Novak, see Koljević 1980 or Samardžić 1988.

Marko Vujičić (Glavić 1887c.116) has the *vila* fly down to blind Manojlo and binds his legs<sup>30</sup> so that Novak can overcome him. It is found again in a Bosniak multiform sung by Ibro Karabegović from Kamengrad in the Bosanska Krajina (MH IV.40). Here, the hero Mujo Hrnjica calls to his three *vile posestrime* as his opponent is set to overcome him. The *vile* fly down in the form of pigeons (*tri tice goluba*) (l. 1537) and divide their distracting duties—clouding the enemy’s vision, tightening his ponytail, and pulling his legs out from under him (ll. 1554-56).

For most of these songs, the *vila*’s primary services are blinding the enemy or tripping him. Thus, a song from Herzegovina (Kurtagić 1943a.3) has a *vila* lower her hair down from a cloud so that it becomes entangled in an antagonist’s legs and topples him. This episode may be particular to a larger portion of Bosnia as it is also found in a song recorded in Sarajevo (Hör II.44), though we find similar variants in bordering regions. Thus, in an unusual song from the singer Iko Knezović of Grabovac in Imotska Krajina (Ostojić 1880-3b.325) three Serbian heroes, Marko Kraljević, Miloš from Pocerje, and Relja the Bosniak, are attacked by a monstrous rendition of the hero Ljutica Bogdan for eating grapes from his vineyard.<sup>31</sup> When Miloš engages Ljutica in single combat, he is nearly bested but for the help of his *vila*, who dramatically descends from the heavens to very undramatically place a stick between Ljutica’s legs and trip him. It is unclear

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<sup>30</sup> It is unclear in the song whether she binds the straps on Manojlo’s *opanci* (traditional leather shoes), or if he is supposed to be mounted and the *vila* binds the horse’s feet. Both readings depend upon the use of the word *putalj*, which is most commonly a name for a black horse with white bands above its hooves, but can also be straps on such a shoe. Given the progress of the story and other multiforms he is most likely not mounted.

<sup>31</sup> See Vuk II.39 for a version sung by Tešan Podrugović and MH II.45 for another collected in Slavonia by Luka Ilić. Both of these lack the *vila* episode.

whether Knezović had a taste for ironic uses of the *vila*'s intervention, or was simply an unimaginative singer who inadvertently created a humorous episode. While the song borrows from the Bosnian tradition, it remains unique to the singer.

### Deer Rider

2% (7 songs) Wide distribution. Independent Motif

The *vila* is sometimes depicted as riding a deer, particularly as she heads into battle or attack. For one song from Dubrovnik (Ljubidrag 1892.10), this is an inconspicuous addition to the song and the *vila* is simply said to ride a one-year-old deer (l. 74). However, in three songs collected from disparate regions, the deer riding has a very distinctive aspect that draws snakes into the imagery of the *vila*. In one unorthodox telling of the story-pattern 'Banović Sekula<sup>32</sup> and the Mountain Vila' (MH I.75) a *vila* accepts a task from her 'vila elder' in exchange for the elder's wings (see 'Cause Rift between Brothers' below). To prepare for her journey she states:

*Ja ću otić u Kozar-planinu,  
Pa ću naći visokog ljeljana  
I tri ljute pod kamenjem guje,  
S jednom ću ga gujom obuzdati,  
A s drugom ću njega osedlati,  
Treća bit će u šakah kandžija.*

I will go to Goatherd mountain,  
And I will find a tall deer  
And three poisonous snakes under a rock.  
With one snake I will tame it [the deer],  
With the second I will saddle it,  
And the third will be a crop in my hand.  
(ll. 46-51)

<sup>32</sup> Though the practice is no longer common, traditionally BCMS names were formally presented with surnames first and given names second. Thus the word for surname *prezime* literally translates to 'before-name.' At the time of these collections, most would have used a name order more familiar to English speakers, but for the characters of the songs the traditional arrangement was more common. I have tried to follow the singers in their use. Thus, in the songs one will never see Sekula Banović but only Banović Sekula. For those unfamiliar, the *-ić* ending (son of, akin to *-son* in English, *Mac/Mc-* in Celtic languages) is the best indicator of surnames. This also occurs with titles such as *Ban* (viceroy) which often follow the pattern of surnames (ie. Banović=son of the *Ban*).

This odd snake-tack is found again in two multiforms of the ‘Water Guard’ motif (MH II.2; Marković 1881.21)<sup>33</sup> where Marko Kraljević does battle with a dangerous *vila* who mounts a deer to engage in combat with him.

<i>Sedmaka je posjela jelena,</i>	With a saddle she mounted a deer.
<i>Jednom ga je zmijom zauzdala,</i>	With one snake she bridled it,
<i>A od dvije dizgen načinila,</i>	With two [snakes] she made reins,
<i>Četvrtom ga po rebrima šiba.</i>	And with a fourth she beat its ribs.

(MH II.2 l. 37-40)

It reappears once more in a song from either the Gornja or Bosanska Krajina regions where a ‘Help Escape from Czar’ motif has a *vila* endow her heroic *pobratim* (oath-brother) with snake reigns for his horse (Marjanović 1877.46).

While this motif appears infrequently in most collected materials, it seems to have quite an ancient pedigree. It is cited in Bulgarian sources with the *samovila* (Nicoloff 1975:11; Popović 1988:67). In those songs, however, the *samovila* rides her deer specifically to deliver a letter to Krali Marko (the Bulgarian version of his title), perhaps indicating that the motif takes a different form among the Bulgarians. Within BCMS regions, *vile* are found riding deer in a much older song dating to the beginning of the 18<sup>th</sup> century (Bog.21). The motif is also transferred onto a non-*vila* character in another song in Vuk’s collection (Vuk I.234). Here, a human girl builds a temple in the forest and fights the sultan’s men on a piebald horse with antlers that she bridles and spurs with angry snakes. All of these facts seem to suggest that the motif is quite ancient and widespread, a suggestion bolstered by comparative material from other Eurasian oral traditions: heroes riding cervidae also appear in the Finnish *Kalevala* (Kirby 1985:66),

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<sup>33</sup> See also Marjanović 1877.6, where the *vila* uses snake reigns but on a ‘*vila*-y horse’ (*konj vileni*).

and in Caucasian epics (Colarusso 2002:238).<sup>34</sup> There are also troll women in Norse mythology who bridle their wolf-mounts with snakes (Puhvel 1987:213; Terry 1990:110).

### **Help Escape from Czar**

6% (19 songs) Wide distribution with heavy distribution throughout Dalmatia.<sup>35</sup>  
Independent Motif.

Though this is an independent motif, it is highly limited in distribution and found in only a small number of variant story-patterns, nearly all of which hinge upon a shared internal episode. The songs begin in one of four stock manners, although unique variants exist (MH II.11; Marjanović 1877.46; Ostojić 1880-3b.21): (1) A hero (usually Starina Novak) has built a beautiful tower and word of its beauty reaches the czar<sup>36</sup> (Banić 1885.82; Glavić 1887b.79; Ostojić 1880-3b.246). (2) A hero is riding his horse outside of the czar's castle/tower and begins to boast about how he could kill the czar with his sword and take the czar's possessions (wife, throne, etc.) (MH VI.6; Glavić 1887c.91). (3) A shepherd has a large flock of sheep and either boasts about having more than the czar, boasts to the sheep that they will drink from the czar's well and graze on his lands, or simply word of this shepherd's abundance reaches the czar.<sup>37</sup> (4) A final variant borrows from a separate song tradition wherein Marko Kraljević ignores a decree of the czar that extends Muslim prohibitions upon the entire nation (no dancing with women, no drinking

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<sup>34</sup> Colarusso suggests a possible link between this myth motif and a number of Iranian or Scythian burial sites in Siberia which have revealed horse-headaddresses mounted with reindeer antlers (2002:243).

<sup>35</sup> All versions of this song were recorded in Dalmatia save for three. One from Daruvar in Slavonia (Ilić 1878a.70), one in Smiljan near Gospić (MH II.11), and one most likely learned in Lika and sung in Slavonia (Kraljević 1886.3; Kraljević 1918:1).

<sup>36</sup> Unless a distinct nation or personality is named (for instance *ruski car* [Russian Czar] or *car Indije* [the Czar of India]) the 'czar' of BCMS traditional singing is always the Turkish Sultan in Istanbul (*Stambul/Stanbul*, also *Carigrad* [Constantinople]). Real, unnamed or imagined Emperors of the Holy Roman Empire/Austro-Hungary/Catholic nations are usually referred to by the title *ćesar*. The *car/ćesar* divide is an East/West division. On the role of the Ottoman Turks in these oral traditions see Appendix 2.

<sup>37</sup> MH VI.4; Banić 1885.4; Kraljević 1886.3; Nališ 1885.63; Ostojić 1880-3a.240.



alcohol and no eating pork) for three years (Alačević 1906-11.25; Ostojić 1880-3a.219).<sup>38</sup>

Word of these various boastful slights on the czar reach him, by rumour, by him personally hearing the offenders, or by being overheard by his servants or others who rush to inform him. The outraged czar will then send his servants to apprehend the characters and bring them before him, or, in the case of the nobler figures (Marko and the tower builder), to call them to his court.

It is at this point in the songs where the central motif begins, linking the disparate songs. In the court, the czar will demand if the slights against him are true.<sup>39</sup> When the protagonists virtuously reply that they are, the czar offers three choices of manners by which they may be put to death which are responded to with three noble refusals<sup>40</sup> based on their unfitting manner.<sup>41</sup> Demanding he be given a hero's death, the protagonists requests an old tired nag (or a blind, crippled, etc. horse), a dull or broken sword, and to have his hands and legs tied behind his back or under the horse. In this manner he will ask

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<sup>38</sup> See Vuk II.52, 71 and MH II.8, 10, 12 for various multiforms of the song lacking the *vila*, with slightly different sanctions and mostly set during the month of *Ramazan*.

<sup>39</sup> In some multiforms the czar demands that the wondrous tower or great herd of sheep be given to him, a demand which is always refused.

<sup>40</sup> Cf. Foley's misguided reading of the tone, distribution, and attribution of this theme which leads him to erroneous conclusions (1991:115-8). Ignorant of a number of multiforms, he assumes that the theme only employs Marko Kraljević (calling it inappropriate to other heroes [117]) and so reads the tone of response as impudence rather than honourable stoicism in the face of danger. He proceeds, then to silence the Croatian singers of this motif, ascribing it to 'Serbian character' and uses Tešan Podrugović's insertion of this motif into an uncommon story-pattern (common practice amongst many singers) to suggest a divergence between Serbian and Bosnian singers—the former 'poetic' in their combinations of traditional materials, the latter slaves to the tradition. I return to this troubling suggestion in Foley's work in Chpt. 5.

<sup>41</sup> These most often consist of 'would you like to be trampled by horses, ground in a mill or chopped by a sword' which is responded to with 'I am not straw/hay/grass to be trampled, I am not wheat to be ground, I am not wood to be chopped.' Other versions include being burned (I'm not a forest/wood/a whore), trampled (I'm not an old man), thrown in the dungeon (I'm not a thief), thrown in water (I'm not a whore), carried away by the water (I'm not a fish), lose your head (no response), hanged (I'm not a thief/*hajduk*) and to kiss a sword (your poorly forged sword would poison my mouth). The final offer is usually to be cut down by a sword which will be agreed upon as fitting.

to be set out onto a field with an army of Turks in pursuit of him. When the czar concedes to this seemingly reliable execution, he sets the protagonists galloping into the field. The hero in plight calls upon his three *posestrime vile* to come to his aid (only one *vila* for the blind singer of MH II.11). The *vile* fly down to him and each offer a service: one untying the bonds, the second sharpening his sword, and the third energizing/angering/making youthful his horse.<sup>42</sup> At this point the protagonist will finish off the army of Turks in a stock manner<sup>43</sup> before returning to the czar to exact his revenge (MH VI.4; Ostojić 1880-3b.21) or to be paid by the czar to spare his life.<sup>44</sup> For some protagonists, the song will end with them returning to their sheep or tower happily having been paid off by or having murdered the czar, while other singers will draw the song to a satisfying close by having their protagonists take his revenge and realize his dreams by assuming the czar's throne and taking his wife or daughter (MH VI.6; Glavić 1887c.91; Kraljević 1886.3).

Beyond the manifold minor variations on the tale there are also quite distinctive innovations and odd adaptations. In four multiforms (MH VI.4, Glavić 1887b.79; Ilić 1878a.70; Marjanović 1877.46) two of the *vile* are replaced by Christian religious figures (Saint Thekla, St. Đurđa, St. Đurđe, Holy Friday, and Holy Sunday<sup>45</sup>). In one of these,

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<sup>42</sup> Marjanović 1877.46 has a *vila* liven her *pobratim*'s horse, sharpen his sword, and add reigns and a girth to the horse made from multi-coloured snakes!

<sup>43</sup> The exception being the multiform sung by Nikola Rudan of Bogomolje (Nališ 1885.63) who has his three *vile* prepare the protagonist as usual, but then has one of the *vile* kill all the Turks for him.

<sup>44</sup> MH II.11; Alačević 1906-11.25; Banić 1885.82; Ostojić 1880-3a.240, 1880-3b.246, 316.

<sup>45</sup> The holy days of Friday and Sunday (*Sveta Petka* and *Nedilja/Nediljica/Nedelica*) are often personified as female saints in BCMS oral traditions, with St. Sunday often presented as the daughter of St. Friday (see Kulišić, et al. 1970:210). The singer's use of Saint Thekla (*Sveta Tekla*) as the figure that frees the protagonist's hands most likely stems from the parallels drawn from the incident of her fetters loosening and releasing her from the bulls in her own legends (Johnson 2006:55). This bears resemblance to one of Vuk's multiforms (II.52) from Bosnia where the protagonist prays to God who magically sharpens his sword, etc.

‘*The Knez of Syrmia and the Czar of Istanbul*’ by the exceptional blind singer Gusto Agačić from Dubrovnik,<sup>46</sup> the conventional tale of the tower builder called to the czar is entirely reworked into a unique song. Here the *Knez* (roughly Duke) of Syrmia builds a beautiful tower and is called to the czar. Agačić, however, defies his audience’s expectations by having stately diplomacy swing the czar from prideful anger into a gracious offer of betrothal to draw their families together. It is only after the *Knez* has gathered a wedding party and retrieved the daughter of the czar for marriage to his son that the brash and arrogant son sings a rude song to the young bride and shames her. This act brings the wrath of the czar upon them and finds the two sons of the *Knez* on the gallows outside of Istanbul. Here they are saved by the humble and lowly prayers of the second son (to God, Holy Friday, Holy Sunday and the *podnepkinja vila*). Other innovations carry less of a poetic touch. Anton Radić of Bogomolje inserts only the sword-sharpening and horse invigorating portion of this motif into a revenge tale where a *vila* aids her *pobratim* in finding the man who killed his nine brothers and stole their wives (Ivančić 1886.34). Elsewhere, the motif is nearly unrecognizable in a song about Marko Kraljević by Stipe Klijaka (Alačević 1906-11.16) from Kotišina in Imotska Krajina. Here Marko, betrayed by his love<sup>47</sup> and lacking his weapons in combat, races

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<sup>46</sup> August ‘Gusto’ Agačić/Igazzi/Agaci/Agacija (as his last name is variously given in Croatian and Italian) was a blind beggar and *guslar* born in Luka on the Island of Šipan. Glavić tells us that he was blind from childhood and had travelled widely through Montenegro, Dalmatia, Herzegovina and even some of Bosnia and Albania. When Glavić recorded his songs sometime between 1865 and 1885 he was approximately 50 years old, and had already been settled in Dubrovnik for 25 years where he lived with his wife and had raised children. Glavić recorded 84 songs from him, 43 of which he designated as ‘heroic songs’ (Glavić 1887h:503-7). A small number of Agačić’s songs were also recorded in 1892 by Nikola Ljubidrag.

<sup>47</sup> The term ‘love’ (*ljubav*) is used commonly in the songs for a character’s beloved or betrothed, but is also used as a stock term to represent a character’s wife. This last use carries metonymic weight for the tradition and is the most common. Like other such terms (see ns. 117 and 162 of this chapter for others), I have chosen to retain it in discussion.

across a field calling to his *vile posestrime* for aid. Only one *vila* answers his call, giving him a new sword and informing him of the many betrayals of his wife.

### **Punish Singing**

3% (10 songs) Wide distribution.<sup>48</sup> Dependent Motif.

In the oldest multiform of this song, most likely sung in 1815 (Nedić 1990:70-1) by the blind singer Živana to Vuk (Vuk II.37), Marko Kraljević is riding over Miroč Mountain with his *pobratim* Voivode Miloš. Marko is tired and asks Miloš to sing to him, but Miloš refuses, telling Marko that he was drinking wine the night before with the *vila* Ravijojla who informed him that she will shoot him with arrows through the throat and heart if he sings on her mountain.<sup>49</sup> Marko coaxes Miloš until he concedes to sing, and Marko nods off in his saddle to the music. Miloš sings so beautifully that the *vila* hears; she begins to sing along with him but becomes angry at his beautiful voice, jumps over to Miroč, draws her bow, and fulfills her threat. Marko wakes to Miloš cursing him and chases after the *vila* on his horse *Šarac*.<sup>50</sup> She flies about the mountains and the clouds but Marko overtakes her and beats her with his mace and fists until she begs for mercy. She placates Marko by offering her services as his *posestrima* and healing Miloš with herbs she collects from the mountainside (see ‘Heal’). Miloš’s heart and throat are healed and improved and Ravijojla swears herself to be of aid to Marko whenever he may need

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<sup>48</sup> Most of the multiforms collected for *Matica Hrvatska* are found in Southern Dalmatia, Kordun, or the Gornja Krajina.

<sup>49</sup> Here Vuk gives the suggestion that Miloš and the *vila* must have had a singing contest the night before and since Miloš had a nicer voice she threatened him to never sing on her mountain (Stefanović Karadžić 2006:278 n.31). This is never stated in Živana’s song but shows up in later versions whose singers may have learned the song from Vuk’s published edition and accepted his interpretation (cf. Alačević 1888.165). For more on print songs re-entering the oral tradition see Lord 2000:136.

<sup>50</sup> *Šarac* means piebald as a general term, but is always the specific name for Marko’s horse. For more on Marko’s heroic horse see Popović 1988.

her. At the end of the song the *vila* warns another *vila* not to shoot any friends of Marko's in the mountain.

Most multiforms hold quite closely to this earliest version, although some unique aspects arise in those recorded in southern Dalmatia, hinting at regional traditions attached to the song. A version by Marija Nijirić from Orašac near Dubrovnik is told closely to Živana's version, although the singer inserts an episode of vile offering seniority (see 'Cause Rift between Brothers' below) before the *vila* strikes, and substitutes Relja Bošnjanić for Voivode Miloš as the victim of her attack (MH II.3). In this song, rather than shoot Relja, the *vila* attacks his face and plucks out his eyes (l. 57-8). Another multiform sung or recited by Anton Radić in Bogomolje in 1886 (Ivančić 1886.36) takes more liberties with the song and elaborates further with innovations derived from the local tradition. In this song Voivode Janko has 'evil' done to his voice (*Njegove je ukobila glase*) (l. 58),<sup>51</sup> his eyes torn out, and his face abused by the *vila*. In his pursuit of the *vila*, Marko makes two heroic leaps, catches the *vila* by the hand and calmly informs her that she will heal his *pobratim* or lose her head. She leaves her wings (*krila i okrilja*)<sup>52</sup> with Marko as collateral (!) and picks various flowers and green basil on Kunar Mountain with which to heal Janko. Upon healing him, she serves the heroes wine whereupon Marko tries to convince Janko to take the *vila* as his bride, claiming that he too married a *vila* who gave him great gifts. Janko kindly refuses (to the *vila*'s relief),

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<sup>51</sup> The verb '*ukobiti*' is based on the word '*kob*' (fate or fortune) and is often associated with fortune telling and dark magic. The sense here is vague and unclear; the *vila* is bringing ill-fate to his voice.

<sup>52</sup> The word '*okrilja/okrilje*' has no meaning, but acts as a poetic reduplication of *krila* (wings). This phrase is common to the tradition, especially in descriptions of the *vila*'s wings, and particularly when they are described as an item to be stolen (Đorđević 1953:61; JAZU 1917-1922 VIII:860. See Vuk II.40 l. 190 for a hero with them).

citing his betrothal to another and then gives the *vila* 30 sequins,<sup>53</sup> telling her to drink wine on him.

The most unorthodox version of this tale came from singer Mate Raos in Medov Dolac in Imotska Krajina (MH V.159), who has blended this motif with a ‘River *Vila* Wrapped around Horse’ motif (see below). In the song the ‘childe Miloš’ is travelling with Vlach<sup>54</sup> carters from Montenegro. Miloš is singing with a soft voice which has led him into *vila* trouble before.<sup>55</sup> A mountain (*zagorkinja*) *vila* writes a letter to the *vila* of the river Cetina saying that Miloš will be arriving to her soon. She instructs her to fire arrows into him or his horse when he attempts to ford the river’s rapids. When he is in the middle of the river, she shoots the horse which magically arrests its movements. Seeing that he will be taken by the river, Miloš tells the carters that their payment is in the pockets of his dolman,<sup>56</sup> along with a golden apple to be delivered to his mother. The carters pray for their friend as the river overtakes him.<sup>57</sup>

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<sup>53</sup> A Sequin (*Cekin*), is a Venetian gold piece, equivalent to a ducat.

<sup>54</sup> In the oral traditions this appellation refers less to real Vlachs and is used instead to designate Orthodox Christians or all Christians in some Muslim singers’ songs.

<sup>55</sup> The singer sings that “*Vile* took his throat / But they could not take it from Miloš” (ll. 6-7). The *vile* have either attempted and failed at ruining his voice, or perhaps attacked him but not debilitated him. It is not clear.

<sup>56</sup> Dolman (*dolama*) is a loose term for a number of Turkish garments worn on the upper body. Originally a long and loose-fitting garment, later, more popular forms were often short-cut, tightly-fitting military coats covered in decorative braiding with short sleeves that emphasized the layering of garments that was the fashion of the time.

<sup>57</sup> Cf. a multiform collected by Pero Marković (1886-7.19) from Ivan Čekićan of Dubrava in Herzegovina which blends the ‘River *Vila*...’ motif more heavily and adds the seniority offering episode of the ‘Cause Rift between Brothers’ motif.

### **Attack Wedding Party in Mountains**

1% (4 songs) Dubrovnik littoral and the island of Šipan. Dependent Motif

There are only four recorded multiforms of this song to my knowledge, all stemming from the city of Dubrovnik (Ljubidrag 1892.10), the city of Orašac, 15 kilometers north of Dubrovnik (Vijolić 1887a.47) and the city of Luka on the nearby island of Šipan (MH II.20; Marković 1892-3.11). All versions involve an ambush upon the wedding procession of Marko Kraljević while he awaits their arrival at his home in Prilep. Although other variant story-patterns exist where Marko's wedding party is attacked (see Bosanac 1897:351), these songs uniquely have a *vila* as the aggressor rather than a human nemesis.

In this story, Marko becomes betrothed to the daughter of a noble (the King of Buda, the *Knez* of Karlovac, or the *Ban* [!] of Venice)<sup>58</sup> but does not accompany his wedding party to retrieve the maiden. Rather, he remains at home or in, one song, stations himself in nearby mountains to guard the party from ambush (Marković 1892-3.11). In his stead, Marko gives leadership of the party to a close confidant (Sibinjanin Anko/Janko,<sup>59</sup> Serbian Stjepan, his servant Milutin, or his old uncle) but warns him not to sing, fire guns or play music on a particular mountain (Orlova, Troglava, Maruša) for fear that a *vila* there (*Baždarkinja*, *Troglavkinja*, or simply mountain *vila*) will attack the

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<sup>58</sup> It is not unheard of for traditional singers to place a Ban or King in Venice instead of the rightful title of Doge (*dužd*), but singers were more often aware of the proper title and the error occurring in the same song from two separate singers in separate cities is telling of the local provenience and the possible novelty of the song to the wider tradition.

<sup>59</sup> János Hunyadi (c. 1406-1456), Regent-Governor of the Kingdom of Hungary. Hunyadi was an ethnic Romanian whose exploits against the Ottomans are celebrated throughout the Balkans. In BCMS epic songs he is known as Janko of Sibinj, although the historical figure had no relation to that town, or Ugrin Janko (Janko the Hungarian) and is regularly accompanied by his young nephew Banović Sekul(a), based in name on Hunyadi's nephew János Székely. Their pairing in the epics is notable for its focus on avunculumism.

wedding party and abduct the maiden. The wedding party and/or the leader inevitably forget this proscription<sup>60</sup> and are attacked. The *vila* breaks the legs of the horses, removes the eyes of the wedding party and abducts the betrothed, taking her to a mountain cave or *vila* manor.<sup>61</sup> A worried Marko soon arrives at the scene of the attack where he castigates the leader of the party and learns the direction of the *vila*'s exit. Marko finds his love bound, frightened and abused in the *vila*'s cave and instructs her to learn the *vila*'s weakness for him. When the *vila* arrives, the poor fiancée asks the questions that Marko has instructed, for which she is beaten severely. Whether owing to hubris or carelessness the *vila* reveals that her weakness lies in another *vila* (the *utva zlatokrila*) or two who reside on tarns.<sup>62</sup> Marko retires from the scene to gather his sight hounds and falcon and proceeds to hunt these characters/items of weakness in order to capture them and force the *vila* to heal the wedding party and return his betrothed.

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<sup>60</sup> The exception being Ivan Ljubidrag's multiform (Ljubidrag 1892.10) where the wedding party heeds the advice, but a *vila* riding on the back of a one-year-old deer still detects them and attacks.

<sup>61</sup> Part of the stock and metonymic style of the songs involves the fact that most characters live in medieval manors (*dvor*, *dvorac*) or towers (*kula*). Even when a peasant character is described at home he is usually said to be in a manor or tower. The sense could be reduced to 'home' but the traditional resonance would be lost in this translation (see Maretić 1909:41). The *vila* too lives in manors, but this is likely an extension of the metaphoric power of the trope to the *vila*'s cave abodes. See 'Fancy Home' in Chpt. 3.

<sup>62</sup> This episode requires some unpacking. In Anica Begin's version (MH II.20) the *vila baždarkinja* states that she is powerful so long as the *utva zlatokrila* and the *uva zlatoruna* are safe on the mountain, in Ivan Ljubidrag's multiform (Ljubidrag 1892.10), it is while Maruša Mountain is healthy and the *utva zlatokrila* is in the cold waters of Maruša Lake, while in Mare Ivanković's song (Marković 1892-3.11) the *vila* fears no one but Marko, and does not even fear him while *utva krilo* is in cold water and *dvije rume* (some animal that has not been identified) are in the green mountain. The term *utva/uva* designates various species of mallards, while *zlatokrila* (golden-winged) specifies the Ruddy shelduck (*Casarca casarca* or *Tadorna ferruginea*) (Hirtz [1926] gives a simple *Anas boschas* L.). The term is used commonly in traditional song, but sometimes referring to the animal (see for instance Vuk II.70, 76, 77), sometimes designating a *vila*, and often unclear in exactly what is being described. See for instance MH II.39 where *utve zlatnokrile* guards a lake but is never referred to as a *vila* or Kurtagić 1908-34.228 where a character asks a maiden guarding a lake if she is a *vila*, an *utvorica* (*utva*+dim./fem.) or a *divičica* (maiden or virgin). A shorter lyric song concerning the hunting of *utva zlatnih krila* who is ambiguously a *vila* can be heard sung by Jasim Aliagić in 1951 in the Yugoslavia volume of The World Library of Folk and Primitive Recordings series (Aliagić 2001).



In a multiform by Mare Ivanković of Luka on Šipan island, Marko also has the *vila* make his bride three times more beautiful than she had been before the *vila* abused her, while Ivan Ljubidrag's telling seems to lose the secondary *vile* episode and just has Marko catch the original *vila* (perhaps she was *utva zlatokrila* all along?) and beat her in a similar manner to the final episode of the 'Punish Singing' motif. Anica Begin<sup>63</sup> takes a more colourful approach, characteristic of her skilful recitations and flare for playing with tradition. In her song (MH II.20), the *vila* comes to Marko transformed into an old hag and complaining to him that he has taken all of her strength, including her strength to heal the wedding party. Marko sees through the ruse and beats her until she gathers herbs and heals everyone. In nearly all of the stories, Marko takes mercy on the *vila*, sparing her life to repay her healing services. The only exception is the version sung by Luce Vijolić of Orašac in southern Dalmatia (1887a.47) whose song strays at numerous other junctures and suggests a lack of familiarity with the story-pattern. In this version the *vila* kills all of the wedding party and Marko must bury them before gingerly setting off to the *vila*'s manor, the location of which he somehow already knows. Here he finds his betrothed restrained and abused and she informs him that the *vile* have all gone out to gather water. She gives him *uve ptice male* (little duck birds) to put in the breast of his clothing which

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<sup>63</sup> Anica Begin is another of the highly talented singers from Luka on Šipan whose songs were collected by Baldo Melkov Glavić. She provided the collector 144 songs, 83 of which he categorized as 'heroic songs.' Glavić wrote of Begin: "Widow of the late Šimun, of the house of Kalafatović, daughter of deceased Antun, 70 years old, born and lived her entire life in Luka on Šipan. Sustained herself with shepherding, domestic and labour work, and predominantly in fishing in the company of her father and brother. Peasant, uneducated, never attended any kind of school, such that even today she cannot identify a single letter of the alphabet. Yet, by nature she is very gifted and a true wonder of the human mind. She is, even today under the burden of her considerable years, able to learn a song which she has heard only once—if she be so inclined, otherwise she never listens to them" (Glavić 1887h:509)

allow him to easily slay the *vila*. He goes to a non-descript body of water, kills the *vila* there and then he and his bride head home.

### **Kill Groom with Arrows**

2% (6 songs) Wide Distribution. Independent Motif

This motif takes two forms.<sup>64</sup> The first is a variation on a song that can exist without the *vila*'s inclusion (see, for instance, Vuk V.3, where spurned love causes the affliction rather than *vile*) but which regularly includes her. In the standard version of the story-pattern, a young protagonist is travelling a great distance with his wedding party to retrieve his betrothed. Along the way he is spied by two *vile* who often comment on his finery and caparison. One of the *vile* states that she would like to strike the youth with an arrow, but the other begs her to only hit his horse, given that the lad is his mother's only son. The first *vila* ignores this mercy and fires upon him, usually striking him in the head. Here, however, the *vila*'s arrows are not physical arrows, but elf-shot<sup>65</sup> that the human characters seem unaware of. The young hero immediately suffers a debilitating headache which dampens the remainder of the wedding proceedings until he returns home to request of his mother that she make up a bed for him to die in. In most versions, the mother grieves and instructs the boy's fiancée on how she will have to proceed with her bereavement before the mother will help her remarry (Kušmiš and Kušmiš 1898.101; Mikuličić 1884.22). In a multiform sung by Ana Banović of Zaoštrog in 1902, the young hero's sister instructs him before departing for his bride that he should equip himself with

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<sup>64</sup> Compare this motif and 'Make Character Sick When Love Spurned' with the Scandinavian Ballad type *Elveskud* (DGF 47).

<sup>65</sup> For elf-shot/arrow see Briggs 1976:118; Hall 2005, 2007:96-147; Keightley 1850:352; Rieti 1991; also ATU D2066.

other heroes' accoutrements—"the horse of Marko Kraljević, the battle spear of Sibirjanin Janko, and the shining feather (a sword) of Banović Stipan" (Banović 1908.16 l. 4-6) and instructs him on how to pass an initial obstacle on his path (the allure of the beautiful maidens of Mostar). He follows her advice well, but she neglects to warn him of the *vile* that spy him afterwards from Velebić (Velebit) Mountain. At first, the *vile* mirror the episode of the Mostar maidens, but then the song shifts in the singing and the *vile* fire an arrow into the hero's forehead, noting that they recognize the horse and weapons but not the bedecked hero.

In a highly distinctive and expanded version of the trope sung by Marko Vujičić from Popovići<sup>66</sup> south of Dubrovnik (MH I.65), Đuro of Smederevo seeks a bride in the daughter of the Ban of the (fantastical) city of Leđan. The courtship goes well but the young maiden asks Đuro about the rumours that he already has a lover, Ana from India,<sup>67</sup> who is a '*vila-y* maiden' (*vilovna djevojka*) and plots their demise. Đuro tells her that everything she says is the truth, although he did not know that Ana was a '*vila* maiden,' the very type which he has vowed never to marry. He passes India city twice, both times spied by Ana who nocks her arrow but is dissuaded from killing him—by her 'young friends' on the first pass under the pretense that her suspicions about his spurned love might be misguided and on the second pass by the *vila baždarkinja* (tariff collector), who insidiously suggests that Ana wait to kill him on his third and final pass so that he dies in front of his new love. Đuro gathers a wedding party composed of the greatest heroes

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<sup>66</sup> The published version in MH I incorrectly credits this song to Kata Ćurlin in Blato on the island of Korčula.

<sup>67</sup> Here, as elsewhere, a mythical and otherworldly realm.

(Relja and Miloš in Bosnia, Janković-Stojan in Kotar, Senjanin Ivo and Marko in Prilip), but to no avail. Marko, sensing the danger, tries to disguise Đuro as another hero on the ride back but impatient Đuro reveals himself and is killed by Ana's arrows. Marko and Ivo attack India and after an extended and complex chase<sup>68</sup> they beat the *vila* into compliance and then mutilate her (digging out her eyes, cutting off her arms and impaling her)<sup>69</sup> after she brings Đuro back to life. The procession is then able to continue.

The second form that this motif takes is a meta-narrative approach that appears even in Vuk's early collection. In two multiforms of the common song Omer and Merima (Vuk I.345; Dungjerović 1891-2.208),<sup>70</sup> the motif of *vile* attacking grooms with arrows is used referentially in the narrative. In both versions Omer loves Merima, but his mother has betrothed him to Fatima. When his mother gathers a wedding party to retrieve Fatima, Omer refuses to join. Upon arrival at Fatima's home the maiden is incensed by the breach in protocol and custom. In a remarkably witty and imaginative referential wink between singer and knowing audience, Omer's mother explains to the young bride that there is a *vila* on a mountain between their homes who shoots grooms in their wedding processions; she left Omer at home for his safety. The fact that this version of the motif, dependent as it is upon audience recognition of the original motif, existed in Vuk's time and can be

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<sup>68</sup> The chase is modelled after that in the 'Punish Singing' with hints of an episode from the 'Attack Wedding Party in Mountains' motif and ending with a 'River Vila Wrapped around Horse' motif.

<sup>69</sup> These kinds of brutal revenges are quite commonplace in the core epic tradition. Unfaithful women are often mutilated in horrific manners (breasts and hands shorn with stumps inserted into chest cavities, hair tarred and ignited, eyes gouged, etc.) and male nemeses are often dispatched brutally with their towers subsequently raided, razed and their infant children cast from high windows. Many singers bring honourable and merciful ends to their villains while a number foreground the brutality of martial interactions.

<sup>70</sup> This song does not normally include the *vila*. For common variants see Vuk I.343, 344.

found in multiform suggests that the stock version was well-known and long-rooted in the tradition.

### **Make Character Sick When Love Spurned**

1% (2 songs) Only recorded in Luka on the Island of Šipan.<sup>71</sup> Dependent Motif

This motif is a unique innovation that seems to have been constructed and taken popular hold on the island of Šipan. The story-pattern is an elaboration of an established motif in the lyric songs<sup>72</sup> which draws inspiration from a number of other motifs and weaves them into a novel song. The motif also hints at local understandings of *vile* and folk magic drawn from yet other registers of the *vila*. The most elaborate version was sung by Anica Begin (Glavić 1887d.141) who claimed to have learned the song from one Nika Vuković, also from Luka. A second, shorter multiform was sung by Mare Ivanković (Marković 1892-3 IV.1), also a Luka resident.

In both versions Sibirjanin Janko gathers an army to head to Kosovo field with his nephew, Banović Sekula, as standard-bearer.<sup>73</sup> As they pass through a mountain, a *vila* is smitten with the beautiful, young hero and descends to him.<sup>74</sup> Here the motif elaborates upon the well established lyric song motif ‘Offer Magic Gifts...’ as the *vila* offers Sekula three good turns, or magic gifts if he will take her as his wife.<sup>75</sup> Sekula turns down her

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<sup>71</sup> Cf. a near-multiform opening in MH I 78 collected on the mainland nearby in Smokovljani.

<sup>72</sup> This seems to be common practice for the female singers of this region. See Murat 1886a.57 or Glavić 1887d.124 and discussion of others below.

<sup>73</sup> This alone links these songs to the variants of Janko and Sekula’s battle at Kosovo in Vuk’s collection which offer a highly divergent story-pattern (Vuk II.85, 86).

<sup>74</sup> In another ambiguous example of *vile* being bird-like or possibly small, the *vila* lands on Sekula’s standard (see n. 3 of this chapter). Sekula’s connection to *vile* is well established elsewhere (MH I 74, 75, 78; Vuk I.266).

<sup>75</sup> See the ‘Offer Magic Gifts...’ motif (below). Here, rather than an offering in plea, the singers have shifted the motif to be an enticement. The offerings here are that he will succeed in battle at Kosovo, that she will give him wealth and that she will give birth to a heroic child for him (Glavić 1887d.141 ll. 21-31; Marković 1892-3 IV.1 ll. 18-24).

advances, telling her that his mother told him never to marry a *vila*.<sup>76</sup> Bluntly rejected, the *vila* casts ‘grievous magic’ (*teški mađiluk*) upon Sekula which causes his head to ache and his health to rapidly deteriorate. Janko, unaware of the magical nature of Sekula’s affliction, recommends simple remedies. Sekula, knows, however, that his time is limited and sends a desperate letter home to, variously in each song, his sister and mother, who have secret healing knowledge. In both multiforms these incidents initiate a cross-dressing motif where the hero’s sister dresses in male clothing in order to ride to the military front to heal her brother and engage in battle in his stead.<sup>77</sup>

What is most interesting in this motif are the descriptions of the magic which the *vila* has cast upon Sekula. In Ivanković’s song, mother and daughter pick mountain herbs on their way to Kosovo. When they arrive, the mother places the herbs on Sekula’s head, burns his clothes on a fire and dresses him in new clothing to heal him (Marković 1892-3.IV.1 ll. 104-6). In Begin’s multiform, Sekula’s sister Jelica races to his tent where she finds him feverish and near death. She lifts his head and removes the heavy magic that the *vila* placed on him. The ‘magic’ is never fully explained but manifests as a tangible item or substance that must be removed from his body. The first magics (they are treated in plural upon removal) are under his right armpit, the second are embedded in his heroic

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<sup>76</sup> In Begin’s version Sekula calls the *vila* a whirlwind (*Hod' otole, vihru od planine!*) “I don’t believe in your magics, / Rather in my great God. / My mother instructed me / That I should never marry a mountain *vila* / *Vile* are whirlwinds from the mountains (*E su vile vihri od planine*) / Nor maidens who are their mother’s only daughter / Only-daughters are harlots” (Glavić 1887d.141 ll. 35-42). The connection between *vile* and whirlwinds shows up infrequently but commonly enough to be a core characteristic and to lend weight to the interpretation of her name put forward by Nodilo (see n. 5 in the Introduction). See for example, MH II.41 and Šestić 1889.271 where the *vila* travels in a whirlwind.

<sup>77</sup> Begin has Sekula’s sister Jelica ride alone to the front to heal her brother where she undergoes a number of trials, in each one besting male heroes and proving herself a greater warrior than even her brother. In Ivanković’s song the sister cross-dresses to accompany her mother, the healer, to the front. Ivanković’s multiform is much abbreviated and lacking the trials of the sister, although she engages in battle.

hair. Jelica pulls them out and puts them in the pocket of her dolman. After she heals his head with herbs and he falls asleep, she exits his tent and walks Kosovo field until she finds a body of water. Here she takes the magics out of her pocket and casts them into the water. The magic is so red hot that when it hits the cold water it creates blue and bloody waves (Glavić 1887d.141 ll. 256-60). After hours of using the herbs on Sekula, the hero finally wakes, fully healed but still unsuited for battle, prompting Jelica's forays into the world of men.<sup>78</sup>

This idea of *vila* magic appears nowhere else in the song tradition, but has correlates in narrative lore and possibly in real ritual. The collector Mijo Žuljić outlined a similar description of how peasants attempted to aid their male family members who had had their minds swept by the *vile*. Those *vilenjaci* who wandered about the hills after *vila* had charmed them (*občinile*) with their *vila*-charms (*vilovske čine*), were brought to a church where a priest would sprinkle them with holy water and pray above them. Thus, the priest and family would “burn the charms from him” (*spale s njega čine*), with varying degrees of success. Those for whom the ritual is successful would return to their normal state, while those who died were buried outside the cemetery as unclean dead (Žuljić 1904-11:556).

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<sup>78</sup> A true master of her craft, Begin has word of this healing ‘by a doctor from Buda’ as well as the true identity of the doctor reach the Turkish Czar who feigns a *vila*-induced headache as well, hoping to abduct Sekula's sister. See this thesis' Supplement for a translation of the song (Narrative Song 4).

### **River *Vila* Wrapped around Horse**

2% (6 songs) Bosnia and Herzegovina and Dubrovnik region.<sup>79</sup> Independent Motif

While this motif is employed in two songs as an independent motif (MH 1.65; Marković 1886-7.19 both discussed above), there are four songs (representing two multiforms each of two variants) that suggest the core uses of the motif. Here a mounted hero attempts to forge a river, but his horse is arrested half-way across. With the aid of an advisor, or with much harassment of his horse, he is usually able to reach the other side of the river, at which time he discovers that a *vila* has wrapped her hair, herself, or both, around the horse's legs in an attempt to drown the character.

In one song tradition (Hör I.3; MH I.36), this motif is combined with the 'Impede Building' motif and connected to the historical event of the building of Mehmed Paša Sokolović's famous bridge over the river Drina.<sup>80</sup> In these songs Mehmed Paša hires master architect Mitre to build his bridge in Višegrad. When Mitre goes to inspect the location his horse cannot escape the waters of the river. With much coaxing, or with a rope thrown from Sokolović, the horse extricates itself, whereat a *vila* is discovered wrapped around the horse's legs.<sup>81</sup> Mitre draws his sabre to remove her head but she warns him that he shall never build his bridge without her knowledge. This leads

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<sup>79</sup> With one attestation in Popovići north of Dubrovnik (MH I.65) sung by Marko Vujičić which he learned from Ston native Đuro Ivanković while working on a boat. This suggests that the motif was known well enough in the Dubrovnik region. The number of collected songs and the way that the motif is used in a more dependent manner in Bosnia, however, suggest that that is most likely its source region.

<sup>80</sup> This event is most commonly known through Ivo Andrić's depiction of it in his opus *Na Drini Čuprija* (Bridge on the Drina) where he mentions this very tradition about *vile* obstructing this bridge's construction (Andrić 1978:28, 49). See 'Impede Building' below.

<sup>81</sup> Despite the fact that the *vila* is located in the river, she is only referred to as a 'water *vila*' (*vodenica*) in one song (MH I.36), and is even called a 'mountain *vila*' (here *bjelogorka* [white low-mountain]).



inevitably to the ‘Call for Sacrifice’ motif and ‘Impede Building’ motif as commonly employed together.

In a second tradition (MH V.37; Pavlinović 1876b.537), the motif arises under quite a different circumstance. Since the multiform recorded by Pavlinović is truncated and sung in a manner that requires audience acquaintance with the material (see Foley 1995:8-9) I shall provide a quick summary of the version in Nametak:

Pasha Sejidiija’s army settles by the Morava River. All are early to bed except the Pasha who stays awake and is inclined to listen outside. He hears a *vila* in the river calling to a *vila* in the mountain saying, “Tomorrow the Pasha will pass by us, / And he will lead his army. / In the army is Zaim-pašić Ahmo! / Let us drown him, / So that we can love the dead Ahmo, / Since we cannot love him live!” (ll. 19-24). The *vile* think no one hears them but the Pasha hears them (a common poetic trope in the songs). In the morning, he calls a workman to send criers throughout the camp in search of the soldier Ahmo. The youth arrives at the Pasha’s tent and, finding him a good lad and courteous, the Pasha gives him advice. He provides him a sort of ritual instruction to place the nails in his horse’s shoes backwards, saddle the horse backwards, take the reins backwards and to ride backwards (ll. 47-50).<sup>82</sup> They set off and all the army crosses the river safely except Ahmo who becomes fixed. The Pasha yells to him to fire both his pistols between his

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<sup>82</sup> A common trope in myth the world over. In BCMS oral traditions, magical protection against supernatural beings is often obtained by turning ones clothing or other items backwards. Cf. the preternatural hero Tale of Orašac whose standard-bearer rides his mare backwards and with his standard upside down in Međedović’s most impressive epic “The Wedding of Smailagić Meho” (1974:200). On Tale see Foley 1994.

horse's ears.<sup>83</sup> He does so and the horse starts, squeals, and pulls from the water the golden stocks (*falake*) and ropes with which the *vila* attempted to bind him, as well as the *vila* herself, attached to the protruding nails on the horse's shoes (see this thesis' Supplement for a translation of this song [Narrative Song 2]).

### **Sexual Competition to Female**

3% (9 songs) From Kordun (Pokuplje) to Western Slavonia.<sup>84</sup> Dependent Motif

This motif has two major variants. In the first (Kamenar 2013.9; Kušmiš and Kušmiš 1898.136; Marković 1881.29; Strohal 1883.149, 150, 151<sup>85</sup>), a mother overhears her daughter-in-law mournfully singing or talking aloud while conducting domestic tasks (weaving, sewing, etc.). The daughter complains that after nine years in marriage and having come to live with her husband (usually Ivan/Jivan or Mihalj), she has yet to lie with him in their marital bed because he has taken a *vila* as his concubine. The mother enters their bedroom that night and finds her son in bed with the *vila* while his true bride stands tragically at the bedside. The mother resolves the problematic situation by driving the *vila* away, usually by threatening to cut off her hair with a knife (Kamenar 2013.9; Strohal 1883.150), chasing her off (Strohal 1883.149), or by killing the *vila* in her son's bed (Marković 1881.29; Strohal 1883.151).<sup>86</sup> In Strohal's first multiform the singer adds

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<sup>83</sup> Another common ritual act in the Muslim epics when the horse is arrested in water, by *vile* or otherwise. The idea may be to outline that the shot is being fired in close proximity, but the impracticality and specificity of firing between the horse's ears suggests something more.

<sup>84</sup> Most of these songs were collected in close proximity, northwest of the city of Karlovac or in Zrin in Banska Krajina

<sup>85</sup> Strohal collected three multiforms of this song in Stative near Karlovac. The version published in MH V.23 is a conglomerate of songs 149 and 150. Combining songs in this way was not common practice with the editors.

<sup>86</sup> In Strohal 1883.151, the mother takes a sword and cuts a bastard out of the *vila*'s stomach.

dramatic depth to the couple's supernatural marital difficulties by placing blame on the mother's incautious words:

<p><i>Još govori Mihaljeva majka:</i>  <i>“Biži, vila, od Mihalja moga,</i>  <i>“Ja nis’ sina s vilun oženila,</i>  <i>“Nego san ga sirotun divojkun!”</i>  <i>Još govori vila prebijela:</i>  <i>“Ver’ ti boga, Mihaljeva majka,</i>  <i>“Zač ti meni sina obećala,</i>  <i>“Dok ti je bil maljan u povojieh,</i>  <i>“I dok si ga u nuni nuni,</i>  <i>“Uvik si mu tako govorila:</i>  <i>““Nuni, nuni, Mile, moje dite,</i>  <i>““Brzo rasti i brzo pameti</i>  <i>““S belun ću te vilun oženiti!””</i></p>	<p>Then Mihalj's mother said,          “Shoo, <i>vila</i>, from my Mihalj!          I didn't marry my son to a <i>vila</i>,          Rather, to this poor maiden!”          But the too-white <i>vila</i> said,          “On your faith, Mihalj's mother,          For you did promise your son to me.          While he was still in swaddling clothes          And you would coo and rock him,          You would always speak thus,          ‘Hush, hush, my dear little child,          Quickly grow tall and smart          And I will wed you to a white <i>vila</i>!””<sup>87</sup>          (Strohal 1883.149 ll. 17-29)</p>
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A multiform found slightly farther afield, from Marta Ilijašević of Rajić in Slavonia, mirrors the plot of these, but it is the poor girl's brother-in-law who hears her woes and sets her marriage right. The brother-in-law tricks his brother into leaving his room, admits the *vila* and then digs out her eyes and cuts off her breasts, telling her to return to her mountain (Kušmiš and Kušmiš 1898.136).

In a second variant collected in Banska Krajina and Western Slavonia (MH V.22; Bunjevac 1886.21; Milićević 1884.4), the daughter-in-law complains once more of a *vila* concubine ruining her marriage, only here the husband spends his evenings with the *vila* in the mountains and already has children by her. The young bride is forgotten in the flow of the song as the mother invites the son to bring his *vila* home so she might at least meet his secret family. He agrees, but warns his mother that she cannot mention God

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<sup>87</sup> This plot-point hinges on the understanding that beautiful women are often compared metaphorically to *vile*. The drama of the song thus rests on a ‘be careful what you wish for’ moral.

(sometime Mary also) around his *vila*-wife. As they approach the home, something happens to startle the mother who unthinkingly utters a blessing, “God be with you white *vila!*” (MH V.22 l. 56) upon which the *vila* flies away into the clouds. In two of these songs (MH V.22; Milićević 1884.4), this motif shifts into an episode<sup>88</sup> normally drawn from the ‘Swan Maiden’ motif where the father calls to the *vila* asking her what shall become of their children if she leaves. In both versions the *vila* replies that the children will be fine:

<i>Ako l' sinci moje krvi budu,</i>	If our sons be of my blood
<i>Oni ć' naći svoju milu majku,</i>	They will find their dear mother
<i>Naći će ju nebu u oblaci;</i>	They will go to the sky and find her in the clouds;
<i>Ako l' sinci tvoje krvi budu,</i>	If our sons be of your blood
<i>Ti je 'rani sebi uz koljena!</i>	Then you will raise them on your knee!
	(MH V.22 ll. 67-71)

In the multiform collected by Milićević, a wind rises the next day and the *vila*'s two boys fly to their mother (1884.4).<sup>89</sup>

### **Save Character from Dangerous Lake**

1% (3 songs) Dubrovnik littoral and the island of Šipan. Dependent Motif

This motif was collected from three singers: Gusto Agačić in Dubrovnik (MH I.53), Katarina Kmetović in Banići (Milas 1884.6), and Mare Ivanković in Luka on Šipan (Marković 1892-3.12), all of whom provided fairly similar multiforms. In this song

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<sup>88</sup> An argument could be made that the episode of a *vila* leaving her children is an independent motif of its own but I have chosen to keep it connected to the ‘Swan Maiden’ motif since the majority of its uses are there and because comparative material from a range of sources suggests that the episode is integrally linked to the motif.

<sup>89</sup> The nature and understanding of *vila* children is an interesting topic that shifts with the colourful opinions and examples provided by various singers and tellers. In these songs we get the sense that *vila* blood is a genetic question. Her sons here can fly, yet male *vile* do not exist in the song tradition, only male infants appear. Many legends suggest that great male heroes have *vile* for mothers, while most informants for the descriptions held the opinion that *vile* cannot give birth to male brood. In descriptions from collectors in Montenegro, *vile* are said to grow in nature from plants and trees or dew (Đorđević 1953:70; Vrčević 1876:87).

Marko Kraljević is travelling with his nephew (Childe Marijan in two songs, Miljenko in the third) when they decide to visit a local Ban (of Krojan and Jedren) or King (of Buda). Marko instructs his nephew on etiquette and they are received warmly. While feasting with this noble, the nephew falls in love with his daughter and, through various means, learns that the only way to gain her hand is to quest across fantastic mountains and lakes to pick a rare flower (either the golden [*pozlaćeni*] or the dear beloved [*dragoljuba*] flower<sup>90</sup>) as proof of his heroism. By guile or gift he acquires Marko's horse, Šarac, and sets off on his journey. Upon reaching a body of water that he must cross, the young hero is met by a *vila* who recognizes Šarac and enquires how the young hero came to have Marko's horse. Though she tries to dissuade him from his dangerous quest, seeing his stubborn resolve, the *vila* instructs him in magic means to cross the waters (to slice at the water around him with his sword, or to tighten the girths on Šarac's saddle). He passes safely and retrieves the flower, but upon return the waves become choppy and bloody and overwhelm him. His *vila* helper sets to flight, calling on 30 other *vile* to help her save him and mustering them to rescue with warnings of Marko's wrath should they allow his nephew to perish. Once saved, the hero returns from the mountain to battle Musa the robber on the road home and claim his bride.

The most interesting aspect of this song, from a comparative mythological standpoint, is that the *vila* here is marked by a physical deficiency. In Kmetović's version she

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<sup>90</sup> *Tropaeolum majus* (garden nasturtium, Indian cress, or monk's cress) is known in BCMS as *dragoljub*. I am weary of glossing thus as it seems the singer is not envisioning a true plant species in these songs and it is not clear that such a specific and foreign species would be familiar to most singers and fodder for oral traditions. Cf. Foley, who makes an odd, uncited and un-noted correlation between this flower and the flower known as *Latinka* (1991:76-7). To my knowledge, the term *Latinka* only represents the common daisy (*Bellis perennis* L.).

is named the ‘one-eyed’ or ‘blind-in-one-eye’ *vila* (*ćoravica*), while in Agačić’s version she is the one-handed/armed *vila* (*čolaska/čolaskinja*). The latter informs Childe Marijan, with no explanatory context, that she lost her right hand defending the lake (ll. 399-400). The overlap of these two deformities on the same motif should raise the interest of any scholar familiar with the many Indo-European myths where this critical trope arises (Puhvel 1987:164, 181, 199-200).<sup>91</sup> Also notable in one multiform is another example of a native of Luka on Šipan, Mare Ivanković, connecting *vile* with whirlwinds (Marković 1892-3.12 l. 95).

### **Heal Blindness**

2% (7 songs) Herzegovina, Dubrovnik, Šipan and Montenegro. Independent Motif.

Though it is not exclusive to them, *vile* often blind or remove the eyes of their enemies or victims as well as regularly restoring vision. The ‘Attack Wedding Party...’ motif, explored above, involves a *vila* blinding the members of a wedding party and then returning their vision under threat, but other songs present the *vila* healing blindness of her own volition. This action is integral to a well known story-pattern replete with fantastic elements, the earliest multiform of which was sent to Vuk from Montenegro (possibly collected by Petrović Njegoš).<sup>92</sup> In Todor Ikov Piper’s “Jovan and the Giant’s

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<sup>91</sup> The fact that this deep mythological resonance only occurs in these songs from the Dalmatian island may also suggest Venetian, Latin or Aromanian influence.

<sup>92</sup> *Vladika* Petar II Petrović Njegoš (1813-1851), religious and political leader of Montenegro in Vuk’s time. Njegoš was a *guslar* and used the traditional singing to influence his literary work. Both he and Vuk were friends, drawn together by political and personal interests. Though he dreamed of a modern independent Montenegrin nation (Goy 1995:21), he aligned Montenegrin identity with the Serbian cultural movement (Pavlowitch 2002:40). Njegoš adopted Vuk’s orthography for his printing press in Cetinje (Goy 1995:14) and the two would remain friends until Njegoš’s early death (Wilson 1970:294).

Elder,” (Vuk II.8) when a deceptive mother’s giant lover<sup>93</sup> ambushes her son and tears his eyes out, it is a *vila* that washes his eyes with healing water and prays to God to heal his vision (ll. 295-7). Anica Begin in Luka on Šipan (MH I.45) provided a multiform of this song some 30 years later, which adds even more fantastic elements<sup>94</sup> and elaborates the song to an impressive 1,002 lines. Here the *vila* is called on by Jovan’s human *posestrima* Anđelija, the princess of Buda, to heal him. The *vila*, who flies on silken wings, sacrifices her wings at the princess’s pleading by making seven quick trips to the river Jordan. Interestingly, here the only water that can heal Jovan’s eyes is tragically corrosive to the *vila*’s pagan and fragile wings (l. 864). A second song by Begin (MH I.55) re-employs this motif when Marko must call on the *vila* Nadanojla (said to be mistress of all the *vile* [l. 391]) to heal the eyes that Marko has shot out of a Snake-Man’s head (see ‘Turn Man into Snake’ below).

In one final song found in multiform from both Herzegovina (Vuk V.19) and Sarajevo (MH V.58),<sup>95</sup> a mother rebukes her son’s dismay when his friends heckle him for being betrothed unknowingly to a blind maiden. Resolved to love her despite her deficiency, he leads his wedding party to retrieve her. On their return trip, a *vila* calls from a cloud to the maiden, bartering with her to trade a man (first her groom, then his *dever* [bride’s chaperone]) for her sight. When the maiden refuses both offers, the *vila*

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<sup>93</sup> This song occasionally employs a human lover in place of the giant (see for instance Murat 1886a.24). It also appears in the form of a folk tale, such as Tordinac 1885.1, where the giant is replaced by a *šarkanj* (dragon). However, in those variants the *vila* is absent.

<sup>94</sup> Beyond the mountain giant and the *vila*, Jovan must slay a dragon (*haždaja*, derived from the serpent *Aži Dahāka* from the Avesta and brought to the region via the Turks), and slaughter an army of giants. He also takes the serpent’s infant dragons (*haždajice*, *zyjerke* [little *haždaje*, little beasts]) as his pets.

<sup>95</sup> Đorđević cites a third multiform, also from Sarajevo (1953:72 n. 121).

(*vile* in MH V.58) settles on trading for the girl's horse, to which the maiden agrees. The *vila* rides off with the horse and gives the maiden her sight. In the Herzegovinian multiform, when the groom discovers that his bride is no longer blind he takes the *vila* as his *posestrima* and gives her many gifts.

### **Cause Rift between Brothers**

2% (7 songs) Wide distribution. Dependent Motif

This motif is one of many variants of a story-pattern involving two brothers who quarrel, leading one to kill the other, and then reflect upon the tragedy before killing himself.<sup>96</sup> In these variants, a *vila* causes this quarrel. These songs usually open with a vignette of the happiness and love between two or three brothers (and occasionally a maiden who lives with them) who are spied by a group of *vile*. The *vila* elder, at the sight of their joy, offers variously her seniority (MH I.46; Pletikosić 1889.55), some money (Vuk II.11), or a large *banovina* (a viceroyalty) (Nališ 1885.46; Pletikosić 1889.55)<sup>97</sup> to whichever of the *vile* in her group will cause a quarrel between the brothers.<sup>98</sup> In most cases, the youngest *vila* accepts the challenge and flies down to them. Mistaking the *vila* for a beautiful maiden,<sup>99</sup> the brothers begin to quarrel over who shall have her. Most often one is killed and the other takes the *vila* with him on horseback. He is some distance off

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<sup>96</sup> See Bog.6 for example and Bošković-Stulli 1970.

<sup>97</sup> In Ive Banović's multiform (Banović 1908.23) it is the Czarica of Constantinople that offers half of the city and her wealth to whoever might cause the quarrel; a *vila* answers the call. This mixing shows up in other multiforms such as Tommaseo n.d.25 where a *vila* offers riches and a human maiden accepts the challenge.

<sup>98</sup> This episode of a gathering of *vile* and one's offer of gifts to any of her peers who would fulfill a task for her is drawn into other songs and makes it another candidate for its own motif. However, like the episode of the *vila* leaving her children above (n. 87 this chapter), it is so commonly connected to this motif and reminiscent of it in other circumstances that I am inclined to interpret those other occurrences as a borrowing from this motif. For some examples see MH I.75; MH II.3.

<sup>99</sup> It is usually not clear whether or not the brothers recognize her as a *vila*. In MH I.46 the singer has the *vila* transform rocks into sheep and herself into a shepherdess.



when he comes to his senses, finds that the *vila* has vanished and returns to his brother's body to conclude the tragedy.<sup>100</sup> In an innovative ending, which Jaka Korunić from Smokvica on the island of Korčula learned from her mother, two brothers are made to quarrel by a *vila* over a maiden with whom they live. By the end of the song one brother is murdered while the other and the girl have committed suicide. In their places grow two pines and a fir.<sup>101</sup> The fir loses its needles in sorrow after every winter and the mountain *vile* tend to the trees and, strangely, are said to taunt them (MH V.108).

In a slight variation on this motif, collected in both Sućuraj on the island of Hvar (Nališ 1885.46) and in Dugobabe near Split (Pletikosić 1889.55), the *vila slovinkinja* is offered a great *banovina* if she can turn the three Kotromanović brothers<sup>102</sup> (who live in Jajce with their sister Danica) against each other. She attempts to do this but is unsuccessful<sup>103</sup> and so resorts to spreading lies about the brothers' allegiance amongst Bosnian or Slavic gentry (*bosanska/slovinska gospoda*). The gentry attempt to kill the brothers and cause the family to disperse to various cities. The sister, in both multiforms, arrives in Rome where she dies of sorrow.

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<sup>100</sup> In Vuk II.11, it is a crow that reprimands the character for his terrible actions, while in a song by Ivan Kirola of Orašac (Vijolić 1887b.69) a *vila* does not cause the quarrel, but rather calls down to chastise the murderer.

<sup>101</sup> As a clear example of the fluidity of the ideas that attach to songs and motifs (what Lord called tension of essences 2000:97) these two pines and fir (a metaphor that is also used outside of this motif) also show up in the multiforms collected in nearby towns Zaostrog and Sućuraj (Banović 1908.23 and Nališ 1885.46).

<sup>102</sup> The Kotromanovići were a Bosnian noble and later royal dynasty from the late medieval period. See Ćirković 1964:72, 136, 164.

<sup>103</sup> In Nališ 1885.46 she again casts 'grievous magic' (*teški mandiluk*) on them but it does not work.

### **Call for Sacrifice**

4% (12 songs). Wide Distribution. Independent Motif

The idea that *vile* call for, suggest, or demand sacrifices can only loosely be titled a motif. Though it is a common behaviour of the *vile*, it does not occur as its own narrative unit replicated across the tradition. Instead, it is simply a common behaviour that arises in connection with motifs.<sup>104</sup> The most common example is found in the ‘Impede Building’ motif, with two other examples occurring in the ‘Trick *Pobratim*’ motif, both of which will be discussed in more detail below. There is, however, one very distinctive example that arises in a song in such a manner that I am inclined to see it as an archaism. If it is not a remnant of an older traditional pattern, then the singer had a very odd sense of humour.

In the early 1880s, the butcher Ante Čajkušić of Grabovac sang a variant of a common song about Marko Kraljević being captured by Turks to be hanged in Karlovac (MH VIII.17). In his variant, Marko sends word of his trouble to his home in Prilep and his brother Andrija and other heroes prepare to ride to his aid. Marko’s two young children, Pilip and Nikola, overhear the news and gather horses hoping to join in the rescue. They are lied to by their uncle and dissuaded from going, but secretly set off despite him. A *vila* watches them from a cloud as they ride out and says to herself, “Whichever hero would come along / Kill those two children / I would give him half my strength” (ll. 229-31). The episode is presented oddly, immediately forgotten in the flow of the story and the *vila* does not appear again in the song. It is possible that the singer

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<sup>104</sup> The same applies to the ‘Dance *Kolo*’ motif which will be explored below.

simply disliked the characters of the children and decided to have a *vila* give voice to his distaste, but I am inclined to see here a half-retained sacrifice motif carried in the song on the pretense of conservation. Perhaps in Grabovac this song was not sung without this episode.<sup>105</sup>

### **Trick *Pobratim***

1% (2 songs) Island of Brač. Dependent Motif

Mate Ostojić collected two multiforms of a fairly unique song on the island of Brač, the first a longer version sung by Ana Zlatar in the village of Povlja (MH V.38) and a second from Antica Jurunović in Selca (Ostojić 1880-3b.113). In the song, a *vila* (a *vila* and a maiden in Jurunović's) is building a city (tower) on a mountain. Not from regular materials, but from the bones of horses and heroes (from the heads of the dead). Running out of materials, the *vila* writes to her *pobratim*, the Ban Drinović (Binković), to obtain more for her. She informs him of a wealthy wedding party passing through the mountain, telling him to lay waste to the party but to leave the bride alive. The Ban is not keen on the work, but follows the *vila*'s request, readies an army and fulfills her demand. The panicked bride, begs her cruel assailant for mercy and asks if he is familiar with her brother, the Ban Drinović (Binković). The Ban remorsefully curses his *vila posestrima* (the *vila* and maiden) for her heinous trick, showers gifts upon his sister and sends her home to her castle telling her to wait for him.

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<sup>105</sup> This episode may derive from other variants where Marko gets a letter to his *pobratimi* under the pretense of writing to his wife and two sons to come witness his hanging. The czar allows the letter to be written because he secretly plans to kill Marko's sons at the hanging and end his line (MH II.8, for example). If this is the source, then the alteration is drastic.

The macabre image of *vile* constructing structures with human body parts surfaces infrequently but widely in her tradition (see MH X.8; Vuk V.260; Delić 1877.46; Kurtagić 1908-34.103; also Ajdačić 2001:213), as well as the idea of her demanding human sacrifice. The motif to which they are attached here, however, as well as the idea that a *vila* will betray her loyal *pobratim* rather than dutifully serve him, is queer and signals a unique innovation and song tradition that is most likely particular to the island.

### **Turn Man into Snake**

1% (2 songs) Both sung by Anica Begin in Luka on Šipan. Independent Motif

The two animals most often associated with *vila* lore are birds and snakes. Yet, while birds are often used in very straightforward manners (she transforms into a bird, she talks to a bird, she is confused for a bird, a hero has a dream where *vile* are birds, etc.), snakes are drawn into the tradition in often odd and tangential ways (snake reins and arrows, snake guards at a '*vila* manor,' *vile* raise a 'snake-man,' etc.). 'Turn Man into Snake' does not assuredly qualify as a motif, since the examples do not follow a similar narrative structure and both are drawn from a single singer, Anica Begin, suggesting that the motif may be unique to her creative process. I have chosen to include the motif because both songs are known to have been learned from another singer (the first from her father Antun Kalafatović and the second from another Luka native Frane Malešević) which suggests an existing tradition. Moreover, the connection of *vile* to serpents is omnipresent and cannot be denied as a deeply ingrained aspect of her wider tradition.

In 'Marko Kraljević and the Snake-Man' (MH I.55), Marko is called by Lazar Višnjević to rid him of a Snake-Man who beds his wife every time Lazar leaves to

hunt.<sup>106</sup> Višnjević conducts the same indirect interrogation theme found in the ‘Attack Wedding Party’ motif and learns that the Snake-Man’s fears Marko, Šarac and firearms which Marko was given by his *posestrima vila* (see ‘Give Equipment or Clothing’). Lazar summons Marko, who battles the Snake-Man, traps him, and shoots his eyes out. As Marko prepares to decapitate him, the Snake-Man begs for his life, informing Marko that he is in fact the only prince of Buda, enchanted ten years before by a *vila*’s spell. He promises great rewards from his father if Marko spares his life, for he only has 15 days left until his curse ends and the *vile* remove his snake shirt. When Marko agrees and they take each other into *pobratstvo* (brotherhood by oath), the snake tells Marko to quickly drive Šarac to cold ‘*Dunaj* water’ and to there call to the *vila* Nadanojla who is mistress (*gospođa*) of all *vile* and manages his curse. Marko enlists the *vila* to fly to the monster and heal his vision<sup>107</sup> and the two then wait-out the remainder of the curse. The *vila* then instructs Marko in avoiding one last magic danger when he arrives in Buda, and he successfully returns the prince to his family and receives a reward.<sup>108</sup>

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<sup>106</sup> There are multiforms of this song, but the insertion of *vile* into the story is particular to Begin. Cf. Vuk II.43; MH I.54; Broz and Bosanac 1896:570-571; Glavić 1887c.103; Miošić-Kačić 1886.22. This song also bears parallels to the ‘snake-groom’ story-pattern (MH I 32; Vuk II 12) which might have informed its creation.

<sup>107</sup> The *vila*’s flight is presented oddly here as she is first said to fly with her body (l. 415), and only later are wings mentioned. As noted above, *vila* flight is seldom presented clearly in oral traditions. For the narrative songs she is most often said simply to fly or ascend/descend, with the most descriptive passages coming from Gusto Agačić who often has his *vila* ‘let her wings down from her shoulders’ (*spušti/popušti/ispusti iz ramena krila*) (MH I.53 l. 354; Glavić 1887b.77 l. 743, 1887c.88 l. 53).

<sup>108</sup> In an example of the many ways that *vila* lore is woven through songs, Begin also employs the idea of beautiful people being compared to *vile*. When Marko arrives in Buda with the prince, the King and Queen ask Marko if he has captured a *vila* in the mountains, for they do not recognize their beautiful son (l. 517).

In Begin's second song, 'A *Vila* changes Sekula into a Snake and Gives Birth to a Baby with Him' (MH I.74),<sup>109</sup> Banović Sekula gathers a war party and heads into the mountains despite his sister's desperate pleas, prompted by a premonitory dream. He comes upon water in the mountain near which *vile* dance a *kolo*. The leader of the dance, breaks off from the group, flies over to Sekula and welcomes him, telling him that she prayed to God to see him in the woods. He reacts angrily, threatening to cut her down with his sword (resonances of Begin's other Sekula and *vila* song [Glavić 1887d.141]), but she transforms him into a snake and takes him into the mountains. His army brings the news to his sister who searches for him in the mountains every day for a year. On the last day of the year, a voice from under the water of a lake instructs her in a magic process to gain her brother back. She crosses to the other shore, finds three snakes in front of a great stone and lets them jump into the bosom of her unbuttoned blouse. She races home with her uncomfortable delivery and releases it into Sekula's bed. In the morning the snakes have become Sekula, the *vila*, and a young son that they spawned in their snake forms. They thenceforth live happily with the devoted sister in the castle.

### **Foretell Death**

1% (2 songs) Trnava in Bosnia (Podrinje) and Požega, Slavonia. Dependent Motif

This motif is only found in two multiforms of the same song collected one hundred years apart from one another. The song is 'The Death of Marko Kraljević'

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<sup>109</sup> As mentioned above, song titles were a foreign idea to most singers. Most collected titles represent a name given by the collector, or else a sort of prompted response by the singer when asked what the name of the song should be, what the song is about, or how they would explain that song to another singer (Lord 2000:99). The large collection sent to *Matica Hrvatska* by the Collector Baldo Malkov Glavić is full of beautiful examples of such titles, a number of which outline the plot, often including two or three turns in the tale. The two songs presented in this motif were retitled for their publication in MH I.

famously sung to Vuk by 48-year-old Filip Višnjić<sup>110</sup> in 1815 and collected again by Ivo Kraljević in Požega in 1915 from the 70-year-old singer Ivo Perković. Although there are many traditions about the death, or eternal sleep of Marko Kraljević, this story-pattern is unique in that Marko learns his fate from others. While travelling through a mountain range, Šarac stumbles—highly uncharacteristic for such a heroic steed. When Marko worries aloud about this, a *vila* informs him that Šarac is aware of their imminent demise and that Marko must travel to a nearby well where the truth of his end will be revealed to him. This motif falls into the category of the *vila*'s common propensity to call out to characters (see below), but adds prescience to her repertoire of supernatural abilities.

Another multiform of this song (not included in this survey) was collected from an unnamed singer by Todor Ikov in Montenegro (1973-4 I:cclxxii) and was posthumously published from Vuk's unpublished MSs (II. 62), although in this version the *vila* is replaced by a 'something' from the sky (see below in this chapter). This means that the song is likely traditional,<sup>111</sup> though Višnjić has provided his characteristic poetic depth and artistic flavour to his multiform. However, given the high degree of similarity

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<sup>110</sup> Of all the singers he personally collected from Vuk considered Filip Višnjić (1767-1834) and Tešan Podrugović (1775-1815) his two finest. Višnjić was born near Ugljevik in Bosnia and went blind from smallpox at the age of eight. At the age of 20, most of his family was tortured and killed by Ottoman Turks after they murdered two Turks who had raped a woman in the family. Filip learned to sing to the *gusle* and became a mendicant singer and beggar, travelling all over Bosnia and even as far as Northern Albania (Stef. Karadžić 1833:xii). He entered into Serbia in 1809 and lived in various camps along the Drina until 1813, singing songs to boost the moral of the soldiers in the First Serbian Uprising and composing a number of songs about the revolt and its leader Đorđe Petrović, or Karađorđe (xii). When the Turks in 1813 once more took control of Serbia he and his family fled to Syrmia and settled in the village of Grk (the village was later renamed Višnjićevo in his honour). Vuk collected 17 songs from the singer at the Monastery in Šišatovac in 1815, 13 of which were original compositions (Šašić 1998:61-62). For more on Višnjić see Koljević 1980:306-10; 340-2; Nedić 1990:38-61. On Tešan Podrugović see Koljević 1980:311-313; Nedić 1990:17-37.

<sup>111</sup> Višnjić is well known for inventing many of his songs (Lord 2000:136; Stefanović Karadžić 1833:xii).

between Višnjić's and Perković's multiforms and the late date of Kraljević's collecting, it is quite possible that Perković's telling is highly influenced by Višnjić's version.

Publications containing Vuk's most popular songs were readily available by the time of Perković's singing (Lord 2000:137) and Višnjić was one of his most celebrated singers, a clear choice for inclusion in most small chapbooks that proliferated in rural regions.

### **Dance/Song and Flute Competition**

1% (2 songs) Brist and Zaostrog in Dalmatia. Dependent Motif

Informant descriptions talk about *vile* forcing shepherds into competition with them (Ptašinski 1890-9:210). The shepherd will play his flute and the *vile* will dance to see who wins.<sup>112</sup> This trope is, however, rare in the narrative songs. I have found only two examples of it drawn from singers living within five kilometers' proximity of one another on the Dalmatian coast. In both multiforms the lowly shepherd has been replaced by the hero Ivan of Senj.

In 'Senjanin Ive'<sup>113</sup> and the *Vila Mandalina*,<sup>114</sup> collected in Zaostrog in 1903 by Stjepan Banović from his sister Ive (Banović 1908.42), white *vile* fly to Ivan's tower, dance *kolo* and call out to him. When his mother responds that he has gone out hunting in the mountains, the *vile* greet her and tell her to have Ivan go to another mountain for water and bring with him his *diple* (pipes)<sup>114</sup> and *svirale* (reed flute) when he has

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<sup>112</sup> Characters are said to *nadigrati* (out-dance), *nadpjevati* (out-sing) and *nadosvirati/nasvirati* (out-play). This always means the one who dances and sings/plays the longest until the others grow weary.

<sup>113</sup> Senjanin=man from Senj. The diminutive of Ivan is most commonly Ivo, but in some regions of Dalmatia these diminutives take on an 'e' instead (Frane rather than Franjo, Mate rather than Mato, etc.). Women's names here do the same (Kate rather than Kata, Ane rather than Ana, etc.).

<sup>114</sup> A *diple* or *dvojnica/dvojanke* is a common woodwind instrument for the region. It can either be carved as a fipple flute for direct playing or as a bag-pipe-style reedpipe attached to a tanned goat or sheepskin. Its unique sound character comes from its double chanters, each in its own bore within a single body that produce a layered sound.



returned. If he out-plays them, they will give him the *vila* Mandalina to marry. Upon his return his mother excitedly informs him. He dresses in finery, grabs his instruments and heads into the mountain. He arrives, begins to play and quickly out-plays the *vile*. Having won, the *vile* instruct him on where, when and how to acquire Mandalina as his bride and the song shifts into a ‘Swan Maiden’ motif.

In a multiform collected in Brist from Ana Miošić 17 years earlier, a playing and singing competition also leads into a ‘Swan Maiden’ motif, but the entire song starts with a ‘Wager with a Maiden’ motif (see both below) that is quite an odd pairing (Miošić-Kačić 1886.42). The motif follows a near-identical pattern but here the *diple* and *svirale* are replaced by a *gusle*<sup>115</sup> and the stakes are outlined—if the *vile* win they will cut off his head, if Ivan wins he may take the most beautiful *vila* to his manor. Ivan meets the *vile* in a field; he plays and they sing rather than dance.

<i>Biele su se umorile vile;</i>	The white <i>vile</i> tired themselves out,
<i>Mladi Ive ni počeo nije.</i>	But young Ive hadn’t even started.
<i>Kad to vidi Senjanin Ivane,</i>	When Senjanin Ivan saw that,
<i>On izbire ponajljepšu vilu,</i>	He picked the most beautiful <i>vila</i>
<i>Pa je vodi dvoru bijelomu,</i>	And brought her home to his white manor,
	(ll. 87-91)

### **Fly over in Woods**

2% (6 songs) Bosnia. Independent Motif

At any point, when a hero needs to travel a great distance and over high mountains, many narrative songs will include some passage where night is falling and the hero and his horse are presented with the true wilderness of the mountain. In most songs,

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<sup>115</sup> The *vila* tells Ivan’s mother, “Let him take maple wood / And *gudalo* of *jafriko* wood” (ll.57-8). A *gudalo* is the bow for a *gusle* and maple is the choice wood for carving a *gusle*. The metonymy of the reference would not be lost on an emic listener. I can only assume the *Jafrikovo drvo* is wood from Africa and thus something foreign, unique, and perhaps magical.

an assortment of beasts (usually wolves, ravens and bears) will call out, or flood the mountain path forcing the hero to calm his horse or to fend off the beasts with his sword or the horse's striking hooves,<sup>116</sup> but in some songs from Bosnia a unique motif arises that includes *vile*.

Kosta Hörmann received a song from a singer from Zagorje in Western Herzegovina, about whom no information remains, which he included in his first volume (Hör I.2). In this song, the protagonist and a small party are travelling over Maša Mountain in the night. The primordial fear that the forest exudes is demonstrated by an odd assortment of wild beasts:

<i>Golema je ta planina Maša,</i>	That Maša Mountain was enormous;
<i>Kroz nju hoda tri bijela dana,</i>	And took three days to traverse.
<i>Nigdje sela ni palanke nema,</i>	Not a village nor blockhouse <sup>117</sup> on it,
<i>Neg s' izvile pod oblake jele,</i>	Rather the firs there wound up toward the clouds
<i>Iznad puta sastavile grane.</i>	Assembling their branches above the path.
<i>Oko puta golemo kamenje,</i>	Around the path were enormous stones,
<i>Po kamenju porasla mašina,</i>	And on the stones moss had overgrown,
<i>Pa se u njoj nakotili vuci,</i>	In the moss wolves propagated,
<i>Po jelikam nalegli gavrani.</i>	In the firs ravens nested.
<i>Viju vuci, grakću gavranovi,</i>	The wolves howled, the ravens crowed,
<i>Iznad puta prelijeću vile,</i>	Above them <i>vile</i> flew across the path,
<i>Prekasuju megjedine crne,</i>	Black bears ambled about,
<i>Pa s' i oni u planini krive.</i>	They too bellowed in the mountain. (ll. 1226-38)

<sup>116</sup> If no real beasts are encountered the hero will most often calm his horse, telling it to fear neither wolf nor *hajduk*, for a wolf would not attack another wolf, nor a *hajduk* another *hajduk*. For multiforms without *vile* see MH I.53; Glavić 1887b.77; Šestić 1889.262.

<sup>117</sup> A *palanka* is a small wooden fortification built along mountain passes in Ottoman times where travelers would be able to sleep and defend themselves from attack if need be. The term *čardak* is often used for these structures, particularly those that served as guard stations, though this term can also designate a two-storied urban domicile with a fenced-in yard, or the upper floor of any building. In songs *čardak* also often carries a metonymic function, like the words *dvor* (manor) or *kula* (tower) to designate the simple concept of home.

This exact motif arises again in four of the eight songs collected by Mato Križević from the 25-year-old singer Ahmed Čaušević<sup>118</sup> from Brekovica near Bihać.<sup>119</sup> In three of these songs (Čaušević 1888.3, 5, 6) the motif is presented in a simple form (with a trio of wolves, ravens and *vile*),<sup>120</sup> while in ‘The Song of Dizdarević Meho’ (Čaušević 1888.4), the theme is expanded to its fullest form (eagles are added to the animal list) and is read as an augury of an upcoming battle by the famous character Mustajbeg of Lika.<sup>121</sup> In this highly elaborated song,<sup>122</sup> the characters pass many mountain ranges and, as always, night falls as they pass a dangerous mountain (here Bakonja) and encounter the menagerie of beasts:

<i>S desne im strane zavijaše vuci,</i>	From their right side wolves howled,
<i>A čuju se mrki gavranovi,</i>	And dark ravens could be heard,
<i>A pjevaju orli mrcinjaši,</i>	Scavenger eagles sang out
<i>Preko puta prelijeću vile,</i>	<i>Vile</i> flew across the path,
<i>A čuju se tice uranjinje.</i>	And early morning birds could be heard.
	(ll. 3008-12)

Đulić the standard-bearer asks Mustajbeg what all these animal omens mean and he tells him that it bodes poorly for them. Unfortunately, the *vile* are not present in the divining:

<sup>118</sup> Čaušević’s first name is variously written Ahmed and Ahmet. I use the form Križević provided as he collected from the singer.

<sup>119</sup> Albert Lord noted that there seemed to be a traditional tale-telling zone running the Bosnian border from Bihać to Herzegovina that stopped abruptly at the Montenegrin border (Parry and Lord 1954:17).

<sup>120</sup> Compare with a multiform sung by Murat Žunić from Bihać, collected by Parry and Lord in 1935 (PN 1937, Parry, Lord and Bynum 1979:252). Here the flying *vile* are replaced with singing *hajduks*: “*Tu vijū vuci, pivaju hajduci*” (l. 583).

<sup>121</sup> Mustajbeg of Lika (*Lički Mustajbeg*) is the leader of the Bosnian border heroes of Udbina, he is one of the most common characters in the Muslim songs.

<sup>122</sup> This song runs an impressive 4,534 verse lines. To my knowledge, this song and another of Čaušević’s (1888.6, which runs 4,614 lines) are the longest encountered by researchers of oral epics until Parry and Lord collected from Avdo Međedović in 1935. An unnamed editor (possibly Marjanović) who was tasked with assessing Čaušević’s work for Matica Hrvatska, noted that he had never encountered any song as long as Ahmed’s (Čaušević 1888:277).

<i>Bit će mesa vuku i gavranu,</i>	There will be meat for the wolves and ravens,
<i>Mrka će vuka krvi napojiti,</i>	The dun wolves will drink their fill of blood,
<i>Gavrana crna mesa nahraniti.</i>	The black ravens will sate themselves on meat.
<i>Čuj, Djuliću, što ću govoriti!</i>	Listen, Đulić, to what I say!
<i>Što se čuju orli mrcinjaši,</i>	The scavenger eagles that we hear,
<i>Mrtvim će se umećat glavama;</i>	Will settle in amongst decapitated heads;
<i>Što pjevaju tice urankinje,</i>	The early morning birds that sing,
<i>To će mloga zaplakati majka</i>	Those will be the many crying mothers
<i>Po Udvinu i po Zadru gradu;</i>	Throughout Udbina and Zadar city.

(ll. 3031-9) <sup>123</sup>

The motif also shows up in a song from Sarajevo (Hör II.40) but is presented there in an altered form. In a possible blending of the Bosnian variant with the more common trope, the protagonist tries to calm his frightened horse as they pass a wooded range by telling him, “Don’t be frightened tonight along the mountain, / The dun wolves are our *pobratimi*, / The ravens are our conversation-mates, <sup>124</sup> / The white *vile* are our *posestrime*” (ll. 231-4).

### **Comb Hair**

1% (2 songs) Gornja or Bosanska Krajina and Zaoštrog. Independent Motif.

This motif is regularly discussed in descriptions, but seldom figures in songs and oral narratives (see pg. 312 below). It seems that the *vila*’s propensity for combing her hair belongs in all depictions, but that she simply finds less opportunities to preen herself in the action of songs and tales. The motif arises in two narrative songs. The first is injected into a ‘Help Escape from Czar’ motif (Marjanović 1877.46). As the protagonist of the song flees on his nag across a field, he calls to Holy Friday, Sunday and his *posestrima vila*, Breberija. The *vila* is the only one to come to his aid, but hears his plea

<sup>123</sup> In general, songs from Bosnia and Slavonia seem to stress an animalistic and gruesome nature in *vile* that is less common in songs from other regions. Their position here as connected to carrion-feeders and avian harbingers of death rings heavily of their parallels with Norse *valkyrjur/dís* (Jurić 2010b:39).

<sup>124</sup> This line is unclear, “*Gavranovi naši razgovori*,” literally reads “Ravens our conversations.”

and is introduced into the song while she is “far away, / combing her hair on a beech tree stump” (ll. 69-70). The second example involves a shepherdess who comes across *vile* combing their hair atop fir trees and remarks on their beauty. This song is described in detail in the independent motifs below (Banović 1908 5).

### **Horse Race**

2% (6 songs) Herzegovina, Bosanska Krajina and Southern Dalmatia.<sup>125</sup> Dependent Motif

In a number of songs (most commonly drawn from western Bosnia), a noble will hold a great horse race, the winner of which will gain the hand of his daughter in marriage.<sup>126</sup> The racers are always a motley assemblage of entitled nobles with the rarest and most expensive steeds and frightening Arabs with enormous battle horses. Into their ranks will come a lowly young hero<sup>127</sup> who will inevitably win the race. In a number of these songs that task will be accomplished thanks to the various interventions of the hero's *posestrima vila* who seems to be a common addition to the motif. Although the *vila*'s role in most of these songs is simply another form of the ‘Call with Secret Information...,’ I have made it its own motif because some of the multiforms involve direct intervention and the particular connection to the motif of the horse race creates linkages among them all.

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<sup>125</sup> Most versions of this song that I have analyzed are derived from Herzegovina or Bosanska Krajina (see n. 119, this chapter). Another (Vodopić 1893.10) was recorded from a singer from Smokovljani, near Ston in southern Dalmatia, Nikola Vlahović, who explained that he learned his songs from Herzegovinian singers (1893:112). Thus Ivan Pranjić from Bisko is the only singer with a multiform who is lacking a connection to this region, and this possibly only because we have no information about him.

<sup>126</sup> Often the daughter is placed in a carriage which starts the race well ahead of the contestants. Whoever reaches the coach first wins the race.

<sup>127</sup> These songs are always border songs involving exogamous bride-stealing. If the hero is a Muslim character then the race will be held in Dalmatia by a noble there, if he is Dalmatian then the race will be held in Turkish-held territories.

In two songs sung by Ahmed Čaušević (Čaušević 1888.3, 5), the *vila*'s main role is informing the hero of how many and which riders are still ahead of him every time he thinks that he has taken the lead. In one of these songs, when the hero cannot overcome the final and most difficult rider, his *vila* calls to him explaining that if he wants to go faster he must shift his legs from off of his horse's wings<sup>128</sup> so that it can achieve its full speed. In Ivan Pranjić's song, 'The Marriage of Childe Marijan' (Banić 1885.24), Marijan is in financial straits and about to sell his prized steed when a *vila* calls to him and instructs him to enter the horse race. Later, as Marijan closes in on the lead in the race, the Black Arab<sup>129</sup> tricks him into dismounting<sup>130</sup> and an unexplained force compels his horse to refuse his remounting. The *vila* calls again, instructing him to take the horse to Venedica Cliffs (?) and to sprinkle it there with black earth. Doing this allows Marijan to re-enter the race.

In two songs collected by Hörmann, the *vila* again informs the hero about which riders are ahead of him, but here vestiges of other motifs are drawn into the tale. In 'The Hrnjice in Skradin' (Hör II.57), when the Coastal Arab (*morski Arapin*) tricks Halil into dismounting, his horse is unable to recommence. Blending this motif with the 'River *Vila* Wrapped...' motif the *vila* asks him,

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<sup>128</sup> Winged horses are not uncommon in the tradition. Sometimes the term is used figuratively to suggest the fantastic speed of the beast while in others the wings are literal. The *vila* suggesting ways to make a horse go faster is one of the many pieces of advice that she often provides. See 'Call with Secret Information...'

<sup>129</sup> The Black Arab (*crni Arapin*), is a common villain in the epic tradition. It is not certain whether the name is supposed to represent a single character or simply a common racial designation. It effectively covers the same mental space as the out-dated and racialized term Blackamoor in English.

<sup>130</sup> This is a common episode in this song, the Arab tells the hero that his horse's shoes have come off and his feet are bloody and beaten (or similar tricks) forcing the hero to dismount, investigate and thus lose his place in the race.

“Zar ne vidiš, njima ne video!	“Don’t you see? Best you see nothing, then!
Arapove splentale ga vile,	The Arab’s <i>vile</i> have seized its legs. <sup>131</sup>
Kamo li ti dvije puške male?	Where are your two little firearms?
Eto ti jih u grivi gjogatu,	Here they [the <i>vile</i> ] are, in the white horse’s mane,
Pa kroz grivu pali iz pušaka.”	Fire off your guns along his mane.” (ll. 927-31) <sup>132</sup>

In a similar multiform (Hör II.56), the *vila* informs Halil that another rider has two *vile*. She has chased one off, but the other is obstructing the horse’s legs. She tells him to fire his pistol near the horse’s legs to kill the invisible *vila*. When Halil still proves unable to take the lead, the *vila* ‘lets out her wings’ (*rastvoriti krila*) (l. 279) and climbs under the horse using her power of flight to lend speed to the horse.<sup>133</sup>

### Regular Motifs that are Also Found in Lyric Songs

#### **Call with Secret Information or Strategy**

43% Nar. (131 songs), 10% Lyr. (15 songs). Wide Distribution. Independent Motif

This is the most common motif and use of the *vila*. The nature of the motif allows for so much variety in use and examples are so numerous that it is unfeasible to explore all aspects in their minutest detail. Only a broad sketch is ventured here. In this motif, a *vila* will call down at any point in a song to deliver secret news, information, insight and/or strategies to a protagonist. In some songs it is unclear whence the *vila* is ‘calling down,’ but in most it is from high mountains, with a smaller number positioning her on a cloud (Hör I.9, 36; MH I.68; Banić 1885.52). Most often her call will be used to warn of an impending attack (MH VIII.13; Vuk II.95; O. Nedić 1887.4), but the uses of this motif

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<sup>131</sup> Lit. Have tripped him.

<sup>132</sup> The idea that *vile* can be invisible is much rarer in the song traditions; yet, here we see an example of the concept crossing over from the register of the oral narratives. Compare the episode with n. 83, this chapter.

<sup>133</sup> Compare with Šestić 1889.262, where a *vila* helps Hrnjica Halil ride more quickly by ‘throwing wings’ under his horse (*Ali vila podbaci mu krila*) (l. 127).

are so varied that nearly any deployment is imaginable within the general confines of the tone and plots of the songs. Some examples of this motif include: telling a character that his brother's wife has been kidnapped (Vuk III.17); that a church in his district has been sacked (Vuk IV.34); the state of his family and lands (Vuk IV.40); of his brother's, nephew's or son's murder (Glavić 1887d.144; Ostojić 1880-3b.482, 221); that an enemy is fleeing (MH VIII.28); that he is leading a wedding party into danger (MH IX.23); how to make his horse go faster (Kurtagić 1943a.4; Šestić 1889.262); that his betrothed is drowning herself (MH X.42); how to find his way after getting lost (Kurtagić 1943a.9); how to overcome an opponent (Hör I.9); battle tactics (Islamović 1888.16); how to shake off fetters and free himself (Ostojić 1880-3a.218); or even how to steal a horse (Banić 1885.12).

This motif's examples also include the 'Musa Battle,' 'Know Where Water is,' 'Horse Race,' and some other smaller motifs. These represent variants that have connected to a particular tale and solidified into their own unique and oft-replicated form. Other songs are passed on carrying this role of the *vila* as intrinsic to them but without altering her actions into any unique innovation that sets the motif apart. Thus, in songs where Ivan of Senj is informed about the death of his relation Tadija,<sup>134</sup> it is always Ivan's *posestrima vila* that brings this news (Banić 1885.54; Ivančić 1886.45; Miošić-Kačić 1886.89; Smičiklas n.d.7). Similarly, in the songs about a young hero who cannot

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<sup>134</sup> The relationship between Ivan and Tadija of Senj varies with different singers. He can be his nephew (Delić 1877.28; Vodopić 1893.10), his son (Banić 1885.54; Glavić 1887d.144), his brother (Banić 1885.13; Miošić-Kačić 1886.92), or his cousin (Miošić-Kačić 1886.89). While Ivan appears in various songs, Tadija is most often sung about in only two songs: those about his theft of and marriage to a Muslim maiden across the border and those about his death and the vengeance wrought by Ivan.



find his *hajduk* older brother and so employs a traitorous Turk as his *djever* (bride's-chaperone), it is a *vila* who finds the *hajduk* brother in the mountains and tells him of a Turkish ambush and the untimely end awaiting his young brother (Glavić 1887b.77; Šestić 1889.278).

Yet, as straight-forward and utilitarian as this motif is, there are also manifold opportunities for singers to play with the tradition and employ innovative tropes. Thus in Pašo Guta's 'The Enslavement of Rakocije Ban at Mrkalje' (Hör II.63), the singer has the *vila* call down multiple updates and suggestions to the protagonist in the heat of battle in a manner that borders on play-by-play commentary. In a very odd song from Mato Rajić (MH IX.5), the *vila*'s advice is not particularly good and draws her *pobratim* and others into danger and death. Ana Banović of Zaoštrog (Banović 1908.18) has a cross-dressing heroine enlisted in the czar's army saved from unmasking by a *vila* when the *carević* (the czar's son) devises a plan to reveal the maiden. Her *vila* calls down (perhaps impersonating a superior officer?) with a lie stating that the soldier's military tour is concluded. In a song by Nikola Vlahović from Smokovljani (MH I.78), the *vila* tries to sell her special knowledge for money, weapons, armour and a youthful lover, while in Mara Grgurević's 'The Death of Captain Grgić' (Zdjelarević 1886.3), the *vila* calls with secret knowledge, not to a hero, but to a horse. Never one to let her *vile* sit idly or engage in her songs in simple ways, Anica Begin sang two songs where a *vila* not only suggests a

very elaborate battle plan to her *pobratim*, but involves herself in the excitement by having the plans depend upon her involvement (Glavić 1887e.153, 1887f.195).<sup>135</sup>

When tasked with calling to characters to deliver bad news, the *vila* will often call with variations of an angry and spiteful stock greeting that stresses the character's negligence or ignorance and often chastises the character. Most commonly the *vila* will call starting with "evil morning to you..." (*zlo ti jutro...*) as an oral traditional inversion of a common 'good morning' (*dobro jutro*) greeting. These dialogues are often simple<sup>136</sup> but can be elaborated into poetic soliloquys (Glavić 1887d.144) about the character's ignorance, cursing his/her habits (Ostojić 1880-3b.482) and elaborating on the many foolish things he/she may be doing instead of tending to his/her heroic duties (Glavić 1887a.37; Milas 1884.21). This elaborate anti-greeting is especially common in songs from lower Dalmatia, and particularly associated with one song where the Beg or Pasha of Gračani kills Tadija of Senj and his relation Ivan is informed by his *posestrima vila*.

"Zlo ti jutro, Senjanine Ivo!  
 "Zlo ti jutro, a gore ti bilo!  
 "Ako, Ivo, hladno piješ vino  
 "Na ljute ti rane udarilo,  
 "Crnom ti se krvi izm'ješalo!  
 "To li igraš vrana konja tvoga,  
 "Tvoj se dorat prodo' na telalu,  
 "A ti, Ivo, izgubio glavu!  
 "Ali ne znaš, al' za to ne haješ  
 "Da je vaša četa izginula  
 "Š njime Tado d'jete Gjuričino,

"Evil morning to you, Ivo of Senj!  
 Evil morning, were that it was worse!  
 If, Ivo, you are drinking cold wine,  
 Let it hit<sup>137</sup> you on heavy wounds  
 And mix with your black blood!  
 If you are playing with your raven horse,  
 May your horse be sold at auction  
 And you, Ivo, lose your head!  
 Either you don't know or don't care  
 That your troop has been slain  
 And with them Tado, Đurić's child

<sup>135</sup> The first, involving tossing coins and handing out swords (Glavić 1887e.153), is explored in 'Give Equipment or Clothing,' while the second involves a horde of *vile* clearing a path for a hero by killing a swathe of Turks (Glavić 1887f.195). This second song is also notable as the only narrative song that I am aware of that mentions vampires (*ol' su crni noćni vukodlaci*) (l. 464).

<sup>136</sup> Vuk IV.21, 40; Glavić 1887d.125, 126; Miošić-Kačić 1886.89; Ostojić 1880-3a.241, 1880-3b.221.

<sup>137</sup> This has the same double-meaning as it carries (albeit more awkwardly) in English—both the affect that alcohol has on one's mental capacities and as a hit that should strike him on a wound.

<p> <i>“A tvoj sestrić, da od Boga nagješ!</i>  <i>“Pogubi ih beže Gačanine</i>  <i>“U planini pod vrh Velebića,</i>  <i>“Leže mrtvi Senjski vitezovi,</i>  <i>“Kako da je borje posječeno,</i>  <i>“Na svakome sjedi crni vrane,</i>  <i>“Na Tadiji sinovcu tvojemu,</i>  <i>“Na njemu je vrane i gavrane,</i>  <i>“Pa mu vrane grdi lišće b’jela,</i>  <i>“A gavran mu crne oči pije!”</i> </p>	<p>                     And your nephew, for God’s sake!<sup>138</sup>                      The Beg of Gačani has killed them                      In the mountains, under Velebit’s peak,                      The knights of Senj lie there dead,                      Like felled pines.                      On each man sits a black crow.                      On Tadija, your brother’s son,                      On him sit a rook and a raven,                      The rook tears at his white face,                      The raven drinks his black eyes!”                      (Glavić 1887d.144 ll. 6-26)                 </p>
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When this motif carries over into the lyric songs it serves the same role, but is often employed for more mundane purposes, such as the trysts and tragic decisions of various lovers (Vuk V.86; Pavlinović 1876a.517), informing a character where to find his future bride (Vuk I.92), or for other mundane comments (see Odić 1890.24, where the *vila* asks a character how he sews such fine short fur coats). Due to the length of the lyric songs, the calling there never contains the *vila*’s elaborate monologues but only utilitarian revelations. Sometimes the role hints at more, but the short song structure curtails any true elaboration of the plot. Thus in one of Vuk’s lyric songs (Vuk I.192), a white *vila* warns a young Voivode that a miracle is coming, but no explanation is given as to exactly what that means.

### Swan Maiden

4% Nar. (12 songs), 1% Lyr. (2 songs). Wide Distribution. Dependent Motif.

An integral part of the *vila*’s lore, which shows up most predominantly and well explicated in the narrative songs, is her use in a ‘Swan Maiden’ motif.<sup>139</sup> In these songs, a

<sup>138</sup> Lit. “If you find God.” This is most likely a *lapsus linguae*. The common phrase is “*ako Boga znadeš*” (if you know God). If the phrase was intended, it would carry a similar meaning.

<sup>139</sup> The ‘Swan Maiden’ motif is an exemplar of the failings of the AT index. Variants of this motif are represented by ATU 313, 400, 413, 465, B652.1, C31.10, D361.1, D721.2 F302.4.2, F302.4.2.1, F302.6, F303, F304.4, F329.4.3, F350, and K1335. Even Stith Thompson felt inclined to point out the problems of

character is most often hunting or walking through the mountains when he comes upon *vila* dancing *kolo* or a single *vila* bathing or guarding water. This opening may ‘piggy-back’ on the ‘Know Where Water is’ motif (Marković 1892-3.7), the ‘Water Guard’ motif (MH I.51; Banić 1885.85; Marković 1892-3.7), or as a consequence of the ‘Impede Building’ motif (Kušmiš and Kušmiš 1898.59), or the ‘Dance/Sing and Flute Competition’ motif (Banović 1908.42; Miošić-Kačić 1886.42). In other multiforms, the *vila* may be encountered when the hero goes to catch her at the sea (MH I.75; Banić 1885.85), or in one song sung by Naco Kmetović in Bikić, when the protagonist simply proposes marriage to the *vila* (Prčić n.d.45).

At the waterside, the *vila* will disrobe one or two garments or precious items—either her wings, her clothing/linens, her crown/headdress (*kruna/uzglavlje*) or her shining weapons (*svijetlo oružje*) (Miošić-Kačić 1886.42). The protagonist will then steal the *vila*’s items and flee quickly home with her in pursuit, or else take the items and forcibly subdue and abduct the *vila*. In some multiforms, the *vila* will feign a struggle with the hero but, in fact, happily follow him back to his home. The structural cohesion of the episodes in this motif were so compelling that they even disrupted the narrative flow of songs. A song from Zaoštrog in Dalmatia opens with Ivan of Senj competing in a ‘Dance/Song and Flute Competition’ motif where his prize is to win a *vila* bride. However, when Ivan concludes the competition, rather than being given a *vila* for a wife,

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Antti Aarne’s system for recognizing this common motif (1946:88). Alan Miller (1987) has suggested an updated system for it.

as the original stakes suggested, the *vile* collude with Ivan against one of their sestren, instructing him on how to steal the *vila*'s linens the following week (Banović 1908.42).<sup>140</sup>

Having captured the *vila* by force,<sup>141</sup> wile, or love, the protagonist will often have her baptized, marry her and spend a number of years with her (usually 1, 3 or 9) during which time she will give him one, two or more children. Once time has passed, the *vila* will trick her human mate, or his sister, into returning her stolen items, usually during a celebration. When the item is her wings, she will request them under the pretense that she wishes to dance *kolo* and a *vila* cannot do so without her wings. In two songs collected in Luka on Šipan, the *vila* has her items taken by the protagonist (in both cases Marko Kraljević), but is more than willing to return home with him (MH II.19; Marković 1892-3.7). In a motif borrowed from oral narratives, she warns him on the way that he must tell no one that she is a *vila*. In one of these multiform (MH II.19), he must lie to all he meets, stating that she is a shepherdess.<sup>142</sup> In both songs, Marko forgets his promises during a grand celebration and refers to his *vila* wife, prompting her flight.

As she flies into the skies, destined to return to her old life, the hero will plaintively cry out to her, begging her to return, asking if he will ever see her again, or attempting to coerce her return by asking what will become of their young child(ren). She

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<sup>140</sup> This song interestingly has the hero stealing the *vila*'s linens. Later when he must return them, the singer, Ive Banović recalls the necessity of the *vila*'s flight and has Ivan give her her linens and wings. In Kmetović's multiform, where the protagonist acquires his bride through three years of courtship, a pair of wings are drawn into the narrative at the point where they are needed, most likely, with little concern on the singer's part for the disjuncture since no emmendations were attempted or notes made. It is a testament to Prčić's good sense as collector for not having altered the song afterwards.

<sup>141</sup> See, for instance, Banović 1908.42 where the tone of forced union is well stressed and the song borders on a traditional poetic depiction of rape.

<sup>142</sup> See the 'Not to Tell' and the 'Golden Rasudenac' motifs in Chpt. 3 below.

often responds that she will return to feed any infant children late at night or early morning, but that the father will see her no more (MH I.51; MH II.19; Marković 1892-3.7). Otherwise, she replies that he need not worry about the children, if they are of his blood/lineage they will stay with their father, while if they are of hers they will find her in the heavens/at the dawn (Kušmiš and Kušmiš 1898.59; Prčić n.d.45, 77. See also ‘Sexual Competition to Female’ above). In Ive Banović’s multiform, the children that are female will find the mother, while the males will stay with their father (Banović 1908.42). Two multiforms from the neighbouring towns of Zaoštrog and Brist reveal a local tradition where, as the *vila* flies away, she asks the sun to greet her husband when it rises and deliver the news of her departure to her children (Banović 1908.42; Miošić-Kačić 1886.42). In two multiforms from Luka on Šipán, the normal tragic ending of separation is circumvented into reunion as Marko reclaims his *vila* wife through further guile.<sup>143</sup> Finally, a multiform from Mostar has the *vila*’s children desperately call to her to return. She refuses, saying that she too has a mother and brothers (Nametak 1897.5).

The motif is so well established over a broad swathe of the region that the sanctity of the tradition seems paramount, save for minor regional variations, and yet, here too we see singers adding their personal touches and styles to how this motif is delivered. In a multiform by Nikolica BeniĆ Radulić of BeniĆ, Bosnia (Obradović 1887b:2), the entire

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<sup>143</sup> In the multiform sung by Anica Dušilo-Ćako, the *vila* flies into the sky, informs Marko that he shall never see her again and then fires arrows at him. Marko dodges the attack and sends his falcon to steal her crown and wings once more, drawing her to the ground and back into their marriage (MH II.19). In Mare Ivanković’s song, the *vila* successfully leaves and a despondent Marko finds her once more, dancing *kolo* with her *vile* sestren when he takes a hunting trip to ease his sorrow. Once again, his falcon steals her precious items and draws her back into a fairytale closure that is otherwise lacking in the tradition. Cf. ‘Host Lost Spouse’ in Chpt. 3.

song takes on a multitude of unique and enigmatic aspects (MH I.75). Her song opens with a congress of *vile*, the elder of which will give her wings and some clothing to any of the group who will travel to the Red Sea, capture coastal fish and protect her face from the kisses of snakes (?) (*Očuvala lica bijeloga, / Da joj zmaji lica ne obljuje* [ll. 25-6]). The youngest *vila* harnesses a deer with snakes and heads to the sea where she catches a number of fish before the deer is arrested in the water despite her violent urgings (echoes of the ‘River *Vila...*’ motif). When she tries to ascertain why he will not move, the deer tells her to look to the sky. Above her is a highly mythic version of the hero Banović Sekula, flying through the air on a black winged horse, descending upon her and blazing in flame such that the sea is illuminated! He chases her through water, mountains and trees (reflecting the episode in the ‘Punish Singing’ motif), before he takes her wings, brings her home, baptizes and marries her, and fathers nine children with her. In an episode reminiscent of a common folklore motif (Grimm.49; ATU 451), every time a child is born, other *vile* take the baby away to a cave. After the ninth disappears, Sekula grows angry at the *vila*, demanding to see his children. She fools him by suggesting that she would give him nine fantastical children if she had her wings back. When he gives them to her, she flies away to live with her children and the other *vile* in the cave.

In an equally idiosyncratic multiform collected from Luka Banić in Donji Dolac (Banić 1885.85), Ljutica Bogdan informs his drinking fellows that he will go to the sea and capture the ‘seaside *vila*’ (*vila primorkinja*). He comes to a chasm at the coast where he watches the *vila brodarica* (the boat-fee collecting *vila*) fly off a mountain wearing her

feather clothes (*perje i poperje*),<sup>144</sup> which she removes to bathe in the sea. He takes the clothes and returns to his tower, forcing the *vila* into marriage with him. Once she deceives him into returning her feather-clothes and flies away, she returns to her job as the tax-collecting *vila* of the ‘Water Guard’ motif! Settled back into her usual profession, the *vila* writes a letter to Bogdan threatening to kill him if it does not give her their child. Banić informs us that the hero has little choice and so brings the child to her. When Bogdan arrives, he argues with the *vila*, chastising her for abandoning her family. She responds by throwing their child into the sea and then beheading the hapless hero.

This motif seldom enters the lyric songs, most likely because it requires so many episodes to convey its full story arc. In one song, from an unnamed singer in Dragovci in Slavonia, only a fragment of the full story is presented (MH V.35). A Prince is wandering through the mountains when he sees *vile* bathing. He asks his horse if he is fast enough to steal the *vila*’s crown and shirt. The horse is willing and outlines a plan whereby they will steal the items and then flee, transforming into a number of forms (bird, fish, maiden) as they encounter various impediments (mountain, river, field). They enact their plan and the *vila* whose items are stolen cries and is comforted by the other *vile*. In another song (Pavlinović 1876b.540) the ideas of capturing a *vila* for a bride and her giving strong children is hinted at without ever engaging in the actual motif. Notably, these two songs (and one other of the narrative songs, Kušmiš and Kušmiš 1898.59) are also in octosyllabic meter rather than decasyllable.<sup>145</sup>

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<sup>144</sup> The reduplication on feathers (*perje*) here mimics that of wings in ‘*krila i okrilje*.’ n. 52, this chapter.

<sup>145</sup> Prčić n.d.77, could also be placed in the category of lyric song. It was one of the few that were difficult to assign, but given its clearer run through the narrative patterns of the motif, I assigned it to the majority as per my method outlined above (n. 80 in Introduction).



While the metaphoric, poetic and cultural aspects presented in this motif are rife with power and meaning (the taming of untameable nature with the products of culture and vestiges of bride-capture, etc.), for the purposes of comparative mythology this motif is one of the most tantalizing. While the ‘Swan Maiden’ motif is well attested throughout Eurasia and beyond (Hatto 1961), to my knowledge the only materials in which it is applied to an ornithomorphic supernatural being with warrior aspects is with the *vila*, the Norse *valkyrjur/dís*,<sup>146</sup> the Vedic *apsarāses*, and in a bifurcated form in the warrior-women and bird-women of *Ján* in the 1,001 Nights (Jurić 2010b). If Hatto is correct in suggesting a North-Asian origin for the Swan Maiden, then following this particular group of figures could unlock some understanding of when the motif entered Europe and what possible bird-warrior women (such as the Celtic *Morrígan*, who has no swan maiden aspects) might have existed on the continent before the introduction of the motif and onto which it easily settled.

### **Dance *Kolo***

4% Nar. (12 songs), 5% Lyr. (7 songs). Wide Distribution. Independent Motif.

This is another behaviour of the *vila* that can only loosely be labelled as a motif since it appears in such a wide array of traditional patterns. Nonetheless, the *vile*’s propensity for dancing *kolo* is a trope that spans all registers of her tradition and is common in the narrative and lyric songs. For the narrative songs, a protagonist will most often come upon a group of *vile* in the mountains dancing *kolo*, which will initiate the plot of the song (MH I.51, 74, 75) or he will be invited to dance with them (Banović

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<sup>146</sup> I largely agree with Hall’s reading of the relationship between these terms (2007:22).

1908.42; Miošić-Kačić 1886.42). In nearly all versions of the ‘Swan Maiden’ motif, the *vila* uses her participation in a human *kolo* during a celebration as her means of escape, concluding the motif (MH I.74; MH II.19; Kušmiš and Kušmiš 1898.59; Miošić-Kačić 1886.42).

For the lyric songs the dancing is similarly used, mostly acting as an opening vignette (MH V.32; Vuk I.183). In one song, the *vila* calls a maiden out to dance and sing in a way that is reminiscent of the songs where Ivan of Senj is invited; yet here, rather than calling her to competition, the *vile* are said to call the girl to battle (Pavlinović 1876b.545). Elsewhere, *vile* are invited by a character to dance *kolo* at his wedding celebration to make it merry (Lazzari 1889.10). Here, too, a *vila* will dance *kolo* with humans (Ilić 1878b.310), though *vile* most often dance with their own in the mountains, even when the dance is only background scenery to the events of the song (Pavlinović 1876b.586).

### **Give Equipment or Clothing**

4% Nar. (12 songs) 1% Lyr. (2 song). Wide Distribution. Independent Motif

In many narrative songs, characters are given weapons and clothing by *vile* to help them in their trials. The motif arises in a number of interesting and curious ways and is often so little commented upon in the narrative that singers and listeners most likely understood this as a common and crucial way that *vile* helped their *pobratimi*. Often her gift is mentioned in the songs as having been given before the events depicted. The daggers Marko Kraljević uses to kill Musa Kesedžija are often said to have been given to him by his *vila* (MH II.43; Ilić 1878a.6. See ‘Musa Battle Motif’ above). In multiforms of a story-pattern explored above, a Snake-Man informs a woman he is accosting that harm

can only come to him by a magic spear (Glavić 1887c.103) or firearms (MH I.55) that Ognjeni Vuk or Marko Kraljević, respectively, were given by their *vile* (see ‘Turn Man into Snake’). In one song Vuk collected from the Montenegrin, Đura Milutinović, a character who is about to be executed fools his executioner into freeing his hands on the pretense that he might remove his golden shirt which was given him by a *vila*—it would not be suitable to bloody it (Vuk IV.4 ll. 97-8).

Naturally, much of this gift giving occurs in the events of the stories as well. In one multiform of the ‘Help Escape from Czar’ motif, rather than sharpening a dull sword given by the czar, the *vila* brings the protagonist a new sword (Alačević 1906-11.16). In a song by Anica Begin, from Luka on Šipan, the hero, Petar Mrkonjić, must enlist the help of a *vila* to save his *pobratim* Ivan from the gallows in Mostar (Glavić 1887e.153). The *vila* devises a battle plan that, uncharacteristically, involves her doing most of the work. While the Turks gather to watch Ivan hanged, she flies over the crowd tossing coins and trinkets about. The distraction works because, in her words, “Turks are greedy for sequins / They’ll climb all over each other / Trying to be the first to grab the sequins” (ll. 248-50). Once Petar has used the distraction to free Ivan’s hands and neck, she gives them both swords and helps Petar not to fear Turks (l. 289).<sup>147</sup>

Other songs focus on the way that a young hero, raised or aided by a *vila*, is given a sword and horse by her before setting out on his first adventure or beginning his heroic life. We find this in the ‘Shade and Suckle’ motif (particularly Ilić 1878a.1), as well as in

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<sup>147</sup> This statement is quite vaguely presented “I will be of aid to you, / That you have no fear of the Turks” (*A ja ću ti u pomoć biti, / Od Turaka da ne imaš straha!*) (ll. 288-9). This may only mean that he has her support in the battle but hints at the kind of battle ecstasy and furor found in other Indo-European traditions (Kershaw 2000:80-3).

versions of the ‘Take Away Child’ motif where a *vila* takes her *pobratim*’s child and raises him to avenge his father (MH IX.2; Miošić-Kačić 1886.65; Pletikosić 1889.30). In a unique example of this type of song, the concept of a *vila* giving a shirt to a character returns but with very distinct implications:

In the 1840s the priest and avid collector of folklore, Luka Ilić (1817-1878) collected the song “Franjo Matiević and the Pasha of Požega” from the singer Mato Kožić of Radovanci (MH IX.2). To my knowledge, this is the only song ever collected that deals with the reportedly historical event<sup>148</sup> of the slaying of the Pasha of Požega after he abducted 300 young Christian maidens from the region and shipped them to Istanbul as slaves. In the song, the Pasha is also collecting male youths (most likely to become janissaries<sup>149</sup>), and is particularly searching for Franjo Matijević whose father is already a prisoner in the Pasha’s dungeon. Luckily, before his capture, the father gave his son to his *posestrima vila* to hide from the Turks and raise. When the boy is old enough, he challenges the Pasha to single combat, which the cowardly leader refuses. Seeing no honest recourse, the *vila* devises a plan. She teaches Franjo her ‘crafts/knowledge’ (*nauci*), and gives him a Damascene sabre and ‘*vila* clothes’ (*vilinsko odilo*). The magic

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<sup>148</sup> I have not seen another sung version, although there is an oral narrative of the event recorded in Đurić 1996:64-5. This song is, indeed, based on a historical event from 1613, though most historical accounts follow the folklore very closely in their fantastic and heroic descriptions (Švear 1842:449-50).

<sup>149</sup> Janissaries (Ottoman Turkish *يڭيچرى*, modern Turkish *yeniçeri*, BCMS *janjičari*. Lit. New [*yeni*] army [*çeri*]) were an elite corps of infantry regiments established by sultan Orhan in 1328. The original janissaries were composed of Christian slave youths, kidnapped from subject populations and forcefully converted to Islam. Highly trained, and, unlike other slaves, paid wages, they acted as bodyguards, palace troops and standing army for the Sultan. With time, as admission standards were lowered, the corps degenerated into an expensive, unwieldy civilian military conglomerate that was seldom effective in battle, harassed subject populations and regularly threatened revolt against the Sultan. A large number of Janissaries were compelled to mutiny then purged in battle, or executed by a new army formed by Sultan Mahmud II in the ‘Auspicious Incident’ of 1826, upon which they were formally disbanded.

garments make the hero unrecognizable to others and, as he rides to the city gates, the Pasha mistakes him for a number of famous heroes before a visiting Aga from Banja Luka decides that the rider must be a young Turk come to court the Pasha's daughter. It is only when they are dining together at the Pasha's table and the hero laughs characteristically, that the Pasha sees through the glamour, too late to save himself.

Finally, the magic in *vila*-made garments is also presented in a song from Luka on Šipan (Murat 1886a.57). In the song, two female characters have white and magnificent clothing sewn for them by a *vila*. The garments convince men in Buda that the human women are *vile*. Since this particular song borrows heavily from a motif of the lyric songs, it is treated in greater depth below (see 'Gives Gifts for Wedding Party').

This motif occurs seldomly in the lyric songs. I have found only two examples and one carries the obvious mark of borrowing from the narrative register. In a song from Duboka in Slavonia (MH V.36) a maiden asks her sister *vila* to give her *vila* clothes. The clothing renders her invisible and she uses them to spy on her love, to learn where he travels, and if he looks upon other girls. She takes shelter in a fir tree and surveils him passing, but his horse senses her presence and reacts, ultimately causing the *vila* to give away their ruse. In Drenovci, Sirmia, another song has a maiden take a *vila* as her *posestrima* (Ilić 1878b.278). The maiden asks the *vila* to give her 'vila beauty' so that she attracts boys. She particularly desires Ivo Seljanin. If Ivan's inclusion does not draw enough parallels to the narrative epic, the maiden also requests 'secret knives' to give to him in case he needs them in battle. The *vila* fulfills these requests and sends Ivo to the maiden. The girl gives Ivo the knives and tells him he will need them on Kosovo field.

## Water Guard

7% Nar. (21 songs), 1% (1 song). Wide Distribution. Dependent Motif.

The ‘Water Guard’ motif is another of the most well-established, homogenous, and likely most ancient of the traditions associated with the *vila*. In its most common form, a character (usually Marko Kraljević) is riding his horse through the mountains and suffering from great thirst. He begins to curse the mountain for not having any potable water and considers slaughtering his horse (and in two songs [MH II.2; Delić 1877.46], even his falcon) to drink its blood to survive. Some unidentified voice will call to him from the mountain<sup>150</sup> and tell him not to curse the mountain, nor to slaughter his horse, but to follow magic instruction<sup>151</sup> that will lead him to water (most often a green tarn, a well, or unidentified cold water).<sup>152</sup> He is warned, however, that the water is guarded by a *vila* (*brodarica/brodarkinja*, *vodarica*, *jasačkinja* or *đumlugdžija*) who collects a tax (*brodarica*) on all water use (or for crossing the water [MH I.35]). The tax is importantly collected in body parts—most often a hero’s eyes, arms or muscles, and a horse’s four legs.<sup>153</sup> The protagonist follows the advice, finds the water, and either discovers the *vila*

<sup>150</sup> For more on this trope see ‘Non-*vile*...’ below. Sometimes the voice is another, or even the same, *vila* calling to him (see ‘Know Where Water is’), while in one multiform it is an ‘unknown hero’ (Ostojić 1880-3a.69).

<sup>151</sup> The magic instruction in these songs is stock and common to the tradition at large. It will either entail simply ‘going ahead just a little farther’ (*Nu ti pođi malo ponaprida; već ti goni šarca naprijeda*) or else ‘turning withershins’ (*Ti se vrni s’ desna na lijevo; Već s’ okreni zdesna nalijevo*).

<sup>152</sup> As another example of *vile* building with human body parts, in a multiform by an unnamed singer in Lika (Delić 1877.46) the *vila* has fenced in her green lake with men’s shoulders woven together with women’s hair. Other innovations on the water location include Kata Matković from Cavtat who places her *vila* on the river Sava (MH I.35), or Kata Palić from Čonoplja in Vojvodina who has the *vila* guarding a well with three silver drinking cups.

<sup>153</sup> The singers employ a sensible system of payments here: The *vila* either demands eyes (common to the *vila* tradition), or else signature/critical characteristics for man, beast and woman: in Alačević 1906-11.28, collected in Povlja on the island of Brač, the toll is divided as follows: for heroes – eyes and horse; for maidens – eyes and breasts; in Alačević 1906-11.26, which is a very close multiform collected in Imotska Krajina, the hero must give his eyes, his horse’s four legs and his sword; in MH I.35 horses give their legs, heroes their heads, and maidens their eyes; Zlata Kulenović from Kulen Vakuf (Kurtagić 1908-34.1) has

absent or sleeping.<sup>154</sup> He and his horse drink their fill (sometimes also trampling or picking the *vila*'s roses or stealing other items from the site [MH II.72; Ostojić 1880-3a.69]) before heading merrily or quietly on their way.

When the *vila* returns or wakes, she discovers the water has been imbibed, muddied or disturbed and chases after the perpetrator to demand her tax. Two songs, one from Dalmatia and another from Luka on Šipan (MH I.51; Marković 1892-3.7), use this point in the song to simply transition into the 'Swan Maiden' motif. Most commonly, however, the motif diverges here into two common episodes with a number of innovative uses colouring each tradition. In most songs, the *vila* and the protagonist will come to some verbal confrontation<sup>155</sup> before entering into an extended battle, while in three multiforms the *vila* immediately engages in battle riding a deer or horse that is harnessed with snakes (MH II.2; Marjanović 1877.6; Marković 1881.21. Cf. 'Deer Rider'). Once the battle begins, their combat follows the stock formula of battle with Musa Kesedžija quite closely, including the epic amount of time they wrestle, the white froth and blood (Glavić 1887b.76), fooling the *vila* into looking to the sun or sky,<sup>156</sup> a 'Musa Battle' motif call to a *vila posestrima* who cannot help (MH II.2, Trnski 1890.6), secret daggers (MH II.2,

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her *vila* collect a toll divided between horsemen, who must give their eyes and pedestrians who must give their arms from the shoulder down.

<sup>154</sup> Mare Ivanković (Marković 1892-3.7) from Luka on Šipan informs audiences that if the *vila*'s eyes are open then she is sleeping, if they are closed then she is guarding the water.

<sup>155</sup> In a variant found in Lika and neighbouring Banska Krajina (Ciganović 1884.94 and Delić 1877.46), Marko plays coy trying to offer the *vila* money.

<sup>156</sup> MH II.2; MH V.30; Delić 1877.46; Glavić 1887b.76; Kurtagić 1908-34.1; Marjanović 1877.5, 6; Marković 1881.21; Prčić n.d.81; Trnski 1890.6. Two of these multiforms collected by Ante Ostojić (Alačević 1906-11.26, 28) involve fog and thunderheads rolling in over the combatants and Marko warning the *vila* that either a lightning strike or an arrow fired from the clouds (!) is going to strike them. Gusto Agačić uses lightning as well (Glavić 1887b.76).

Trnski 1890.6), and finding three hearts within the *vila*'s body after she is disembowelled.<sup>157</sup>

A second variant involves the protagonist decapitating the *vila*, whose head, sailing through the air, praises him, his mother, or the luck she has had to die at the hands of such a hero (Alačević 1906-11.26, 28; Konjiković and Marjanović 1896.2; Kurtagić 1908-34.1; Ostojić 1880-3a.69). These end-of-life soliloquys from the *vila* often take a simple and stock form: "Woe is me, my dear mother / Turks and Christians have tried to fool me / No one can fool me / Except the Beg Osman-beg" (Kurtagić 1908-34.1 ll. 36-9). "Dear God, praise be to you! / That every [*vila*] would truly die / As I have at the hand of Kraljević Marko." (Alačević 1906-11.26 ll. 66-8). But singers also innovate with this tradition. In one song, collected in Ličko Lešće by Ivan Konjiković, the singer plays with a meta-referent that speaks back on the tradition when Marko decapitates the *vila* and her head proclaims apathetically, "So it has been with all of my friends / Who have taken heavy water tolls" (Konjiković and Marjanović 1896.2 ll. 27-8).

In a song from Southern Dalmatia (MH II.2), the death of the *vila* is treated as a great tragedy, one that has impoverished the forest. A *vila* curses Marko for the murder,<sup>158</sup> but he pays no heed and leaves haughty and singing. Conversely, in a song from Ivan Radić of Bogomolje on the island of Hvar (MH II.72), the *vila* is the victor of the encounter. After calling Marko a whore and three times demanding her fee from him,

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<sup>157</sup> Delić 1877.46; Kučera 1884.164; Marjanović 1877.5, 6; Marković 1881.21; Trnski 1890.6. In a song from a female singer in Otok, Syrmia (Kučera 1884.164), rather than the typical three hearts, the *vila*'s first heart is a grey falcon, the second a winged serpent and the third the heart of a too-white *vila*! The first heart had become angry, the second was just beginning and the third unaware of all (ll. 36-41).

<sup>158</sup> It is not entirely clear in the song which *vila* is doing this. It is probably his *posestrima vila* who aided him in the battle, but may also be the last utterance of the dying water guard.



the indignant Marko is struck by a terrible headache that ends his life (see ‘Cause Headache’). For three female singers, Kata and Ljubica Medićeve (Ciganović 1884.94), and Kata Palić (Prčić n.d.81), the *vila* is let-off lightly and more humorously when Marko smashes her in the mouth with his sword and leaves her crying in the mountains or beats her violently with his mace and leaves her cursing the smith who forged it for him. Gusto Agačić in Dubrovnik uses the motif as a replacement explanation for how Marko got his *posestrima vila* (Glavić 1887b.76). As the *vila* is about to overpower Marko in combat, Marko fools her into looking to the sky and uses the opportunity to grab her by the knees and smash her about the ground throughout the valley. The singer brings beautiful continuity and circularity to the tradition when, begging for mercy, he has the *vila* vow to help Marko whenever he needs her, as long as he does not call for aid on a Sunday! Finally, Kata Matković from the area around Cavtat, draws the Water Guard *vila* out of her tradition and supplants her in a completely different song where she acts simply as an obstacle for the protagonist to pass on her quest (MH I.35). Here the *vila* takes a toll from all who want to pass the river Sava but the heroine passes her twice quietly, never waking her from her slumber.<sup>159</sup>

For the lyric songs, the ‘Water Guard’ motif only appears in a song fragment collected by Mihovil Pavlinović in Varcar, Bosnia (MH VII.331). Here ‘Mountaineer Ivan’ is climbing a mountain and cursing it for its lack of water. The song ends with a *vila*

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<sup>159</sup> Compare this also with Banić 1885.85, outlined above (‘Swan Maiden’ in Narrative Songs), where the *vila* is said to be the *brodarica vila* guarding her waters, but never actually engages in any aspect of the motif.

calling to him and telling him where he can find water, but warning of the tax that the *vila* *brodarkinja* will demand.

**Know Where Water is**

4% Nar. (13 songs) 1% Lyr. (2 songs) Wide Distribution. Independent Motif.

This motif ranges widely in the songs within which it is employed and yet the motif itself is highly consistent and indicative of a deeply-held understanding of the *vila* that will surface again in other registers in unique but related motifs. In short, the *vila* knows where water is to be found on mountains and is consistently called upon by singers to direct their protagonists to sources of water. We have already seen this motif with the thirsty hero riding through the mountain in the ‘Water Guard’ motif (Alačević 1906-11.26, 28; Kurtagić 1908-34.1; Prčić n.d.81), as well as in the ‘Foretell Death’ motif (Vuk II.74; Kraljević 1886.3). It arises again in an irregular motif, ‘Maiden Becomes *Vila*’ (Pavlinović 1876b.543) where a *vila* encounters a shepherdess, tells her that she must be thirsty and directs her, in line with the tradition, to ‘go ahead a little’ where she will find three wells (l. 22). The *vila* instructs the maiden on what to do at each well but the girl ignores her suggestions.<sup>160</sup> In Zaostrog, Ive Banović attached the motif to a song type that usually does not include the *vila* (MH V.4) about a baby who is not allowed by Saint Peter to enter the gates of heaven until it finds the waters of heaven.<sup>161</sup> Unable to find the waters, the baby cries and is heard by a *vila* who tells it to ‘go a little farther ahead’ where it will find three rivers (l. 42). In a song by Mustafa Mujkanović of Stolac (Kurtagić

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<sup>160</sup> I would assume that the *vila* is trying to trick the maiden in some way and the girl’s instincts prevail, but there is no hint of explanation to confirm that. Most likely some aspects of another song in the singer’s repertoire have bled into this song.

<sup>161</sup> Not only are most multiforms of the song lacking in *vile* (see Vuk V.314; Andrić 1909:413-4), but songs with a religious tone or religious characters in general rarely include *vile*.

1943a.4), the hero Halil Hrnjica is in pursuit of his enemy but hindered by an unseen impediment retarding his horse. The singer blends the *vila*'s knowledge of water locations with her common concern for religious tenets, only this time Muslim rather than Christian. Here, the *vila* calls down to Halil and tells him that his horse is failing him because he has had a maiden on his lap and has made himself unclean (see surahs 4.43 and 5.6 in the Qur'an). She instructs him to dismount, go to a nearby green lake, and perform *wuḍū*-ablutions (*uzmi abdest naše*) if he wishes to continue his charge (ll. 132-8).

After the 'Water Guard' motif, the most common episode in which this motif is found is in a number of songs in which a hero or heroes are directed by a *vila* to water with women working beside it. In an odd song by Josip Matulić of Postira on the island of Brač (Ostojić 1880-3a.252), Marko Kraljević is on his way to fight Filip the Hungarian when he grows thirsty on a mountain and begins to curse it. A *vila* calls to him telling him not to curse the mountain but to go ahead a little and find a well that is guarded by young water-maidens dressed in widow's weeds. Marko arrives and finds that all of these young women are widows of men whom Filip has killed. In two similar episodes in songs from Donji Dolac in Dalmatia and Broćanac in Kordun (Alačević 1906-11.13; Banić 1885.38), heroes seek a lost mother or sister (respectively) who was kidnapped or sold into slavery. In Pera Banić's multiform, the heroes get lost in the mountains (Banić 1885.38), while in Matija Dedić's it is once again Marko growing thirsty and cursing the mountain (Alačević 1906-11.13). In these versions, the hero(es) are told to go a little ahead where they will find 'cold Danube water' and a number of women bleaching their linens at the waterside. For the young heroes in Banić's song, the *vila* informs them that their mother is one of the

women; for Dedić's song, one is Marko's sister. Here, the *vila* is not kind enough to inform Marko and he learns only after he has kidnapped his sister and tried to 'kiss her up' (*obljubiti*)<sup>162</sup> in a typical incest motif.<sup>163</sup>

For the lyric songs, I have found only two that exhibit this motif and they suggest a borrowing from the epics. This first (MH VII.331) is addressed above in the 'Water Guard' motif. The second from Uskoplje in Bosnia (Pavlinović 1876b.565) was also collected from an unnamed singer. Here Childe Marijan is riding along a mountain and cursing it for not having any water. As he considers slaughtering his horse to drink its blood, a *vila* from the mountain calls to him and tells him not to do it, but rather to turn 'back backward' (*vrati se natrag u natrage*) where he will find a well of cold water with a deer sleeping beside it with a sheaf of clover under its head.<sup>164</sup> The *vila* tells him to run and drink (ll. 9-13).

### **Heal**

10% Nar. (32 songs) 1% Lyr. (1 song) Wide Distribution. Independent Motif

A highly important and well represented motif of the *vila* involves her ability to heal (most often *vidati* or *liječiti*) characters. The motif has already arisen as an independent motif attached to eleven songs found in four motifs listed above ('Punish Singing,' 'Attack Wedding Party...', 'Kill Groom...', and 'Heal Blindness') where a single *vila*'s services as healer are offered in kindness, or forced on her to amend the

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<sup>162</sup> This verb is common to the tradition and used both naïvely to refer to much kissing, and discreetly to refer to sex.

<sup>163</sup> As is normal for these, the sky clouds over and begin to rain blood before Marko discovers his near-blasphemy. See Vidan (2003:65-6) for more.

<sup>164</sup> The clover is possibly notable. See the 'Ask Clover Who Trampled it' motif in the lyric songs.

harm she has caused. The motif arises regularly, and fits easily into any song where a character is wounded in battle or otherwise.

The motif is quite standardized. The wounded character finds himself dying in a mountain, under a fir tree or in a cave,<sup>165</sup> from wounds he has incurred in battle. Either he (MH V.25; Ostojić 1880-3a.217; Pletikosić 1889.9), his brother (Ivančić 1886.18, 24; Ljubidrag 1892.18; Ostojić 1880-3a.243), his friend (Murat 1886a.2), his mother (Vijolić 1887b.63), his father (Glavić 1887c.116), his wife or lover (Hör II.64; Ivančić 1886.32) or his horse (!) (Hör II.43) call to their/his/her *posestrima(e) vila(e)* who flies to his aid. Otherwise, the *vila* simply comes upon the character or senses his/her presence in the mountain.<sup>166</sup> The *vile* arrive singly, in pairs, or in groups of three or nine (with one and three being the most common formations) and proceed to heal the character's wounds.

While the nature of the healing is often left unexplained (Bervaldi-Lucić 1887.1; Murat 1886a.2), it most often takes the form of collecting mountain herbs, and using them to heal him, with no elaboration about how exactly that is done.<sup>167</sup> Elsewhere, the *vila(e)* collects herbs or flowers<sup>168</sup> and makes a salve (*melem*) or medicine (*lijek/lek*) of them

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<sup>165</sup> These locations are tantalizing to view as linked to the motif itself since they are the habitats that the *vila* is most connected to in narrative songs, but most battles in the songs occur in mountains, and the most common tree to populate the songs is a fir, such that this aspect is likely mere coincidence.

<sup>166</sup> Hör II.48; Glavić 1887c.88; Šestić 1889.286; Vijolić 1887b.94; Vojniković-Pezić 1887-8a.23. Of particular note here is a song from Počitelj in Hörmann's collection (II.48) where three *vile*, fly over the mountain in which Mujo Hrnjica is dying and settle on a stump to rest. They hear ravens cawing and comment that there must be a corpse rotting nearby. Only the third *vila* (who is revealed to be Mujo's *posestrima*) knows to interpret the calling of the ravens at that particular inauspicious time as a sign that a wounded hero is dying in the mountains. This episode reminds one of the *valkyrjur* in the *Hrafnsmál* (Davidson 1988:87).

<sup>167</sup> Hör II.64; MH I.65; MH II.3, 41; Vuk II.38; Ivančić 1886.18, 36; Ljubidrag 1892.10.

<sup>168</sup> The most commonly named herbs that the *vila* employs for her magic are Basil (*Bosiljak*, *Ocimum basilicum*) and Strawflower (*Smilje*, *Helichrysum*, most likely the Everlastings [*arenarium*]), as both factor in traditional medicine for the region. A variant form for basil provides a rhymed pair consisting of six syllables that fulfills the second colon of a decasyllabic line: *smilje i bosilje* (strawflower and basil). This

which is then applied to the hero's wounds.<sup>169</sup> In some songs she uses water to heal wounds or blindness, often flying great distances and making multiple trips for the water (from the sea, river Jordan, etc.),<sup>170</sup> or simply dabs or washes the character's wounds with a kerchief (Glavić 1887c.88; Vojniković-Pezić 1887-8a.23).

In a local tradition from the village of Bogomolje on the island Hvar, the connection between *vile* and clover (See 'Ask Clover Who Trampled it') is drawn tangentially into the healing motif. In two songs from the village, the *vila* requires that the wounded character be laid on a mattress of clover to be healed (Ivančić 1886.32), or covers the character with fallen leaves and clover after healing him to complete the operation (.18). In a song by Marko Vujičić of Popovići (Glavić 1887c.116) a *vila* simply sets broken ribs once a battle is over.<sup>171</sup> The singer Pavao Raos of Medov Dolac sang or recited two songs: 'The Wedding of Tadija of Senj' (Ostojić 1880-3a.243) and 'Tadija of Senj and the Vezir of Udbina' (.217) for the collector Mate Ostojić that, despite their distinct openings, are multiforms and share many formulaic themes, including this motif. Yet, while the first song contains three typical *vile* (here the *posestrime* of Tadija's brother Ivan) collecting their herbs in the mountains to make their healing balm, in the

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pairing is also retained as a folk-saying, added into conversation to remark on things that retain their innate or good qualities despite the overwhelming influence of something negative.

<sup>169</sup> Hör II.43, 48; Ivančić 1886.24, 32; Ljubidrag 1892.18; Ostojić 1880-3a.243; Šestić 1889.286; Vijolić 1887b.94.

<sup>170</sup> Hör II.48; MH I.45; Vuk II.8; Marković 1892-3.11; Vijolić 1887b.94.

<sup>171</sup> This song stands as a clear display of the overwhelming power of the tension of essences in oral-traditional material. Once again we find a shocking connection between a lost eye and a lost hand that is rife in Indo-European myth traditions (see 'Saves Character from Dangerous Lake' in this chapter). While the character in the song has his ribs broken and his arm severed, at the end of the story, the singer mistakenly has the *vila* heal the hero's ribs and eyes.

second song Tadija's own *vila* presents herself as more cosmopolitan than his brother's by making three trips to the city of Zadar to retrieve her healing salve.<sup>172</sup>

Most often the healing process is broken into sequences of threes. In some multiforms of this theme three *vile* will each take a turn applying salve to the wounded character. In others, a single *vila* will apply it three times, with each application improving the character's state:

<p><i>Al eto ti devet posestrima, Pa sve beru travu svakojaku, Pa od trava melem načiniše. Kad mu jedan melem udariše: Makni diete svojom desnom rukom; Kad mu drugi melem udariše: Makni diete rukom obadvima; Kad mu treći melem udariše: On progleda očim obadvima.</i></p>	<p>Then those nine <i>posestrime</i>, Well they picked all sorts of herbs, And from the herbs made a salve. When they had applied one salve, The youth moved his right arm. When they had applied the second salve, The youth moved both his arms. When they had applied the third salve, He looked about with both his eyes. (Šestić 1889.286 ll. 542-50)</p>
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In yet other multiforms, the three *vile* divide duties amongst themselves:

<p><i>Jedna vila srebro povadila, Druga mu je rane izpirala, Treća mu je melem pristavila. Skoči Tade na noge lagane.</i></p>	<p>One <i>vila</i> removed the silver [shot], The second cleaned his wounds, The third applied the salve to him. Tade jumped to his nimble feet. (Ljubidrag 1892.18 ll. 659-62)</p>
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Folkloric numbers enter the motif again when a *vila* calls nine *posestrime* to pick herbs (Šestić 1889.286 l. 532), the *vile* must pick “nine herbs from the ninth mountain” (Hör II.48 ll. 212-3), use “nine-year-old salve” (Ivančić 1886.24 l. 302-3) to heal the character, heals him with three swipes (*tri mašom*) (MH I.65), makes three trips to Zadar (Ostojić

<sup>172</sup> This example draws into question the idea that singers might have a single way of employing the *vila* in each of their songs. Whether this change has been made to differentiate the songs beyond their titles, or to differentiate between Ivan's and Tadija's *vila* is debatable. The difference might have come pre-packaged in the song as learned, although the Zadar trope is very unique and unlikely common inherited material. See Chpt. 5 for more discussion on this.

1880-3a.217) or seven trips to the river Jordan (MH I.45). The heroic amounts of time the character requires to recover from the wounds often ranges widely—half a year (MH II.41), 15 days (Murat 1886a.2), two days (Hör II.43)—but most often takes on common numbers—three days (Bervaldi-Lucić 1887.1), nine days (Hör II.64), nine years (Vijolić 1887b.63), and can also fall into the pattern of consecutive recovery:

<i>Jā sām tvoga brata ozdravila:</i>	I have healed your brother:
<i>Parvi dān je u šćāpe hodio,</i>	The first day he walked with crutches,
<i>Drugi dān je po kuće šetao,</i>	The second day he strolled about the house,
<i>Treći dān je kolo uzigrao.</i>	The third day he danced <i>kolo</i> .
	(Bervaldi-Lucić 1887.1 ll. 107-10)

In many instances the *vila*'s healing services are not provided freely but require some form of payment. This aspect takes a particularly important role in a common motif employed in lyric songs (see 'Love Won't Give Up Fee'), but also enters the narrative songs at times. In the song 'Ivan's Love' by the singer Kata Berkušić in Bogomolje (Ivančić 1886.32), a character's brothers betray him for the fine gift he is bringing his love and leave him dead in the mountains. His wife goes looking for him and employs the aid of her *posestrima vila* who demands half of Ivan's wealth in return for healing (really resurrecting) him. When Ivan is healed and recovered, he offers gifts to the *vila* but she refuses all wealth, telling him only to spread word of her healing prowess. In one of two songs that use the 'Heal' motif to lead into or out of the 'Last Request' motif (Glavić 1887c.88; MH V.25), the singer Ana Zlatar has her *vila* leave a hero dying on Prolog Mountain to deliver the news to his family. When she encounters his sister at home, the *vila* barter with her, taking the maiden's hair as payment for healing the hero (MH V.25).



For the lyric songs, my study uncovered only one song where the motif is employed, although, as noted, the implications of the motif underpin the common ‘Love Won’t Give up Fee’ motif. The song, ‘A Hero’s Message,’ recorded in Karlobag in 1845 (MH V.27), is a lyric version of the ‘Last Request’ motif which opens *in medias res* with a *vila* picking herbs to heal her dying *pobratim*, who stops her because he knows it is too late to save him.

### **Impede Building**

4% Nar. (11 songs) 2% Lyr. (3 songs). Wide Distribution.<sup>173</sup> Dependent Motif

‘Impede Building’ is perhaps the *vila* motif most well known by non-specialists, thanks to the popularity that greeted Vuk’s publication of the multiform sung to him by Old Man Raško, titled ‘The Building of Skadar’ (Vuk II.26).<sup>174</sup> The motif exists at the level of a theme, but borders on a story-pattern in that it almost always opens a song, thus dictating the material, but resolving itself variously. The versions in the narrative and lyric songs mirror each other closely enough to be presented together. The lyric versions differ only in that they deal with less content or present the material in brief, with a focus on the emotional weight of the story.

The motif carries a legendary quality to it, in that it is often connected to real architectural structures and the protagonists (or less often protagonist) are often real historical figures, or at least imagined characters connected to a noble historical family. Thus Raško’s version of the song has three Mrljavčević brothers (the historical brothers

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<sup>173</sup> This motif was heavily collected throughout Montenegro, Bosnia, Herzegovina and Slavonia. It seems to be rarer in Dalmatia.

<sup>174</sup> For some of the voluminous discussion on this piece see Dundes 1989; 1996; Leader 1967; Vargyas 1967; Zimmerman 1979b, for an English language translation see Holton and Mihailovich 1997:78. Cf. ATU D2192.

Vukašin, Uglješa and the invented, Gojko Mrnjavčević) building the city of Skadar (Shkodër in present day Albania), while a multiform sung by Ružica Grgić in Potočan in Northern Bosnia involves nine brothers of the house of Atlagić (MH V.92).<sup>175</sup> A popular variant in Bosnia uses the building of the bridge over the Drina river at Višegrad, commissioned by Mehmed Paša Sokolović (Sokollu Mehmed Pasha) as the context for the motif (Hör I.3; MH I.36).

This motif always opens with a protagonist(s) trying to raise a structure (a city, a tower, a mosque, or a bridge). The work is going poorly though, whatever is built by day is destroyed by *vile* in the night. At this point in the most common variant a second motif is initiated when a *vila* will call down to the character(s) and reveal that a sacrifice must be walled into the foundation for the structure to stand. While the victim of the sacrifice can vary,<sup>176</sup> it most often takes two forms—two children or the lunch-bringer.

The two Bosnian multiforms that detail the building of the bridge at Višegrad (MH I.36; Hör I.3) open with Mehmed Paša Sokolović contacting the master architect Mitre with his plan. When the calendar bodes well for building, they travel to Višegrad to survey the site. Mitre rides his horse into the water which leads into a “River *Vila* Wrapped Around Horse” motif. Once Mitre has drawn the *vila* out of the water he

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<sup>175</sup> A song collected in Dragovci in Slavonia (Bogdešić 1884 26) mentions three Filipović brothers. While there are notable historical figures with that surname, including some Bosnian Begs, the name is too common and the song too vague to firmly connect it to any historical figures in a substantial manner (Ivanković 2013). Another song from Mikanovci uses the three Jakšić brothers (Kučera MH 42.394) another reference to a feudal noble family (Koljević 1980:111).

<sup>176</sup> These victims include a sister in a multiform sung by two sisters from Komletinci in Syrmia (Kučera 1884.1), a shepherd in a song from near Derventa on the northern Bosnian border (MH V.92), a ‘thin Latin’ (*tanjeno latinče*) in Novi Mikanovci (Kučera 1884.394 l. 7), and a son in a song from the Bihać region (MH V.91). These last two examples complicate Dundes’ assertion that a key aspect of these ballads is the requirement that the victim be female (Dundes 1995:47-8).

threatens to decapitate her to which she variously takes him as her avowed brother, offering him her aid in the building (Hör I.3), or threatens him that killing her will render his project an impossibility: “If, Mitre, you kill me, / You will never build the bridge, / For I have my friends” (MH I.36 ll. 41-3). When the building proves impossible without the *vila*’s insight, she calls to Mitre and Sokolović, telling them that they must find two children to be walled in the bridge. In all multiforms where these are the demanded sacrifice, the children are given metaphorically important names derived from the verb *stojati* (to stand, to be erect)—Stojan and Stoja or Stoja and Ostoja. For the Bosnian multiforms, these children are found, kidnapped and walled into the bridge, securing its stability and concluding the motif. While in the oldest version that Old Man Raško sang for Vuk (Vuk II.26), these children are notably not located and, after building is unsuccessfully resumed, a second and more common sacrifice is demanded.<sup>177</sup>

Most commonly the *vile* will demand either that the brothers wall one of their wives into the foundation of the building or will call for a vague sacrifice and the brothers will settle on wives as suitable victims. The brothers vow not to inform their respective

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<sup>177</sup> The particular traits of this motif pose much difficulty for delineating its history. While many aspects of the multiforms follow Raško’s earliest-recorded telling closely enough to seem derivative (with later singers removing either of the sacrifices as superfluous), the facts seem to point to a much older tradition, at the very least in the Bosnian and Montenegrin variants. The motif has a very wide range of distribution, many multiforms (with and without *vile* [see ‘Non-*vile*...’ below, as well as Andrić 1909:458; Broz and Bosanac 1896:532-537]), and draws from a common Indo-European motif that is found throughout the Balkans and as far as the Caucasus and India (Dundes 1995; Leader 1967:19-43; Vargyas 1961; 1967). Even Vuk presented a multiform for one section, hearkening to a pre-existing tradition (Stefanović Karadžić 2006:253 n. 19; Zimmerman suggests that this multiform came from Raško himself [1986:288] but the text does not support this). While Raško’s version bears closely to variants found from Albania to Montenegro (Nikčević 1987-8; Tomić 1908a; 1908b), the story-pattern was most likely already widely distributed in various multiforms at the time. In a forthcoming article, I explore Raško’s unique doubling of the sacrifice as an innovative (either personal or regional) blending of the two versions which were likely known in his birthplace of Kolašin.

spouses; whichever wife brings their lunch the following day will be chosen as victim (MH V.90; Vuk II.26; Bogdešić 1884.26; Prčić n.d.12). In all multiforms, the older brothers secretly inform their wives, while the youngest naively keeps his vow and his wife becomes their hapless victim.<sup>178</sup> The wife is immured in the foundation, but asks that her breasts and face remain exposed so she may see and nurse her young child.<sup>179</sup>

For many of these songs the exposed breasts (said to account for a milky, wonder-working substance that leaks from the walls of Shkodër [Stefanović Karadžić 2006:254 n. 20]) are of less importance than the tragic image of the immured victim looking out at his or her family (MH V.92; Kučera 1884.1). For an unnamed singer in Dragovci, south-central Slavonia, the mother's lactation takes on fantastic aspects when a river of her milk flows from the city (Bogdešić 1884.26). Sauntering by, her young child drinks from the river and comments on how flavourful it is, initiating another multiform also found in the version collected from Reza and Anka Lukić in Komletinci in Syrmia (Kučera 1884.1). In both songs the tragedy of the walled-in mother strikes an emotional chord with God who sends the Thunderer Ilija (*gromović Ilija*) (in the Lukić's song with the entourage of Saint Pantaleon and Fiery [*ognjena*] Maria<sup>180</sup>) to destroy the city and free the mother.

A variation on the motif, found in three lyric song multiforms in south-central Slavonia (MH V.29; Burazović 1880.73; Kušmiš and Kušmiš 1898.59), circumvents the

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<sup>178</sup> An unnamed singer from Banja Luka inverts the straight-forward tragedy in the motif (possibly attempting to ascribe moral clarity) by making the elder brother's lies more humane and relating the youngest brother's tight-lips to a cocksure hubris about his knowledge of his wife's schedule (MH V.90).

<sup>179</sup> See Dundes 1996; Koljević 1980: 147-150; Zimmerman 1979b, 1986:290-305 for more on the meanings associated with and interpretations of this motif.

<sup>180</sup> See Petrovitch 1972:15.

sacrifice motif entirely. Here a single character named Young Ivica/Jovica<sup>181</sup> is building a city which the *vile* are destroying by night. He complains to his mother, who tells him to station fantastic guards about the city—falcons on the roads, wolves in the alleys, and guards in guardstations.<sup>182</sup> A *vila* is caught by these sentries at which point the motif shifts into two others. Kata Kulić in Roždanik has the guards remove the *vila*'s right wing and deliver her to Ivica, sparking a 'Swan Maiden' motif (Kušmiš and Kušmiš 1898.59); while Janje Dosegović of Dragovci and an unnamed singer near Kraljeva Velika move into an 'Offer Magic Gifts to Spare Life' motif that ends poorly for the *vila* in Dosegović's version (MH V.29).

### **If *Vile* Took Bribes**

1% Nar. (2 songs) 1% Lyr. (2 songs) Wide Distribution. Independent Motif

This is a simple motif and is likely common to the tradition. The motif arises in various songs: Marija Bučić of Stari Grad on Hvar sings about Senković Ban having his sister returned safely to him by a *vila* and offering her a reward (Bervaldi-Lucić 1887.1); Kata and Ljubica Mediceva of Rogulje have an impertinent Marko toss coins at the 'Water Guard' *vila* (Ciganović 1884.94); Anica Begin has a *vila* kill a maiden indiscriminately (MH V.24); and, an unnamed singer in Gradiška has Manda's mother offer gold to spare Manda from the *vila*'s call to dance (Pavlinović 1876b.545). The response from the *vila* is formulaic and traditional:

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<sup>181</sup> Diminutive forms of two variants of the same name, Ivan and Jovan.

<sup>182</sup> This guard motif is also found, removed from its context, in a song from the region around Novi Vinodolski in the Croatian Littoral (Mikuličić 1884.3).

*If vile accepted gifts / All the mountains would be gilt in silver / The flat fields in both silver and gold.* (Bervaldi-Lucić 1887.1 ll. 117-9)

*If I collected ducats and groschens / I would coat the streets with ducats / And cover the forest with groschens.* (Ciganović 1884.94 ll. 29-31)

*If we vile took bribes / We would gild every mountain peak, / And fix all the bridges with silver.* (Pavlinović 1876b.545 ll. 23-5)

*White vile don't care about bribes; / If vile were to accept bribes / All the fields would be gilt with gold, / And all the mountains decorated with pearls* (MH V.24 ll. 66-9)

### **Last Request**

2% Nar. (6 songs) 1% Lyr. (2 songs) Wide Distribution in Croatia.<sup>183</sup> Dependent Motif.

More than any other, this motif highlights the manifold ways that singers dip into the well of tradition and draw out clusters of related material which they arrange in meaningful combinations for their unique presentation of a song. This motif appears in songs collected from the three ends of modern-day Croatia. Certain elements appear throughout, while others are relegated to certain regions. Almost every multiform resolves the story in a distinctive way.

The song opens *in medias res* with a hero dying from wounds in the mountains. The hero is most often Vid Maričić (Maričić Vido, *gospodin* [mister] Vide), although other common heroes are employed too.<sup>184</sup> In two songs from northern Croatia, the *vila*'s arrival is preceded by a crow or raven, although to different effect—in the multiform

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<sup>183</sup> All the versions in my sample derive from the Croatian Littoral, upper Dalmatia, the islands Brač and Hvar, Banska Krajina and Syrmia. It is quite probable that the song could be found in Bosnia, Serbia or Montenegro, but these collections give no indication. See Andrić 1909:434-5 for more examples.

<sup>184</sup> We are seldom told from whom or whence these wounds, except for those songs where the hero is not wounded (MH V.198 where Vide falls asleep in the mountains and Glavić 1887c.88 where Cmiljanić Ilija goes hunting in the mountains and becomes ill there), and in one lyric song from an unnamed singer in Karlobag where the singer has a protagonist dying by the sea from wounds incurred in combat (MH V.27).

from an unknown singer somewhere in Banska Krajina, the raven caws menacingly and irritatingly over the dying hero who ignites his musket and destroys the beast (MH V.26). In Otok in Syrmia, another unnamed singer has a crow bringing food to the wounded Vido who threatens the bird with his musket, imploring it to find his *posestrima vila* (Kučera 1884.208). In other versions, the song opens with the character's *vila* already nursing his wounds, gathering herbs to heal him, or with a *vila* stumbling upon him. Two multiforms from the islands of Brač and Hvar employ a variant opening where *vile* happily dance *kolo* above the dying/sleeping character. Where this multiform might traditionally lead is difficult to say, however, since one version shifts immediately into a separate motif and the hero sleeping in the woods is suddenly and inexplicably transported to his family manor, being sought by the *serdars*<sup>185</sup> that he has apparently deserted (MH V.198).

At this point, the dying hero will relate various final requests to the *vila*. Most commonly he will ask her to fly to his home and report to him about which of his family members are worried about him or mourning, and how often (MH V.26; Glavić 1887c.88; Kučera 1884.208; Novak 1885.29). The answers are stock to the tradition—his mother mourns the most, his father and sister nearly as much, and his wife is rude, indignant and happy that he is missing. In multiforms from Dalmatia the hero will ask the *vila* to request a shirt from his sister or mother in which to be buried (MH V.25; Glavić 1887c.88); while in multiforms from the town of Otok, the protagonist and the *vila* will discuss to whom he

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<sup>185</sup> Historically, a *serdar* (Ottoman Turkish سردار) was a Turkish military rank akin to a general. It became a noble rank under *vojvoda* in the principalities of Serbia and Montenegro. In the songs it retains a military sense for both Muslim and Christian heroes, though usually designates a position more akin to commander or chief of a war party.

should bequeath his horse (Kučera 1884.208; Lovretić 1885.204). Here again, the mother is too old for the horse, the sister will be too upset by it and his wife will sell it—he gives it to the *vila* instead. Beyond these aspects, the various singers bring their own intuitions and opinions into how this morose reflection on death should resolve itself.

In the multiforms from the region around Otok, after deciding to whom he will leave his horse, the hero dies and is buried by the *vila* who builds a wondrous church, plants an orchard and draws water to the burial site to sanctify it (Kučera 1884.208; Lovretić 1885.204). For the unnamed singer from Banska Krajina, Vid Maričić tells the *vila* to return to his home to give his farewell regards to his family members and to remind his wife to raise their children well (MH V.26). The same ending occurs in the lyric song from Karlobag, only that the dying hero asks the *vila* to deliver the message to his *pobratim*, Juro Rukavina, who is to write two letters to his mother and wife

<i>Majci šalje, da mi se ne nada,</i>	Send to my mother, not to hope for me,
<i>A ljubovci, da se priudaje;</i>	And to my love, to remarry;
<i>Da se Pere junak oženia</i>	That her hero Pere has married
<i>Pod Veletom, pod bijelim gradom,</i>	Below Veleta, below the white city,
<i>Crnom zemljom i zelenom travom.</i>	Married the black earth and the green grass.
	(MH V.27 ll. 26-30)

The most poetic and tragic ending belongs to the blind singer Gusto Agačić in Dubrovnik (Glavić 1887c.88). In his multiform, the *vila* retrieves a shirt for Ilija Cmiljanić to be buried in from his despondent mother. The aged mother begs the *vila* to let her accompany her return so that she might kiss and hug her son one last time. In a patterned response that arises again in the multiform from Povelja (MH V.25), the *vila* explains to the mother that it will take the old woman too long to reach her son on foot, then flies away to bury him. Less than a week later, the mother arrives at the mountain



desperately seeking her son. The *vila* shows her where she buried him whereupon the mother disinters her son's corpse, kisses and hugs him and then dies from the sorrow, heightening the tragedy and providing more work for the *vila*.

Luckily for the protagonist of this motif, the singers were not all content with leaving matters on tragic and sombre tones. When Kata Zlatar sends her *vila* back to Senjanin Mate's home to deliver his message to his sister, the young girl turns the tables on his fate, bartering with the *vila* and trading her blonde hair for the *vila*'s healing services (MH V.25). In a multiform from Vrbanj on Hvar the *vila*'s return reveals that the protagonist's wife is marrying another man (Novak 1885.29). When she delivers the painful news to the hero, he is saddened enough to elicit her pity. She heals him with clover and sends him home healthy enough to terrorize his wife and her new groom in an ending that mirrors a common 'Return Song' (Foley 1990; Lord 2000:242). In a final, charming lyric song from Stari Grad on the island of Hvar, the singer Nikola Vlahović-Glava returns us to the sombre setting of the motif, only to defy expectation with a humorous conclusion that beautifies, if not parodies, the common form (MH V.32). In the song, 'Mister Vide' is suffering in the mountains while the *vile* dance *kolo* above him. They invite him to join but he refuses, bemoaning the seven years that he has been suffering there and the terrible state that his family and home must be in. The *vile* quickly comfort him, informing him that they have just been to his home and everything there is well.<sup>186</sup> Hearing the good tidings, Mister Vide leaps to his weary feet and joins the *kolo*.

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<sup>186</sup> One of the matters they report upon is that his love is "younger than she's ever been" (l. 16) which might suggest that the *vile* are not simply relating the positive state of affairs, but that they have actually used their magic to make the situation at his home positive in an effort to convince him to dance with them.

### **Take Away Child**

2% Nar. (7 songs) 1% Lyr. (2 song). Wide distribution. Independent motif.

In their descriptions, various informants noted the *vile*'s propensity for taking men away with them. This also occurs in the narrative songs, yet it is immediately clear that in the register of song, this role is employed with very different connotations. Gone here are the sexual abductions, the negative effects on the abductee's mental health and the seeming servitude that are reflected in descriptions and belong to the oral narrative register of the *vila* and. In the songs, *vile* abduct both males and females, and the purpose is always beneficial, even if there are darker overtones of punishment to some of the abductions. There are four separate story-patterns in my sample that employ this motif.

The first occurrence belongs to four multiforms of a single song, three collected in central Dalmatia around Split and Makarska, and one from Lika. In the song, an older Christian hero is drawn into single combat with a young Muslim, thanks to the machinations of the older hero's conniving wife. Whether the protagonist is Sibirjanin Janko (Banić 1885.35), Janković Stojan (Marjanović 1877.36; Miošić-Kačić 1886.65 cf. Đorđević 1953:94-5) or Young Mihovil (Pletikosić 1889.30), these songs always open with him drinking wine with his young wife. He offends her with an off-hand comment and she goads him into battle with a young Muslim who was once her suitor. Though the Muslim is younger, he fears the seasoned hero. The treacherous wife assures him of success for she intends to sever the older hero's braid, where, as the biblical Samson from whom the concept has been adopted, his power lies. While the hero is preparing for battle and his Clytemnestra is preparing to betray him and trade lovers, she always asks the old hero if she should bring their infant child with them to the battlefield. The protagonist,

sensing his wife's intentions, strikes her and informs her that his son must stay home with his own aged mother. The boy will need to grow up to avenge his father should the 'Turk' be the victor. When the protagonist is deceived and dies on the battlefield, *vile* fly to his manor, take his young son away to their caves or mountains to raise him until he is old enough to exact revenge. When 14 or 15 years have passed, they equip the youth with a sword or firearm and a horse and instruct him on how to avenge his father (Marjanović 1877.36; Miošić-Kačić 1886.65; Pletikosić 1889.30). In a multiform sung by Luca Banić of Donji Dolac, the wife ignores her husband's instructions and takes the infant with them to the battlefield. It is on the road through the mountains that a *vila* swoops down to collect the child (Banić 1885.35).<sup>187</sup>

A similar usage is employed in the second occurrence, Mato Kožić's song about Franjo Matijević (see 'Give Equipment or Clothing') (MH IX.2). Here as the Pasha of Požega searches for Franjo to ship him to Istanbul, Franjo's father Marijan waits in the city dungeon. The worried father opens the song, cursing his *posestrima vila*; he fears that she has not held to her promise to secret the lad away from Turkish abduction and conversion. The *vila* replies from nearby mountains, reassuring him that his requests have been fulfilled and that the youth is preparing for his confrontation with the Pasha.

In the two lyric songs that employ this motif, it is female characters that are taken by *vile* and, in both, the abduction manifests as punishment for careless or ungrateful

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<sup>187</sup> This singer also forgets about the *vile* and the child, concluding the song with the mother accompanying the young victor to Udbina. Even when the *vila* abducts the child, the characters make no note of it. It is likely the singer was not as familiar with this song as some of her others, retaining the abduction, but not recalling why it occurs, or else forgetting to sing that passage. Examples such as these are the origins of the motival archaisms that later perplex scholars. In contrast, see Marjanović 1877.36 for a very complete multiform.

mothers. In an uncredited song from Vuk's first collection, a mother of nine girls desperately hopes that her tenth pregnancy will bear a boy (Vuk I.732). When another girl is delivered, the mother cannot conceal her disappointment. At the baby's baptism, the godfather asks how the child shall be named, to which the mother responds, "name her Janja, may the devil take her!" (l. 11). When the maiden comes of marriageable age, *vile* lead her away into the mountains, informing her mother that she promised her to them with the curse.<sup>188</sup> In a similar song from present day Mrkonjić Grad, in western Bosnia, a *vila* calls out over Bihać to the mother of Beg Kapetan (Pavlinović 1876b.546). In a stock, traditional manner the mother tries to guess what or whom the *vila* wants. The *vila* informs her that she wants her daughter, whom the mother promised to the *vila* as an infant when she incautiously sang the child a spiteful lullaby: "*Ninaj, ninaj, odnile te vile, / donile te u pećine stine*" (Hush, hush,<sup>189</sup> let the *vile* take you, and bring you to their stony cave) (l. 14-5).<sup>190</sup>

Finally, a unique narrative song from Anton Radić of Bogomolje on the island of Hvar draws these two ideas together in a somewhat ungainly presentation of tragedy (Ivančić 1886.35). In this song a widow plans to abandon her nine children so that she

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<sup>188</sup> The implicit connection in the song between devils and *vile* is perhaps enlightening, but is mostly confusing. Though the *vila* is often put in opposition to God and other holy figures, the correspondence of invoking the devil and *vile* answering is unique, especially considering that the curse "may the devil take you" (*đavao te odnijo*) has a mirror-form that invokes *vile* (*vile te odnile*) that could have been easily used in the song.

<sup>189</sup> *Ninaj, nina, nuna, nana*, and similar short words with the 'n' alliteration are soothing gibberish words used to calm babies when they are rocked. They are derived from the Turkish word for lullaby, *ninni* and have both a verb form *nuniti/nunati/nanati/ninati* (to rock or coo to an infant) and a noun form, *nuna*.

<sup>190</sup> Careful readers will recall this concept of the mother's incautious lullaby from a multiform in the 'Sexual Competition to Female' motif (Strohal 1883.149). These songs also bear some resemblance to a song explored in the irregular motifs below where a maiden is sent by her mother to live with the *vile* (Pavlinović 1876b.543).

might marry a man who already has ten of his own. The children convince the youngest child, three-year-old Stipe, to beg his mother not to leave them, or, if she must, to at least leave them their father's wealth and holdings to survive upon. When the child delivers the message, the mother becomes enraged and strikes him, dislodging two teeth and ejecting two streams of blood in a stock, traditional manner. The child begins to wail and cannot be comforted. A *vila* flies down to calm him, but when her best efforts prove fruitless she takes nine of the deceased father's gold cordons as payment for her services and takes the boy to her cave to raise him. Nine years later she returns the 12-year-old who, thanks to the *vila*'s magic, has grown into an enormous hero and looks double his age. His siblings are frightened of him at first but the *vila* instructs them to dress Stipe in finery and bring him to visit their mother. They are not to reveal that this mammoth hero is her baby until they conclude their visit and prepare to leave. They follow her instructions and, in an odd pairing of the lyric song's cruel mother and the epic song's focus on idealized, heroic men, the mother sees what a fine hero she has abandoned and dies of regret to be buried by her hapless children.

### **Shade and Suckle**

1% Nar. (2 songs) 1% Lyr. (1 song). Wide distribution. Independent Motif<sup>191</sup>

The seemingly anomalous comment from Murgić's informant in the descriptions, that men who suckle from *vile* are strong and fast (Murgić 1898:126), while unique in that genre, is actually a widely known and most likely ancient part of the *vila*'s tradition. The

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<sup>191</sup> This motif is difficult to list as dependent or independent. It is so closely tied to one story-pattern that it should be a dependent motif, and yet, the motif shows up in various songs and tales as a story-pattern, a theme, or in small references. It always seems to retain enough of the core material to vouch for its connection to that singular story-pattern, but its various uses and attributions force me to append the independent label. As an oral narrative it exists dependently while its uses in song are more fluid.

motif is most common in the oral narratives, which may prove its original source.<sup>192</sup> It finds fair attestation in song form, but I must admit to being surprised at its small representation in this survey given its common discussion in literature. There are, apparently, no regions in which this motif is not found. It is also attested outside BCMS speaking zones in Albania (Đorđević 1984:287) and Bulgaria (Nicoloff 1975:10); yet, somehow, the motif eluded the song collectors addressed in this research. This may suggest that the motif was more commonly deployed in oral narrative, though it is also possible that this is one of the materials collectors were so familiar with that they assumed it did not need collecting again (see n. 102 in the Introduction).

In its basic form, the story-pattern explains how a hero gained his wondrous strength from a *vila* as a child. It is most often connected to Marko Kraljević among Christian singers and tellers, and Đerđelez Alija for Muslims, although a wide range of other heroes have it ascribed to them as well (Đorđević 1953:97; Parry and Lord 1954:366-370). In the tale, the hero as youth is depicted as a young shepherd who is bullied by older shepherd boys.<sup>193</sup> One day he happens upon one or two young children lying out in the sun, burnt by its rays. He breaks off tree limbs and sets them up to shade the children, before heading on his way. Later the children's mother, a *vila*, returns to them and, upon learning of the young shepherd's kindness, reveals her breast and has the

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<sup>192</sup> See Chpt. 3. Đorđević lists a number of examples of the motif (Đorđević 1953:97), but is never consistent in highlighting the genre or source of the motif. Those materials for which he does mention or cite genre suggest that the motif arises more often in the form of oral narrative. Cf. Hôr I:579-580 for an uncredited narrative of the event, or Parry and Lord 1954:116, 366-370 and 1953:101, which outline an oral narrative of the motif presented by Salih Ugljanin which Milman Parry then had him adapt into song form, with predictably awkward results. This is not to suggest that song forms have not been recorded elsewhere. See Petranović 1870:233, 344; Vrčević 1890:4-7.

<sup>193</sup> On the incongruous blending of noble and rural aspects see Koljević (1980:106-141).

youth nurse from her a number of times, bequeathing him exceptional strength.<sup>194</sup> She then informs him of his heroic fate, and often gives him a horse and a sword as well. In most versions of the song (and tale), the hero's first feat is then to avenge himself on his cruel peers. In many multiforms of the motif, it is the *vila* herself that the protagonist shades after she falls asleep in the direct sun.

My sample includes three songs employing this motif, though all of them lack the crucial nursing episode. In Stanko Janković's very ungainly singing of "The Birth of Marko Kraljević" (Ilić 1878a.1), a *vila* first gives birth to Marko (usually reason enough to ascribe heroic status onto a character [Popović 1988:45]) and then christens him with the hero Miloš Obilić as his godfather. Miloš gives the baby food and wine from the czar's table and then sends him into the mountains to herd sheep. When he returns at midday asking for more food, Miloš chases him off, as do a group of young shepherds. Marko falls down from exhaustion and finds himself at a fresh water spring where a different *vila* sleeps. He shades her with boxwood and lilac flowers, and when she wakes, she finds Marko fetching water and learns that he shaded her. For his kind act she presents Marko with gift options—treasure or strength in battle; a love or a piebald horse. He opts for strength, sword and horse so that he can become a soldier for the czar and rescue his mother from imprisonment (?!). Here, however, the nursing element is lacking and the *vila* simply bestows strength upon Marko. One can hardly wonder at any lack in the motif when the song itself is highly inconsistent.

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<sup>194</sup> This strength is proven in a stock manner when the *vila* has him lift a heavy stone, tear a stump out of the ground or squeeze water from a tree. With each draught of magic milk, he grows closer to achieving the feat.

The motif arises again in a multiform collected by the singer Antun Zepac from Lipa in Istria (Jelušić-Štrkov 1886-7.1). Here, rather than shading the *vila* or her children, Marko shades two large snakes!<sup>195</sup> When he returns the next day there are *vile* in the same location who reward him for shading the snakes. Here again the nursing motif is lost and the *vila* tells Marko to sit on her right knee which will make him as strong as he wishes.

For the lyric songs, the motif only arises once and incompletely. In a song collected in Zenica in Bosnia, a *vila* is driving a boat on a river (Pavlinović 1876b.540). She exclaims, “whoever could catch me / could test my heart. / I would clean his heart / I would nurse his son. / If the baby suckled once / he would already be a little stronger, / If he suckled a second time, / he would pull out stumps with his little finger.” This call is heard by ‘Ivo the lad,’ who asks and is granted the *vila*’s permission to swim in the water and pull her out. It ends on a vague note that seems to suggest that it is leading to a ‘Swan Maiden’ motif.

### **Cause Headache**

2% Nar. (6 songs) 1% Lyr. (1 song) Wide Distribution. Independent Motif

Though the threat of *vile* often manifests in physical terms—as they gouge out eyes or fire arrows at their enemies—hints from materials already explored above have revealed that *vile* are often connected with mental anguish of various sorts. While the concept in the descriptions of wiping people’s minds or inducing insanity never arise in the song register of the *vila*, she is often connected with magical headaches. These afflictions are variously induced, either telepathically or as a product of her arrows,

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<sup>195</sup> This snake multiform seems to be common to Istrian versions of the motif. See ‘Shade and Suckle’ in the oral narratives.



linking them to the concept of ‘elf-shot’ (Bonser 1926; Hall 2005), and always lead to an immediate deterioration of the afflicted’s health followed often by death.

This has already been presented as the effect of her arrows in three narrative songs in the ‘Kill Groom with Arrows’ motif (Banović 1908.16; Kušmiš and Kušmiš 1898.55; Mikuličić 1884.22), as well as two multiforms of the ‘Make Character Sick When Love Spurned’ motif (Glavić 1887d.141; Marković 1892-3.1), and one multiform of the ‘Water Guard’ motif, where Marko Kraljević is struck dead by an angry *vila*’s mind (MH II.72; Ivančić 1886.50). The motif also arises in one lyric song from Vuk Karadžić’s Herzegovina collected by Vuk Vrčević (Vuk V.22). In that song, a *vila* calls for three days above Mostar until finally the Dizdar Aginica<sup>196</sup> calls back with a stock formula suggesting various options for what or whom the *vila* might be looking for. The *vila* replies that she wants the Dizdar’s daughter, Ajkuna. As soon as she says this, the daughter, who is in a different city, is struck by a terrible headache. She has her aunt (*strina*, FBW) write a letter to her mother telling her to come quickly. The mother races to her daughter but comes too late as the maiden quickly dies of her affliction.

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<sup>196</sup> A *Dizdar* is a fortress commander, while *Aganica* means mistress or lady (lit. *Aga* [Lord, master]+ica [dim./fem.]).

## Irregular Motifs

### **Insult Turks in Dungeon**

Čaušević 1888.4. The Song of Dizdarević Meho. Ahmed Čaušević from Brekovica in Bosanska Krajina

Ahmed Čaušević's second longest song opens in a conventional manner for many epic songs. There are 30 Turks<sup>197</sup> from the Borderland rotting in a dungeon in Zadar, long ago imprisoned by the Ban there. It is a widespread tradition in the epic songs to describe the terrible condition of such a dungeon in hyperbolic grandeur. Usually there is water, grass, or both, as high as the characters' knees or waists, and the room is full of snakes, rats, or other vermin. Čaušević makes no exception to this rule, but adds extra residents. "There is water in the dungeon up to their knees, / Cattails growing up to their shoulders, / Snakes and lizards swim about the cattails / The corners have been taken over by *vile*, / They make fun of the Turks' predicament" (*Po budjaci vile osvojile, / Rugaju se po nevolji Turkom*) (ll. 9-13). Čaušević often follows the tradition in connecting *vile* to wild animals in his songs (see 'Fly over in Woods'), but the idea that the *vile* are inside a prison cell and mocking the poor prisoners is highly novel. I have only seen one other near-example of this motif in a song from nearby Gornja Krajina where, after a similar list of conditions in Marko Kraljević's cell, it is said that devils (*sotone*, lit. satans) emerge from/appear out of the walls (*iz zidova niču*) (MH II.8 l. 122), but Čaušević's form stands as unique.

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<sup>197</sup> That is to say *Bošnjaci*, Muslim Bosnians. In the epic songs (and in many areas in real life during and well after Ottoman control), all Turks and Slavic Muslims were simply referred to as Turks.

Admittedly, it cannot be known for certain that these *vile* were not already in the song when Čaušević learned it from Omer Hukić 11 years earlier (Čaušević 1888:384). However, given that this motif is highly distinctive, it is notable that at the time Mato Križević collected these songs from the talented, young singer, Čaušević was serving a (most likely long) sentence<sup>198</sup> for some unmentioned grievous crime (*teški zločin*) in the prison in Lepoglava (Marjanović 1898:xxxii). Perhaps the *vile* appealed to him as malleable enough figures to move into a role that helped him add emphasis to the unbearable conditions of imprisonment.

#### **Discuss How Character can be Fertile**

Vuk II.12. The Snake Bridegroom. Anđelko Vuković.

In one of Vuk's trips through Serbia in 1821, he was escorted by Prince Miloš Obrenović's bodyguard, Anđelko Vuković, who, during their travels, told him a multiform of the song 'The Snake Bridegroom' (Wilson 1970:163). In Vuković's version, the cure for the King of Buda's infertility is revealed to him by *vile* who are gossiping about it near a watering hole. While in other multiforms of this song this function is served by any number of beings such as an eagle, ravens, or soldiers (MH I.32; Broz and Bosanac 1896:520-30), it is highly likely that this role also often fell to *vile*. A similar

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<sup>198</sup> Marjanović and Križević make no mention of the crime, the sentence, or for how long he had been in prison when the songs were recorded. Marjanović does mention that they moved him to a new prison in Zenica after it was opened. Also suggestive are Križević's comments that Čaušević had forgotten none of the songs he had learned in freedom during the time of his imprisonment (Marjanović 1898:xxxii) as well as a comment Marjanović published: "Both the director and I concur that that youth is one of the most upstanding prisoners. In every word he utters, one catches a glimpse of his sincerity, soft heart and honest soul, such that it could be said that only a very hapless event brought him to this unfortunate position" (xxxii).

incident is found in an oral narrative collected by Vuk (Prip.16) where *vile* discuss the cure for a princess's leprosy.

### **Raise a Snake Man**

MH I.32. The Man-Snake. Kate Murat from Luka on Šipan

In Kate Murat's<sup>199</sup> telling of 'The Snake Bridegroom,' after the Queen of Buda follows some poorly related supernatural advice and gives birth to a snake, the snake leaves town immediately and is raised for fifteen years by *vile*.

### **Sit in Horse's Saddle**

MH II.39 Marko Kraljević's Šarac. Jaka Korunić from Smokvica on the island Korčula

This song opens with Marko purchasing his famous piebald. Šarac is described in wondrous but odd terms: "In his saddle was sitting a white *vila*, / In his mane a fiery snake was sleeping, / And in his forehead a precious jewel was sparkling" (ll. 5-8). The use is strange and Korunić does not remark further on the trope in the song.

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<sup>199</sup> Kate Murat (née Palunko). This gifted singer stands as an exception in having been recorded twice for the Matica Hrvatska collection. In the early 1860s at the approximate age of 26, her brother Vinko Palunko recorded a number of songs from her. Many of these songs and others were recorded again in 1884/5 (when she was about 50 years-old) by her son Andro Murat who provided a detailed biography (rife with flowery prose) of his mother. In his flattering biography, Andro noted some important aspects of the singer's life. Born to a low family that rose in prestige and wealth on the island, her two brothers were sent to school (with Vinko completing a higher religious education and later becoming a bishop), while the six girls were denied an education as per the custom of the time. She never learned to read and therefore was unable to learn her songs from books nor "sully any of her songs" (Murat 1886b:4). Andro describes his mother as having a lively character, quick wit, ease with words, as well as being very religious. Though she retained a vast number of songs in her advanced years, she claimed to have known a considerable number more as a youth. As is common of such singers (and their biographical descriptions), Murat outlines his mother's ability in her youth to hear a song once and commit it to memory. He suggests that this trait was common among the women of Šipan, but that his mother set herself apart with her ability to recognize how exactly a song should be sung 'in the Šipan style,' whether a song has the proper 'folk' soul, how to make it flow and agree throughout, as well as ensure that the ideas of the song are well said. He calls these attributes a gift which others "would seek in vain if they knew as many songs as she does" (5).

### **Serve Wine and Snacks**

Vuk II.87. The Wedding of Popović Stojan. Tešan Podrugović from Kazanci near Gacko, recorded in Sremski Karlovci.

Heading to Venice for the daughter of the King, Stojan Popović gathers a wedding party composed completely of great heroes for protection. On their way back they meet an armed Latin hero with strange clothes. He is drinking wine which is served to him in a golden cup by a mountain *vila*. Her right hand pours the drink while her left hand feeds him snacks (ll. 129-31).

This motif is perhaps notable for comparative purposes if credence is given to the parallels drawn between *vile* and Norse *valkyrjur/dís* who feed and pour drinks for the heroes of *Valhöll* (Jurić 2010b:58; Nodilo 2003:271).

### **Captured by Turks**

MH II.41. Kraljević Marko and the Black Arab. Marko Lučić from Prievar near Herceg Novi.<sup>200</sup>

In this song, Marko Kraljević has a premonition of birds being attacked in a dream. When he wakes, his wife interprets the dream as Marko's *vila posestrima* and her two daughters being captured by 30 Turks led by the Black Arab. Marko goes in search of them, but they are not in their usual mountain, nor in their 'playground' (*igralište*). Marko finally comes upon a Turkish camp, where the *vile* are being held prisoner in a tent.

### **Drinking Partner**

Banić 1885.110. Ivo of Senj and Alija of Jajce. Josip Pezelj from Donji Dolac

Ivan of Senj is drinking wine with his *posestrima vila* in Karlovac when a letter arrives for him. When he reads it, he strikes his fist upon his knee and begins to cry (stock

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<sup>200</sup> For the publication in MH II, the editors missed the singer name and incorrectly cite the song location as Dubrovnik. Lučić is only noted as a villager and Greek-Eastern (Eastern Orthodox) regarding religion.

traditional behaviour). The *vila* asks him about the letter that has affected him so and he relates the terrible news contained within. He then retrieves his horse and leaves as the *vila* wishes him well. All aspects of this scene are typical of the tradition, but usually it is a fellow hero, *pobratim*, sister, mother, or some other character drinking with or serving drinks to the protagonist. A *vila* in this role is distinctive.

### Searching for Water

Ilić 1878a.1. The Birth of Kraljević Marko. Stanko Janković of Siče and possibly others<sup>201</sup>

In a poorly sung song,<sup>202</sup> the ‘Know Where Water is’ motif is played out for another *vila*. A *vila* is lost in a mountain seeking shade and water but unable to find it. She prays to God for direction. As she is uttering this request a wind carries the voice of her sister *vila Slavonkinja*<sup>203</sup> to her, “Do not sorrow sister, / That you have no shade or water; / You will give birth to a handsome son / Who will make shade for you / And serve you water in your old age” (ll. 12-6) Still uttering these words, the baby is born and baptized. The baby is Marko Kraljević. As discussed above, this song bears all the marks of a singer aware of many traditions, but poorly skilled in the art of singing.

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<sup>201</sup> There may be one, two or three versions of this song collected by Ilić; his imprecise collecting practices make it difficult to know the exact situation. He presents the song in 1878a.1, as being sung by Stanko Janković, a frontiersman and marksman of a peasant regiment in Gradiška who was born and lived in Siče (1878a:3, 121 n. 1). In a footnote he also mentions having heard a multiform from a blind singer who opened the song with a different beginning that ‘agrees better with history’ (1878a:3). In 1878b.1, the song is reprinted verbatim including a missing passage that the first version lacked but missing the ending. Here no singer is cited, but Ilić explains that he used Janković’s version to finish this multiform which lacked an ending. Most likely Ilić has mixed and matched material from three multiforms and left out two singers’ names, such that it is impossible to know whence which material. 1878a.1 has 290 lines with 27 alternate lines from the unnamed blind singer, while 1878b.1 has 226, otherwise the songs are nearly identical.

<sup>202</sup> In this song, multiple motifs and songs are clustered together that are seldom combined. There are also multiple story-telling errors. A dozen lines after a *vila* gives birth to Marko he has a human mother, another few lines and he must save the mother he just saw at home from a Turkish prison. These are the kinds of errors that competent singers note as the mark of poor and unskilled singers. See for instance Sulejman Makić’s comments in Parry and Lord 1953:266.

<sup>203</sup> The *vila Slavonkinja* is oddly called ‘mistress of the green oak forests’ here.

### **Take Care of Character's Love**

Ilić 1878a.1. The Birth of Kraljević Marko. Stanko Janković of Siče and possibly others

In the same song, Marko's newfound love, Anđelija, takes ill with a headache so Marko brings her to his *vila posestrima*'s manor (which is guarded by seven snakes). The *vila* proceeds to hide the sick maiden from him, then reveal her again. Later, she tends to the girl while Marko is away, but does not heal her as would be expected.

### **Maiden Becomes *Vila***

Pavlinović 1876b.543. A Maiden [Goes] to the *Vile*. Unknown singer from Vrhgorac, Bosnia

A poor mother raises three children in squalor. When they reach a certain age she divides them up. She gives Ivan wealth and sends him off to join the czar's army. She gives young Manda a silken brocade embroidered with gold and velvet<sup>204</sup> and sends her off to the white *vile*. To young Ruža, she gives a crown of pearls, retaining her at home to herd sheep. One day, nine years later, a clamour from the east signals a group of white *vile* who descend on Ruža's herd. They greet her warmly and she calls them her *posestrime*. The *vile* suggest that she must be thirsty from herding and that she should 'go forward a little ahead' where she will find three wells. She is to drink from the first, wash her face in the second and give her sheep to drink from the third. The young maiden follows the instruction and finds the wells, but does not follow their advice. She lets her sheep drink from the first, in the second she washes and in the third she drinks. When one of the *vile* sees that, she asks the maiden where she got her crown of pearls. The *vila* is

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<sup>204</sup> The original contains two instances of a common reduplication '*difa i kadifa*' (velour and velour) which has, in its first instance, been altered to '*diba i kadifa*' (brooch and velour). It is unclear whose hand has made the change. It is possible that the emendation represents a scribal error at the time of collecting that the collector later attempted to correct but, given the second, non-altered form, I would suggest that the singer used the reduplication and the collector or editor assumed an error on the singer's part.

revealed to be Ruža's sister Manda who extends greetings to their mother. She explains that she will never again come to visit for now she is steward to her *posestrime vile* from the mountain. The maiden's status as a *vila* is never completely suggested; she is called a *vila*, but this might be her sister's understanding. Of course, it also heightens the drama for the reveal in the song. No other songs suggest that humans can become *vile*.

**Take Maiden to Teach her Secret Knowledge and Gives her Bride Wealth**

Banović 1908.5. Ivan and Jelica. Mande Andrijašević from Zaoštrog

Ivan and Jele promise themselves to one another upon receiving the news that he is to be conscripted into the czar's army. After he has gone, Jele is herding sheep late one evening when she looks up at a fir tree and sees a *vila* there combing her yellow hair. She pines aloud for such beautiful hair and the *vile* invite her to live with them in the mountains. A deal is struck between them: if she stays with them for 14 years they will teach her woman's knowledge (to embroider, to spin with a distaff, but surprisingly no magic knowledge) and will give her as much trousseau as she wishes, uncountable wealth, and the ability to marry whomever she pleases. She accepts the deal and leaves with them. When her time is near its end, Ivan returns from service to find Jelica absent. Her mother offers him her other daughter, Ane, in her stead, as well as Jele's trousseau; he accepts. That evening the *vile* inform Jelica of the news. For love of Ivan she leaves her incomplete apprenticeship. "Thank you kindly, my dear mothers, / But I won't take your innumerable gold, / Nor your white trousseau / Rather the young hero Ivan, / To whom I gave my word" (ll. 96-100). She goes home amidst the celebration, grabs Ivan and reminds him of his promise. Ivan gives Ane back her bride-wealth and offers her his brother in marriage, but the young maiden dies from the shame and loss. Jele goes into



the forest with Ivan and the *vile* give her lovely gifts and uncountable wealth. Then the mountain *vile* tell her that they will give her, with their love, children, both male and female; first a daughter then some sons.

This song presents an example of generic blending. Oral narrative motifs of abducting youths (there usually boys) and teaching them secret knowledge are here combined with motifs found in lyric songs of *vile* providing a poor girl a trousseau or wedding gifts and drawn into the format of a narrative song.

### **Pull Character out of a Well**

Bervaldi-Lucić 1887.1. The Sister of Senjković Ban and Ivan of Senj. Marija Bučić from Stari Grad on the island of Hvar.

Senjković Ban selfishly refuses to give his sister away in marriage, but Ivan of Senj has promised to take her from him. There is an altercation between them and Ivan shoots the *Ban* and takes the maiden.<sup>205</sup> Along the road back to Ivan's home, the sister betrays his trust and leaps into a well from which she cannot be extricated. She sits for three days, suspended in the center of the well by a mass of woolen fabric thrown into the well by Ivan's *djever* [chaperone]. Ivan retires back to Senj with his men and, after much waiting, a *vila* arrives to extract the girl from her unfortunate position.

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<sup>205</sup> The exact moral overtones in this song are difficult to pin down. At first the song seems to hold Senjković Ban as the villain for keeping his sister when his duty as a brother is to wed her off when she comes of age (possibly also hinting at incestuous undertones that are often explored in songs that begin thus). When Ivan comes to demand the maiden, it is the *Ban* who escalates the hostilities by shooting a number of Ivan's men and bringing his own demise upon himself. Matters seem to shift in the middle of the song though, when the sister refuses Ivan as her lover proclaiming that she will have nothing to do with the murder of her brother. The song concludes with a happy reuniting of brother and sister.

### **Sing in Horse's Mane**

Hör I.8. Đerzelez Alija. From Zenica.

In another strong contender for an archaism, an odd line appears in one of the songs collected by Hörmann for his collection from an unnamed singer in Zenica. In the song the hero Đerzelez Alija is forced to concede to demands that his horse be taken from him. Not wanting to lose his trusted steed, Alija instructs the horse not to let itself be taken. 12 Turks place 12 reins on the horse and drag it from its stable. They get it halfway across a field when it snaps its reins and races back to its stable. As the horse is being dragged out, the singer inserts a line with no context, explanation or further elaboration or mention “Two *vile* sang in the [horse's] mane” (*dvije vile u griv' zapjevale*) (l. 128).

Whatever purpose this line once served in this or other songs known to the singer, it is non-functional here. This might have been a mistaken verse from elsewhere in the singer's repertoire, but if it was retained because, to the singer, this song was simply sung thus, then it could represent something much older.

### **Talk to Dead Character**

Hör II.68. Bojičić Alija's Revenge. From Sarajevo.

In another provocative Irregular Motif from Hörmann's collection, a *vila* holds a conversation with a dead hero in his grave. The song opens with a cuckoo calling out on Prolog Mountain. The dead Bojičić Alija tells the cuckoo to go anywhere but on his grave to call. The cuckoo, however, is not a cuckoo but his *posestrima vila*. She has come to enquire about how life in the grave is treating him. He tells her that he is very comfortable, but that he grows weary of the Ban of Vrljika and his 30 Hungarians who pass regularly on hunting trips. The Hungarians all pass peacefully but the Ban strikes

Alija's tombstone hard with his stirrups and insults the dead hero. Alija asks the *vila* to go to his brother Osman and tell him all of this. She delivers the news to Osman (who also, notably, confuses her for a cuckoo), who then gathers men to attack the Ban. This motif shows vestiges of the 'Ask Clover Who Trampled it' motif and the visit of the *vila* in the 'Last Request' motif, but having the hero already dead in the song is extremely novel. Whether this song represents an innovation on the part of the singer, or a common motif that was little collected, it speaks to an understanding of the *vila*'s role in the tradition that adds weight to comparative suggestions between the *vila* and Norse *valkyrjur/dís* (Jurić 2010b:58; Nodilo 2003:271).

## The *Vila* in Lyric Songs

Since many motifs present in both narrative and lyric songs have been treated above, the careful reader may have an idea of the tone and mood of the lyric songs and the *vila*'s use within them. The *vila* of the lyric songs, is in almost every way, the *vila* of the narrative songs; the register is the same, but the nature of the songs alters the tradition here. The motifs employed reflect the focus of the songs on emotions rather than events and narrative. They are also often simpler motifs since the songs are shorter and, because of this, present a tighter fixity of formulaic composition (Coote 1992; Lord 1995:22). The brevity of the songs also requires a simplicity of focus which makes independent motifs rare. In terms of content, the *vila*'s connection to heroes and heroic tropes still appears in the lyric songs but, since women had more access and opportunity to sing these songs, the songs contain more engagement between women and *vile*, and concern themselves more with traditionally feminine topics of beauty, domestic work and concern with subtle interpersonal connections. This also leads to one of the impediments of analyzing the *vila* in lyric songs—knowing when an actual *vila* is in a song. Since beautiful women (and sometimes men) are often compared with *vile* (see below), and since many of the lyric songs are sung in the first person and concerned with lovers, there are many songs where a singer speaks lovingly of a '*vila*' and it is not always clear if he/she is speaking of the supernatural being (which can and does fall in love with humans) or simply singing of a beloved. Thus, all of the songs that give any indication that their *vila* is in fact a human (she lives in a house in a town, her mother or father are mentioned, etc.) have been removed from this study, while those that remain ambiguous in their depiction were

retained. While many lyric songs are patterned and traditional, these are also the songs composed for group singing, dance and play. The genre is thus more receptive to innovation and novelty and so contains a much higher number of irregular motifs than the narrative songs.

Of 147 lyric songs, the *vila* is again most commonly found in mountains, although here low mountains take precedent over the high.

**Table 3 Lyric Song Locations by Number of Occurrence**

Habitat			Encountered at/in		
Mountain (Low)	<i>Gora, Gorica</i>	26	Mountain (Low)	<i>Gora, Gorica</i>	17
(High) <sup>206</sup>	<i>Planina</i>	13	(High)	<i>Planina</i>	12
City	<i>Grad</i>	6	<i>Vila</i> playground	<i>Igralište</i>	3
Cloud	<i>Oblak</i>	5	European Ash tree	<i>Jasen</i>	2
Coast	<i>Primorje</i>	2	Boat	<i>Brod</i>	2
Manor	<i>Dvor/Dvorac</i>	2	River	<i>Rijeka</i>	2
Water in Mountain	<i>Voda u gori</i>	1	Forest	<i>Šuma</i>	1
Tower	<i>Kula</i>	1	Maple tree	<i>Javor</i>	1
Buda (city)	<i>Buda</i>	1	The East	<i>Istok</i>	1
Pearl	<i>Biser</i>	1			
Cave	<i>Pećina stina</i>	1			
Field	<i>Polje</i>	1			
Across the Sea	<i>Preko mora</i>	1			

The *vila*'s names and epithets are also less dynamic here. She is overwhelmingly referred to as white or 'too-white' (40%), followed by epithets denoting her connection to low mountains (13) (*gorkinja, nadgorkinja...* with the term *zagorkinja* taking the most prominence [10]) or high mountains (*planinkinja*) (4), and only one coastal (*primorkinja*) *vila* (1). There are, again, task-related epithets: the boat driving/boat fee taking (*brodarkinja*) *vila* (MH VII.331) returns here, while others include the healer (*ljekarnica*)

<sup>206</sup> Named locations are rare here. For high mountains they are Lovćen, Papača, Trebević, Dobila, Motokit and Zavelim; the Sava is the only named river and Buda the only city.

*vila* (Vuk I.597), and poisoner (*otrovkinja*) *vila* (MH VII.339). There are also three titles that suit the tone of the lyric songs and are most likely only found there: the little pearl (*bisernica*) *vila* (Lazzari 1889.9), the beautiful (*gizdava*) *vila* (.10), and the heavenly (*rajskije*) *vile* (.34). For proper names, only Danica (.8), Slavka/e (.8, 34), and Mandalina (MH V.34) occur. Unlike her epic uses, the *vila* here seldom flies, and her wings are mentioned only when she barter them in the ‘Wager with a Maiden’ motif (6%).

### Regular Motifs

#### **Compare Childhood to a Beauty’s**

3% (5 songs). Dalmatia and Bay of Kotor. Dependent Motif

In this motif a character (almost always named Petar or King Petar) boasts that his wife is more beautiful than even a mountain *vila*. A *vila* descends from the mountains to see for herself and calls to Petar’s love (most often Mare when named) to exit her manor that she may look upon her. Mare does this, always dressed in finery and shining like the sun. Faced with her impressive beauty, the *vila* must admit that Mare surpasses her, but explains in monologue that there is a clear reason for that:

„Ако т' је љепша љубовца	“If your love is more beautiful
„Од мене виле од горе,	Than I, a <i>vila</i> from the mountain,
„А њу је мајка родила	Well, her mother gave birth to her
„У свилен повој повила,	And swaddled her in silk,
„Мајчиним мл'јеком дојила;	Nursed her with mother’s milk;
„А мене вилу од горе,	But me, a <i>vila</i> from the mountain,
„Мене је гора родила,	The mountain gave birth to me,
„У зелен листак повила;	Swaddled me in green leaves.
„Јутрења роса падала,	When the morning dew fell,
„Мене је вилу дојила;	It would nurse me;
„Од горе вјетрицу пувао,	When a wind blew from the mountain,

„Мене је вилу шикао,  
„То су ми биле дадије.“

It would rock me,  
Those were my nursemaids.”

(Vuk I.114 ll. 23-35)

Characteristic of the lyric song, variation in this motif is minor. In one song from an unnamed singer in the Makarska region, the *vila* asks leave of her fellow *vile* to investigate the claims and Mare describes the finery that she is donning as she prepares to exit her home (MH VI.71), otherwise the multiforms show marked textual stability (see Coote 1992; Lord 1995:22).

### **Pitch Tent for Maiden's Love**

2% (3 songs). Various areas of Bosnia. Dependent Motif

In this song, a maiden in her manor worries that her love will be caught in the rain that has begun to fall while he is out hunting. A *vila* calls to reassure her that she has pitched a tent over him to protect him. Variations occurs here in short descriptions of clothing and garments which are presented variously—as simple descriptors of how her love is dressed (Pavlinović 1876b.548), the garments that the maiden worries will be ruined by the rain (.547), or those items that the *vila* has covered the youth with to keep him warm (Vuk I.227).

### **Poison or Guard Well**

5% (8 songs). Wide Distribution. Dependent Motif

This motif opens with a young maiden spinning in a field (occasionally, first viewed by a falcon flying above [Ostojić 1880-3b.326; Pavlinović 1876a.194]). She grows thirsty and bored with her work and so lays it aside to search for water. She finds a well or ‘cold *Dunaj* water’ that has usually been fenced-in or otherwise sectioned-off by

*vile*.<sup>207</sup> She kneels down to drink from the well when ‘something from the well’ (Vuk I.288; Pavlinović 1876b.550), a *vila* (Pavlinović 1876b.551), or a shepherd boy (MH X.8; Kamenar 2013.95; Ostojić 1880-3a.160, 1880-3b.326) calls to her, warning her not to drink from the water. In most multiforms she is informed that *vile* have poisoned the water by bathing an unbaptized child in it. It is often further explained that the situation would not be so bad if the child had been male, but it was female and so the water is fatal to drink (Vuk I.288; Pavlinović 1876b.551; or with the male more poisonous in Pavlinović 1876b.550). In one multiform of this ending, a *vila* curses the shepherd for revealing this information to the maiden (MH X.8). In two multiforms collected in Imotska Krajina, the girl ignores the advice and drinks from the well. Three white *vile* (*do tri bile vile* again) fly down and mutilate her body for the transgression.<sup>208</sup> In one version, they then put her on a donkey and send her home to spread word of what has befallen her (Ostojić 1880-3a.160), while in the other, the shepherd curses the maiden for not following his advice (1880-3b.326). One final version recorded from an unnamed singer in Podgora, Bosnia skips all of the drama of the song and intentionally derails the motif when the maiden, herself aware of the dangerous nature of the water, ignores her thirst, and instead picks roses that the *vile* planted around the well (Pavlinović 1876a.194).

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<sup>207</sup> Harkening again to *vile* building gruesome structures, a multiform collected from Teza Crnković in Subotica in the Bačka region of Vojvodina, has the *vile* fencing-in the well with the shoulders of heroes (MH X.8).

<sup>208</sup> In one of the songs, the *vile* fly down riding on horses (Ostojić 1880-3b.326), yet another linkage to their lore and that of Norse *valkyrjur/dis* (Cook 1997:303; Grammaticus 2008:69). The mutilations are standard for the traditional response to female betrayal. Her breasts and eyes are removed, her arms broken or cut off and the truncated arms inserted into the holes left by her missing breasts.



### **Ride While Character Walks**

2% (3 songs) Northern Bosnia. Dependent Motif

This is an odd and short motif. The song opens in medias res with a *vila* riding quickly on another man's horse while she ushers that character, barefoot and bareheaded, ahead of her. In two of the songs the character is Osman(-Beg) (MH V.28; Kurtagić 1908-34.103), while in the third he is Ivan, a Catholic rather than Muslim character (Pavlinović 1876b.557). The character on foot begs the *vila* to stop so that he might rest a bit, but she quickly extinguishes his hopes. She intends to take no breaks as she is racing to get to Biograd where she must build, always 'without ruler or chalk,' either the city itself, or its battlements. The character on foot seems to be her prisoner in the song, but their relationship is never developed, nor the building concept. The multiform by Hanka Kurtagić, however, brings the *vila*'s traditional macabre building practices into the song and suggests that at least some singers interpreted the human's situation in the song as dire (Kurtagić 1908-34.103). In her song, the *vila* informs Osman that they must get to Biograd, where they are to build a door from Osman's shoulder, a keyhole from a divorcée's hand and a glass window from the eyes of a maiden (ll. 9-11).

### **Ask Clover Who Trampled it**

5% (7 songs)<sup>209</sup> Herzegovina, Tropolje and the facing portion of Dalmatia.<sup>210</sup> Dependent Motif.

This is a highly evocative motif that brings snakes back into the *vila*'s tradition. The song always opens in identical form, but resolves itself variously. It opens with

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<sup>209</sup> An eighth song (Pavlinović 1876b.574) could arguably be placed here. It mimics the opening of the motif, but in the service of another. It is explored further in 'Reveal Old Groom' below.

<sup>210</sup> All seven multiforms of this song were collected between Livno in Tropolje and Vrhgorac in Herzegovina, and in the span between Split and Imotska on the opposite side of the border in Dalmatia. Many of the songs anchor the action to their locality.

clover (*djetelina/ditelina. Trifolium papilionaceæ*) crying out,<sup>211</sup> and a *vila* calling down to it to ask who has trampled it. The questions are always phrased as a ‘Slavonic Antithesis,’ a common poetic device in the tradition that involves a series of questions and answers (see below). The clover reveals that it is (most commonly) a young lad who has trampled it while making trips day and night to visit his young love, a shepherdess. In the most common multiform, the *vila* descends to the clover, transforms herself into a, often multi-coloured (*šarena*), serpent and waits for the youth to pass. When he rides by, she slithers up his horse’s leg and bites him on the hand. The youth keels over dead in the grass, while his love waits in vain (MH V.31; Grgić 1881.31). Most other multiforms follow the plot quite closely with only minor alterations—the song ends after the *vila* outlines her plot (Banić 1885.269), or the *vila* instructs the clover to transform into a snake rather than doing it herself (Pavlinović 1876b.564). Others hijack the opening lines and the explanation of who is doing the trampling to lead the song into exploration of other themes. Thus a singer from Vrhgorac describes how it is Senjković Ivan trampling the clover when he visits a young widow and her three unmarried daughters who lavish attention on courtiers (.575). Another singer from Ledinac has three Turks leading three Christian maidens trampling mountain germander (*Iva trava, teucrium montanum*), while the maidens metaphorically worry about what ill-intent the Turks have planned for them. Yet another singer from Ljuti Dolac uses the clover metaphorically to vent what seems to be some personal frustration with in-laws (.594).

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<sup>211</sup> Aside from one song which replaces clover with mountain germander (*Iva trava. Teucrium montanum*) (Pavlinović 1876b.582).

### **Reveal Old Groom**

2% (3 songs) Bosnia and Syrmia. Dependent Motif.

Finding more multiforms of this motif would greatly clarify its exact form and nature. This study produced three loosely related songs that show enough semblance to suggest multiformity but not enough to gauge their relationship properly. Linking them all is a *vila* who calls to a young bride-to-be traveling to her wedding and informs her that she is betrothed to an old man. Upon hearing this revelation, the maiden kills herself.

One song from Banja Luka is modelled on the opening from the motif ‘Ask Clover Who Trampled it.’ In the song, a mountain of boxwood and carnations (*šimšir* and *karanfil*), rather than clover, cry out that they have been desecrated by a wedding party passing un-peacefully over them—the bride has been breaking the boxwood’s branches (Pavlinović 1876b.574). Rather than turn into a snake to take her revenge, the *vila* calls to the young bride, telling her to go more slowly over the mountain—if she knew how old her groom is, she would not be in such a rush. At this news, the maiden asks her *djever* (bride’s chaperone) for a knife, under the pretense of slicing an apple, and drives it into her own heart. A second song sung by Reza and Anka Lukić in Komletinci in Syrmia (Kučera 1884.23) offers the young Ajkuna three suitors ranging from poor, young and desired, to wealthy, rich and old. Ajkuna’s mother gives her to the oldest suitor when he offers a great dowery. The two youths act as the groom’s *djever* and best man, while the bride takes *vile* as her bridesmaids. As the party passes through the mountains the *vile* tell the maiden not to look at the two youths her mother rejected but to the old man whom she is to marry. At this the maiden is said to ‘drop dead,’ although the song continues with each suitor providing his hand in hopes to lift her off the ground. She refuses all but her

young chosen, who quickly hastens her away on his horse. The final multiform is a hendecasyllabic lyric song that borrows heavily from the narrative in tone. Collected from an unnamed singer in an undisclosed location in central or north-western Bosnia, the song has the beautiful Mara watching a handsome hero below her window and singing a wish that they will live happily together (Pajić n.d.35). The hero goes home, gathers a wedding party, and retrieves the maiden. As they are passing a mountain range, the maiden's *vila posestrima* reveals that she is being led to marriage, not with the youth, but with an old man (presumably, though not explicitly, his aged father). At the news the girl dives into the sea to end her life.

Despite these songs taking fairly disparate narrative forms, they all hinge around the *vila*'s crucial revelation as the wedding party is passing through mountains. In all, this revelation spurs the bride to suicide, even if the second variant reneges on her death, revealing it as metaphoric with further action. The two Bosnian multiforms contain further textual stability in that the elderly groom is unknown to the bride and the *vila*'s revelatory words make reference to his "white beard that reaches down to his waist" in both (Pajić n.d.35 l. 49; Pavlinović 1876b.574 l. 12). A more curious factor in the Bosnian multiforms that speaks to Lord's concept of a 'tension of essences' is the fact that both make reference to the boxwood shrub or tree (*šimšir*, *Buxus sempervirens*), which is a rarer plant in the tradition. While the first song opens with a mountain of boxwood calling out to the *vila*, the third song has the *vila*'s revelation occur as the wedding party are crossing Boxwood Mountain.

### **Offer Magic Gifts to Spare Life**

7% (10 songs) Wide Distribution. Independent Motif.

This motif arises in three song variants, each culminating in a final important passage where a *vila* offers a character three magic herbs or three ‘good turns’ (*do tri dobra* in Lazzari 1889.28) in return for sparing her life.<sup>212</sup> One variant of this motif has already been explored in the ‘Impede Building’ motif where Young Jovica/Ivica places fantastic guards about his city to capture a *vila* who has been destroying his construction efforts (MH V.29). In a second variant a character is hunting or walking through mountains when he captures a *vila* or spots her in an ash tree (*jasen*) and aims an arrow at her with the intent of killing her (Vuk I.255; Lazzari 1889.28; Pavlinović 1876b.560).<sup>213</sup> Finally, a third variant opens with either Sibirjanin Janko, or his nephew Sekula pitching a tent on a *vila*’s playground (fairy ring) for which she angrily threatens him and he retaliates by capturing her (Vuk I.266; Mažuranić and Mažuranić 1889.28; Mikuličić 1884.3; Smičiklas n.d.38). Once the *vila* has been apprehended, she enumerates three good turns, or the effects of three magic herbs that she will give the hero in exchange for her life. In all three variants, the effects most commonly involve three of the following: that he will be happy, intelligent or wise; that he will have esteem, luck, calm or respect amongst his peers; some gift of wealth; that he will be dear to women; that his wife will become more beautiful than the *vila*; that his wife will give birth to one or many sons; that his arm or sword will easily slay Turks; or that his horse will be fast or wily. Though

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<sup>212</sup> The phrase is stock, though most common in this motival context. See Vuk II.90 for a non-*vila* example.

<sup>213</sup> Of special interest is the multiform collected in Prčanj, Montenegro. The song is sung in the first person and has the *vila* steal the main character’s hat from his head when he passes under the Ash (Lazzari 1889.28). See Supplement, Lyric Song 4.

some songs will end at the offer, most have the character refuse all of the gifts, either by simply stating that he already has these things without the *vila*'s aid, or by having the character respond to each in a stylized manner:

<p><i>“Ne moli se, b’jela vilo! Dok je meni glave moje, Bit ću mudra i pametan; Dok je meni konja moga, Vihar će mi konja nositi; Dok je meni lica moga, Bit ću mio djevojkama.”</i></p>	<p>“Do not beg, white <i>vila</i>! So long as I have my head, I will be intelligent and wise; So long as I have my horse, A whirlwind will carry my mount; So long as I have my face, I will be dear to maidens.”</p> <p style="text-align: right;">(MH V.29 ll. 33-9)</p>
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Rarely, following this refutation the hero will proceed to kill the *vila* (MH V.29; Vuk I.225). As explored earlier, in Luka on the island of Šipan, this motif of three magic gifts was drawn from the lyric songs, with its context as a plea for salvation and redeployed as an offer of bridewealth by a *vila*. The hero's refusal initiates the 'Make Character Sick When Love Spurned' narrative song motif. The connection of this motif with the figures of Janko of Sibirj and Banović Sekula further links the two motifs and reveals the narrative song motif as a local reworking of the more widespread lyric song motif—a practice characteristic of the epic songs of female singers on the island.

### **Call to a City or Village**

2% (3 songs) Wide Distribution. Independent Motif.

In this motif, a *vila*'s common behaviour of calling out to individual characters is replaced by her calling to an entire city or the residents of a city. Two attestations of this motif recorded in Bosnia (MH V.93, X.59) have been attached to a common lyric song about a plague devastating neighbouring areas which occurs in numerous other multiforms that lack the *vila* (Andrić 1909:461-465). The third song has the *vila* calling

out to a village, telling them not to let a certain Antun go to war, for he will not return unscathed or alive (Kušmiš and Kušmiš 1898.3).

**Who Stokes the Fire?**

3% (5 songs) Bosnia. Independent Motif.

This motif is composed of a simple set of lines that are often appended as an opening to the ‘Love Won’t Give up Fee’ motif; a single multiform, however, shows that the motif works independently. The lines are presented in a simple ‘question and answer’ format which asks who is stoking a fire on a certain mountain and who is warming themselves by the fire. The answer is always that *vile* are stoking the fire and that a particular human character is warming by it. For most multiforms, the character warming is a wounded figure, Ivo (with one Muslim singer, Aiša Kurtagić, giving the Muslim name Ibro, presumably due to the homophony), and the introduction of this character leads the song directly into the ‘Love Won’t Give up Fee’ motif (MH VII.329; Kurtagić 1908-34.10; Pajić n.d.2). For the independent presentation of the motif, it is young maidens who warm themselves by the fire (Pavlinović 1876b.542).

**Love Won’t Give up Fee**

7% (10 songs). Throughout Bosnia, Herzegovina and Slavonia. Dependent Motif

In this motif, the healing powers of the *vila* are presented in more sinister tones when, rather than performing this task out of a duty to a character, she demands a fee for her services. The song most often opens with a variously named protagonist building the city of Buda. As he nears completion a stone falls from one of the walls and crushes his

leg (MH V.124; Bogdešić 1884.16; Ilić 1878b.208; Kurtagić 1908-34.201)<sup>214</sup> prompting a *vila* to come to him in aid. Those multiforms that do not open with the builder start instead with the ‘Who Stokes the Fire?’ motif where the character warming by the fire is the wounded figure whom the *vile* have decided to heal (MH VII.329; Kurtagić 1908-34.10; Pajić n.d.2). Interestingly, the oldest collected multiform has neither of these most common openings. In Vuk’s multiform (I.597), the song opens with a house collapsing on the protagonist, Young Jovan, while he is inside, crushing his right arm.

Aside from unique versions where the wounded character offers the *vila*’s fee to any who will help him (Bogdešić 1884.16) or where the *vila* makes heady demands, not as fee, but as ingredients in her medicine (Kurtagić 1908-34.10), most multiforms follow closely to the core narrative of the tradition after the *vila*’s introduction.<sup>215</sup> Mimicking the outlandish prices *vile* place on drinking water, the *vila* demands dire payment from the protagonist’s family for her healing services. The most common forms of the song will lay demands upon the protagonist’s mother, sister and love, with optional demands extended to his father, brother and himself. The demands are stock and fashioned by the tradition—the father and mother are always required to sacrifice the most by giving arms, legs or eyes; the sister to give a braid of her hair or some piece of adornment from her clothing; the brother or the wounded protagonist a horse; and the final demand always made to the love for a precious necklace. The didactic message of the song is clearly presented when the family members readily offer their precious body parts and holdings,

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<sup>214</sup> Except in Mina Hošić’s multiform where what can only be a *lapsus linguae* has her accidentally killing her builder off with the stone (Kurtagić 1908-34.201).

<sup>215</sup> Andrić cites another five multiforms in the collection (1909:492) which my research did not extend to but which derive from the same regions and follow the core motif closely.



but the gift most easily parted with is refused by the scornful or selfish love. Most often the love defends her selfishness by elaborating the gift's sentimental worth—it was given her by her father, mother or family. Her statement also works to disdainfully suggest that some culpability rests with the protagonist who has not given her precious jewelry to wear. Sometimes the love gives voice to these grievances, or is particularly acerbic and deceitful when she states that the necklace was not given to her by the protagonist but rather her first and true love (MH VII.329).

Denied her fee, the *vila* of the songs grows angry and makes the protagonist's wounds worse, tears them open (MH VII.329), or poisons them (MH V.124; Vuk I.597), killing him. Most commonly the songs end here, although Vuk's variant concludes with a stock pattern to further emphasize the love's deceit. Here the singer concludes on the mourning habits of the protagonist's family—his mother mourns unendingly, his sister late at night and early in the morning, his love seldom, and only when he comes to mind.<sup>216</sup> An unnamed singer from somewhere in Bosnia (Pajić n.d.2) ends the song on a tragic note, juxtaposing Ivo's interment in his grave with his love being led to her new suitor's bed chamber (Supplement, Lyric Song 1).

Beyond these innovations and novel approaches to the tradition, a multiform by Jela Bukvić of Popovo in Herzegovina is notable for its style. This song borders on narrative song with its elaboration of the core motif, its clear division of the song into two scenes, and its borrowing from the epic tradition. Here the protagonist is freed from under

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<sup>216</sup> This traditional pattern is most often an episode in the 'Last Request' motif when the *vila* is sent to the dying protagonist's manor to report on how his family is mourning him.

the stone by the *vila* and must himself go home to ask for the fees from his family. The sister's fee shifts here from the omnipresent braid to a more epic demand for her breasts. While other multiforms from the Bosnian border specify that the love's necklace is made of golden ducats (Kurtagić 1908-34.10, 201), here the love's necklace was bought by her brother in Venice for the cost of an oke<sup>217</sup> of ducats and when it comes time to deny the payment, the love's contempt is emphasized in her deception:

<p><i>“Ne dam tebi sa grla gjerdana, Što su mi ga braća dobavila Iz Mletaka za oku dukata. Mogu naći boljeg gospodara, Koji ne će vina i duhana, Vet on čuva robe i dućana.”</i></p>	<p>“I will not give you the necklace from my neck, Which my brothers bought for me In Venice for an oke of ducats. I can find a better lord, One who won't drink wine and smoke tobacco, But instead look after a shop and goods.” (MH V.124 ll. 73-8)</p>
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### Take away Scoundrels

1% (2 songs) Slavonia and Sirmia. Dependent Motif.

This motif involves the simple use of a common phrase that works as a mild to serious curse (see Chpt. 4). Here the common saying is attached to a very short song intended to be sung with similar verses in *kolo* circles or other dances.

<p><i>Woe, lads, devils, Who will fall in love with you? When you fool dear maidens, Let vile take you away.</i> (Bogdešić 1884 III.228)</p>	<p><i>Those devilish lads, Who will love you? When you fool dear maidens, Let the vile take you!</i> (Dungjerović 1891-2.158)</p>
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<sup>217</sup> Oke (*oka* in BCMS) was a common Ottoman measurement of mass. It is equal to 400 drams (*dirhem*) and equivalent to 1.283 kg. (Škaljić 1973:500)

### **Make Good Sister**

1% (2 songs) Luka on the Island of Šipan. Dependent Motif.

Two songs, recorded from different singers with a lapse of 30 years between them, show a fair amount of textual stability and suggest a local tradition. In the song, a youth picks flowers in a field and curses aloud the lack of people there to interact with. In the earlier song, Kate Murat (then Palunko), has “something from an oak” (see below) call to the lad (Palunko 1886.195), while Mare Ivanković has a nightingale call out (Marković 1892-3.1), telling him to head east where he will find a *vila* and a maiden. He is to take the *vila* as his sister and the girl as his love. Palunko’s version follows the action through, while Ivanković’s ends at the advice.

### **In a Boat**

1% (2 songs) Wide Distribution. Independent Motif

There are two songs where a *vila* drives or rides in a boat on a river. The first, collected in Zenica in Bosnia, has been outlined already in the ‘Shade and Suckle’ motif (Pavlinović 1876b.540). The second, collected in the Vrhovac region about a decade later (Kamenar 2013.23), uses the motif in an entirely different manner. This song is also one of the rare occurrences where *vile* occupy the same song as religious figures. In the song, a singer-persona tells the Korana River that it fooled her/him by claiming that there are no boats on the river but, in the morning, the singer saw that there were four. In the first Jesus and Mary, in the second a brother and sister, in the third a hero and a maiden, and in a fourth a white *vila*. The *vila* says,

*Da su meni zelene kočije  
Vozila se vu Petrinju doli  
Da bi vidla kak se doli nose.  
Doli nose lipo i gizdavo:*

If I had green coaches  
I would drive down to Petrinja  
To see how they are dressed there.  
There they are dressed beautifully:

<i>Snašce zelene igljice,</i>	The daughters-in-law, green needles,
<i>I divojke črljene venčce,</i>	And the maidens, red wreaths,
<i>Stare babe peče oko vrata,</i>	The old ladies, kerchiefs about their necks,
<i>Mladi momci čizme s ostrugljane,</i>	The young lads in boots with spurs
<i>Stari momci opanjce pletence.</i>	The older men in braided <i>opanci</i> . <sup>218</sup> (ll. 10-8)

### **Dance while Character Thinks of Gifts to Give her**

1% (2 songs) North-western corner of Bosnia. Dependent Motif

This is another motif drawn from two songs recorded by two female singers in a single region (Bosanska Krajina) at a 30-year gap. This motif is found in multiforms of a song collected from Ivka Pajić in Banja Luka (Pajić n.d.72) and Aiša Kurtagić in Kulen Vakuf (Kurtagić 1908-34.34). In the song, a white *vila* is dancing around the manor of a character (a young Voivode in Vojvodina for Pajić and Muj-Aga for Kurtagić) who worries that he has no gifts to give the *vila* and lists the many items that he has to offer. Despite all his offers, the *vila* ignores him and continues dancing. In Kurtagić's multiform, a somewhat darker conception of the *vila* is suggested as Mujo's last offer is that he has an unmarried brother he could give her. The *vila* likes this offer, and is said to 'leave the manor be' (l. 16), suggesting that her dance was something deadly or foreboding. If the gift of the unwed brother suggests that this song most commonly resolves itself with the promise of a lover for the *vila*, then Pajić's version is even more provocative and adds some homosexual undertones when the Voivode mentions that he has a sister who has never been kissed. At the sister's mention, the *vila* stops and looks, then dances harder. It would help to have more versions of the song to further understand

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<sup>218</sup> *Opanci* (sing. *Opanak*) are traditional footwear of various regional styles. They are shoes made of hard leather soles with soft leather, or animal intestine, strips or laces to cover the foot. These strips vary in style and range from simple banding to elaborate woven or braided designs. The toes of the shoes sometimes have a curled pike (*kljun*, lit. beak) following Eastern fashion.

how Pajić's odd ending is engaging with the tradition. If Kurtagić's version is the most common form, then perhaps Pajić's is simply a playful inversion of expectations which cause a humorous reaction from the *vila* in the song.

**Kill Maiden Indiscriminately**

1% (2 songs) Herzegovina and Luka on Šipan. Independent Motif.

Two songs present a *vila* who kills a maiden for no apparent reason. The motif bears some resemblance to the 'Kill Groom with Arrows' motif, but without being so formalized in the tradition and may represent a re-deployment of those conceptions in a novel form. One of these songs has been treated already in the 'Cause Headache' motif where a *vila* calls to a maiden's mother to proclaim her ill intent before inflicting the fatal headache on her daughter (Vuk V.22). The second song comes from Anica Begin in Luka on Šipan (MH V.24). Here a young maiden sits at her window, weaving a wreath, when a *vila* flies down to her. The *vila* jealously chastises the maiden for being more beautiful than she. The maiden begs for her life, offering a range of gifts to spare herself, to which the *vila* responds with an 'If *Vile* Took Bribes' motif and then fires an arrow into the maiden's forehead. This song reinforces the conception of *vila* arrows as immaterial threats, as the physical arrow brings on headache and illness, though here a material arrow is retained in the girl's head. The poor maiden wraps a kerchief around the new addition to her visage, relates the events and her last requests to her mother, and then gives up the ghost.

### **Kill Soldiers with Stones**

1% (2 songs) Western Bosnia and Herzegovina. Dependent Motif.

In this motif, a *vila* builds a city more beautiful than Constantinople (see ‘Build a City’ below) and word of it reaches the jealous czar. He sends three vojvode and 300 soldiers to raze the city, but the *vila* sees them coming. She removes 300 skipping stones and three other rocks from the battlement walls (Vuk V.260) or from a well (Pavlinović 1876b.536) and uses the stones to kill the attackers. Notably, the Vuk multiform provides another macabre *vila* building. While the *vila*’s city is white, and its towers are made of multi-coloured stones, the battlements are built of hero’s and horse’s bones, with corners reinforced with human heads cast in gold.

### **Celebrate Love or a Wedding**

2% (3 songs) Wide Distribution. Independent Motif

This motif represents a very loose categorization of lyric songs where *vile* are said to celebrate the love between two characters or to celebrate or attend their weddings. These roles often arise in songs meant to be sung at weddings or during certain stages in wedding rituals. *Vile* often show up in such songs, sometimes as real *vile* adding a magic touch to the ritual, or else as metaphors for the beauty of the bride. Thus a song from Prčanj in the Bay of Kotor, Montenegro (Lazzari 1889.34) has *vile* celebrating the love between Slavke and Mirko.<sup>219</sup> On a maple tree before dawn, Slavke sings to her *vile* sisters to wake and celebrate across the green mountains. A heavenly *vila* sings to her group while young Mirko arrives.

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<sup>219</sup> These names are commonly used in lyric songs throughout the Bay of Kotor.

A song from Reza and Anka Lukić from Komletinci in Slavonia (Kučera 1884.23) has been covered at length already (see ‘Reveal Old Groom’) but presents a wedding party where the maiden’s bridesmaids are *vile*. A similar metaphor arises again in another song from Prčanj (Lazzari 1889.10) that the collector Brno Lazzari explains was meant to be sung in *kolo* by friends on a girl’s wedding day (1889:7). Here the *vile* may metaphorically represent human wedding guests. The song starts with a nightingale (who represents the groom) calling all the beautiful *vile* to leave their mountains and fields, cross the azure sea and fly to a manor, where a wedding celebration is being held, to dance and sing. The *vile* are said to bring ‘more pride for the house’ (*neka bude u ovoj kući / za veće dike!*) (l. 15-6). The wedding is described, with comments made to the *vile* about how beautiful the bride would be. This section precedes the arrival of the *vile*, who are greeted by the nightingale. One of the *vile* then explains their purpose for coming: they were all sent to sing—each her own unique song—so that there is more pride for the house and so the *kolo* can be danced without halt. They are said to bring luck, blessing, peace and joy, and their songs to allow the nightingale to receive his true love.

### **Marry or Proposed to**

2% (3 songs). Wide Distribution. Independent Motif.

Another loose category. The songs here involve *vile* who marry or are asked by characters to marry. Here, again, it is not clear whether true *vile* are being discussed. In Vuk I.183, three *vile* are dancing *kolo* under a cherry tree. Radiša is with them and asks one to marry him, promising her a good life. In a song from Brist in Dalmatia (Miošić-Kačić 1886.58), a singer-persona wakes early with his mother telling him to take advantage of the day. His heart leads him to a *vila*’s manor where she stands before him,

young and shining white, like the dawn. He asks her whether she loves him or another. She closes her wings and tells him that she will stay by him forever because he, like his father and mother, comes from good and noble stock. The collector Stjepan Dunderović recorded a simple, two-line dance song (*poskočnica*) somewhere in Syrmia (either Vinkovci or Jankovci regions) that also uses this motif (1891-2.848). These lines were composed to be combined together with others and sung in *kolo* and other dances. It reads: “Marry [my] pride, a *vila* married you / That *vila* was in the wedding party.”

### **Milk Mother/Nursemaid to Child**

1% (2 songs). Syrmia and nearby Orašje in northern Bosnia. Independent Motif

There are two songs that explicitly name *vile* as nursemaids or milk-mothers<sup>220</sup> to characters, although, obviously this relationship is also implied in the ‘Shade and Suckle’ motif (cf. Marjanović 1877 36). In one song from Orašje in northern Bosnia (Pavlinović 1876b 558), while pasturing sheep on a mountain, a mother gives birth to Ivo. A white *vila* is said to be his milk-mother (*ebejka*). He is wrapped in birch leaves and has grape leaves for diapers. The holy mother and God’s angels protected him, and his enemies were below his feet as the shoes under a horse’s hoof.<sup>221</sup> A second, short song (Dungjerović 1891-2.225) from Syrmia (or possibly nearby eastern Slavonia) repeats the same common trope of outlining the naturalistic circumstances of a character’s

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<sup>220</sup> The practice of milk-kinship (*rod po mlijeku*) was common in the both the Medieval and Early Modern Period in European Christian and Muslim groups in the Balkans. Biological imperative often demanded that a lactating woman be found to nurse a newborn until its mother’s milk came in, but the practice also had strategic social aspects since the children of high-born families were often nursed by lower-class women. In both groups the milk-mother’s (*pomajka*, with the Turkish loan *ebejka* among Muslims) family were treated similarly to godparents, staying close to the child and often taking custody of it at various times, including instances when the biological parents died. Marriage between milk relations was forbidden as incest. See Đorđević 1953:97-9.

<sup>221</sup> A common expression in the tradition, most often presented as a blessing “may your enemies be under...” to heroes departing to battle or on quests (see, for instance, Šestić 1889.271).



upbringing. The song opens in a call and answer dialogue where a male persona tells a female that she was fated for him by God. The maiden replies, asking how she could be fated for him when her origins are so humble. Her mother gave birth to her in the mountains, bees' honey was her breast milk, beech leaves were her diapers, she was not bundled in linens but poisonous snakes, and her nursemaid was a mountain *vila*.

### Regular Motifs that are Also Found in Narrative Songs

#### **Give Maiden Gifts for Wedding Party**

3% Lyr. (4 songs) >1% Nar. (1 song). Dalmatia and Lower Bosnia. Dependent Motif.

This motif clearly displays how singers take motifs that belong to the lyric songs and expand them into the form of narrative songs. It also provides interesting evidence for the way that songs lose narrative cohesion or blend with other ideas when they leave their core region of active singing (cf. Tomić 1908a, 1908b).

Three multiforms of this song from Dalmatia (Donji Dolac, Bogomolje on the island of Hvar, and one, unfortunately, unmarked location) present fairly average textual stability and what is most likely the core tradition. The songs open variously but quickly lead to the central problem—a young maiden worries aloud that she has neglected to prepare gifts (and sometimes other preparations) for her wedding party which is about to arrive. Her *vila posestrima* calls to her assuring her not to worry; the *vila* will provide gifts for them. The wedding party arrives and particular members of the party are given particular gifts, most notably fine kerchiefs and shirts. For the groom (or the mother of the groom in MH V.34) the *vila* gives a special gift, a quince or apple tree with a special

number (100 or 40) of leaves.<sup>222</sup> The wedding guests marvel at none of the gifts except the latter. Within these three multiforms there is some variation. Tommasseo's singer (MH V.34) stresses the poverty of the maiden and her lack of gifts, and has other tasks for the *vila* to help with. She/he also adds a comment from the *vila* after the guests wonder at the quince: "If I was giving my own daughter away, / I would not give finer gifts" (ll. 39-40). Matija Banić of Donji Dolac has the maiden marrying the Doge of Venice (Banić 1885.237), while Ivan Barbarić of Bogomolje has replaced the more common fruit tree with a magical golden weasel pelt (Nališ 1885.55). Despite this variety, the songs are united in the textual stability of the maiden's complaint, the *vila*'s aid, the gifts for the wedding party and the party's awe at the most important gift.

This stability is altered when the motif is collected farther afield in Zaslavlje, Bosnia. In this small town half-way between Sarajevo and Mostar, Mihovil Pavlinović collected a multiform from an unnamed singer who places the song in a different setting. Here a wedding party arrives at a mountain where a *vila* stops them and has them set up camp for the night. They drink wine and *rakija* and when the sun rises they prepare to

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<sup>222</sup> The gift of a golden apple is an integral part of wedding practices in BCMS oral traditions and reflects ritual practice in the region as a symbol for the acceptance of a marriage proposal (see Appx. 1). In many songs a quince is used in a similar circumstance which adds to a longstanding mythological question of whether 'golden apples' in fact denote quinces. Golden apples have a strong Indo-European mythological heritage: In the *Gylfaginning* and the *Skáldskaparmál* of the Younger Edda, the goddess Iðunn is depicted as a guardian of golden apples that keep the Æsir youthful (Anderson 1880:87-8, 155-7, 184). Gaia gives a gift of golden apples to Hera on her wedding to Zeus (Poeticon Astronomicon II:3) which are later planted in an orchard and guarded by the Hesperides. It is also a contest over one of these apples that initiates the Trojan War (Kerényi 1959:312-4). Quinces seem to have long-standing connections with fertility in the Balkans. Ancient Greeks tossed them into the bridal chariots of newlyweds and new brides were given them as signs of fertility (Carlton 2013:857). Aristophanes regularly used them in his plays as a metaphor for women's breasts (Aristophanes 2002:359). Given early European practices of translating most fruits as 'apple,' quince are also contenders for Adam and Eve's fateful fruit and many other early mythic examples. For apples and quinces in Serbian and Croatian culture and lore see Čajkanović 1994 IV:72-3, 92-9.

leave. The *vila* gives them all gifts as they leave. To the elders of the party she gives horses, fully decorated and equipped, and to the maidens she gives each a thousand quinces (Pavlinović 1876b.541). Some basic idea of the motif has remained, and yet, so much has changed it is nearly unrecognizable without adequate familiarity with the wider tradition.

Leaving Bosnia to return to Dalmatia and the city of Luka on the island of Šipán, we find the singer Mare Dobud expanding the motif from the eight to forty lines of the lyric multiforms to a narrative song of 236 verses (Murat 1886a.57). In the song, Ivan of Senj has been imprisoned in the dungeon of the King of Buda for 15 years. He writes to his wife, Mare, and begs her to visit him before he dies; she is to bring their daughter, Marge, whom he has never seen. His family receives the letter but Marge refuses to go because she has no new clothes like those worn by the girls in Buda. The mother calls her *vila posestrima* who flies down and sews new clothing, white and magnificent, for the maiden. When they arrive in Buda, the gentlemen of the city mistake the mother and daughter for two *vile*.<sup>223</sup> When they reach the dungeon, Ivan's wife falls faint at the lowly sight of him, while one of the king's slaves wails and cries at the tragedy. This fracas gathers the attention of the king who falls in love with young Marge. Hopelessly smitten, the king frees Ivan and agrees to come to Senj with a wedding party to retrieve the maiden in proper form. As the party approaches, Marge once more complains to her mother that she has no beautiful clothes to wear, no gown for the wedding, and no gifts

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<sup>223</sup> The mother leads her daughter and the men ask her if she is a *vila* headed to the bazaar to trade the other *vila*!

for her guests. Mare calls her *vila* again and the *vila* makes clothes and gifts. There are fine gifts for the guests but for the King, a quince tree with 100 leaves. The guests arrive, feast and celebrate and, when the gifts are distributed, the king wonders at his quince. Then the couple return to Buda and are married.

### **Build a City**

5% Lyr. (8 songs) 1% Nar. (2 songs). Wide Distribution. Independent Motif

Two traditions have already been presented that explore the *vila*'s propensity for construction. We have seen it once in the 'Trick Pobratim' motif in the narrative songs (MH V.38; Ostojić 1880-3b.113), as well as in the 'Kill Soldiers with Stones' motif in the lyric songs (Vuk V.260; Pavlinović 1876b.536). Another lyric song, however, holds the title of the most widely known and sung tradition that employs this motif. Published first by Vuk Karadžić from an unnamed singer in Montenegro<sup>224</sup> under the title 'A *Vila* Builds a City' (*Vila zida grad*), it has been collected in multiform throughout the region by many collectors. Scholars of the region consider it an ancient song given its cryptic and mythological tone (Pavlović 1993:7).

In the song, a *vila* builds a city (or tower [Nališ 1885.66]) on the edge of the clouds and adorns the city with three doors. The doors are each made of a particular substance or colour, most often gold, pearl and scarlet (Vuk I.226; Pavlinović 1876b.538), or sun, moon and gold (MH VII.219; Palunko 1886.67), but also with materials such as platinum, diamond and precious stones variously substituted in (Nališ 1885.66; Smičiklas n.d.80). For each of these doors an action is listed. Though the order

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<sup>224</sup> In a footnote, Vuk alludes to a multiform he heard in Bajice, near Cetinje. It is likely he encountered a number of versions (Stefanović Karadžić 2006:69).

may vary, the *vila* will marry her son off at one door, give her daughter away at another, while the third door provides multiple endings to the song. She may simply exit from it (Palunko 1886.67), walk about it alone (Smičiklas n.d.80), or watch the sea from it (MH VII.219). In one multiform, she thanks God for his gifts and reflects on her youth there (Nališ 1885.66), while in Vuk's version and the multiform in *Matica Hrvatska*'s collection that most closely mirrors it (Pavlinović 1876b.538), the *vila* sits and watches thunder and lightning from the door. The lightning is said to play with the thunder as a young bride plays with and outwits her *deveri* (chaperones/brothers-in-law).

### **Wager with a Maiden**

6% Lyr. (9 songs) 1% Nar. (2 songs). Wide Distribution. Dependent Motif.

One of the more common lyric songs that uses the *vila*, the 'Wager with a Maiden' motif is very widely attested and in numerous multiforms (cf. Andrić 1909:428). This motif exhibits strong textual stability throughout its opening and middle with its conclusion offering a marked openness to singers. In the song, a maiden and *vila* decide to make a wager for who will wake first in the morning and complete a set of tasks. Most often these tasks are domestic in nature—fetching water, sweeping a manor, with occasional additions such as braiding or combing their hair (Vuk V.157; Miošić-Kačić 1886.42), or lighting a fire (Pavlinović 1876b.554). A number of multiforms from various areas in Bosnia and southern Slavonia include additional fantastic tasks into the wager where the contestants must go to Istanbul, steal the keys to the city and open its door, then steal the czar's turban from his sleeping head, the pillow from under his young son's head and the necklace off his wife's neck (Pavlinović 1876b.554, 559; Šestić 1889.157). The maiden almost always bets her eyes, or her head (Vuk V.157) in the wager, while the

stakes for the *vila* involve various types of treasure or else her golden wings (Pavlinović 1876b.552, 554, 559), or her right wing (Miošić-Kačić 1886.42). Both contestants rely upon a bird to act as alarm clock for them, with the maiden wisely choosing a nightingale (*slavuj/slavić*) or swallow (*lastavica*), while the *vila* incorrectly relies upon a falcon (*sokol*) that allows her to sleep-in. The reason that the falcon proves a poor choice is never quite clear, although some singers venture to clarify the unfolding of the story. One unnamed singer in Podgora in Imotska Krajina places the blame on the birds—the falcon called all night and so slept past the dawn, while the maiden’s bird slept in the night and woke early (Pavlinović 1876b.552). Another singer places the onus on the maiden and the *vila*, the first feeding her bird a dinner, while the latter forgets to feed her falcon, forcing him to toil through the night hunting game (Miošić-Kačić 1886.42). Whatever the cause, the maiden always wakes first and completes her tasks before the *vila*. In two identical songs from the village of Bebrina in Slavonia<sup>225</sup> their actions are contrasted, running through the list of tasks in the order they were first presented, but always with the *vila* one task behind the maiden (Ilić 1878b.143; Pavlinović 1876b.553).

While the victory is always certain for the maiden, the outcome of the song proves highly variable. When the reward is treasure, many songs end with the simple collection (Vuk V.157; Šestić 1889.157), or with the *vila* congratulating the maiden on her victory with the ominous warning of the place her eyes would have adorned on the *vila*’s tower

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<sup>225</sup> Two identical songs from the south Slavonian village of Bebrina appear in two separate collections (Ilić 1878b.143; Pavlinović 1876b.553). Luka Ilić collected his version some time between 1840 and 1850, while Mihovil Pavlinović visited the site between 1860 and 1875. It is unclear whether Pavlinović might have recorded the song from the same singer or if the two collectors were in contact and shared the song. In this song, the singer replaces the *vila*’s falcon with what is likely a goose (*gosko*), which the *vila* complains fooled her by not waking her.

(MH V.21). The songs from the singers (or possibly singer) from Bebrina end with the *vila* attempting to blame her tardiness on her avian accomplice, while the girl corrects her that all things happen as God wills them (Ilić 1878b.143; Pavlinović 1876b.553). When the *vila*'s wings are at stake, the maiden may graciously reject the gift, making light of the wager as only a pretense (Miošić-Kačić 1886.42; Pavlinović 1876b.552), or she may wickedly demand the fulfillment of the wager from the distressed *vila* (Pavlinović 1876b.554, 559).

This research produced two examples of this motif being used in narrative songs; of these only one exhibits true adaptation of the material. A multiform from the shepherdess Ana Miošić in Brist, has been treated here alongside the lyric material, because it is sung in their format (Miošić-Kačić 1886.42); the song is only categorized as a narrative song because the singer combined a number of motifs into a longer, multi-episodic song. The song opens with the motif of the wager, but once the maiden has spared the *vila* her wings, the *vila* flies to the tower of Ivan of Senj and the song shifts—running through a ‘Dance/Song and Flute Competition’ and ‘Swan Maiden’ motif. Conversely, the song “The Wager of a *Vila* and a Maiden,” collected from the 30-year-old Vice Glavić of Luka on Šipan, further illustrates the common artistic tendency of the women in that city to take lyric song motifs and elaborate them into long narrative, epic songs (Glavić 1887d.124). Here a young maiden and orphan, Mare of Poljice, pines for a lover. She thinks no one hears her, but a *vila* hears. The *vila* is saddened by the maiden and offers her a wager to see who will wake earliest, fetch water, sweep her house and braid her hair. The stakes are their eyes. The maiden goes home and reveals the wager to

her nightingale who warns her that she has been foolish, that the *vila* will wake before her. This avian friend, intent on helping Mare, wakes her before dawn bellowing loudly (and lying) that the *vila* already has a head-start on the girl. This trick gives Mare a strong lead on the *vila*. Once Mare has completed her tasks she feigns lust for the *vila*'s eyes, frightening her into producing a fine substitute gift, marriage with the king of Buda. The *vila* flies to Buda and convinces the king of Mare's exceptional beauty. He quickly sets off with his wedding party for the maiden and brings her back to Buda for a happy ending of queenship, marriage and babies.

### **Remove Heart**

3% Lyr. (5 songs) <1% Nar. (1 song). Wide Distribution. Dependent Motif

This motif is unique as the only *vila* motif in song where the *vila* is regularly replaced by a different supernatural being. Although the vast majority of multiforms employ the *vila*, many have in her place the *vještica* (witch) (see MH VII.336; Vuk I.237 for examples). While this might at first glance seem to support Póc's theory about witches replacing the *vila* and similar (fairy) figures in the region (Pócs 1989), Bošković-Stulli suggests that those multiforms with *vještice* most likely represent the original form (Bošković-Stulli 1968:23, 31).<sup>226</sup> This song has been collected in numerous multiforms since the earliest recordings and, although it is found throughout the region (with variants as far afield as Slovakia and Bulgaria), it seems to have a heavy preponderance in the

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<sup>226</sup> Bošković-Stulli based her conclusions on the fact that local beliefs in witchcraft include similar abilities to drain strength and notions of cannibalism present in the song, while no traditions exist in which mortal women become *vile* temporarily, or are secretly *vile* (1968:23). She suggested that *vile* have displaced the *vještice* simply because *vještice* are not used in song traditions, while *vile* are used regularly (31). It is a practical and convincing explanation although no force exists which compels narrative arts to follow such clear logic. It might be that this depiction of the *vile* derives from their more horrific tendencies and that Póc's theory explains the shift.



traditional region of Croatia and particularly amongst kajkavian speakers (Bošković-Stulli 1968:20). Bošković-Stulli has looked intensively at this particular ballad on a wider temporal and spatial scale in her 1968 article, but within my more restricted collection sample there were five examples.<sup>227</sup> Multiformality in my sample falls into two clear divisions that are relegated to the song opening, with stability in the remainder of the song aside from rare additions of material to the conclusion.

The song is presented in a very dreamlike and ethereal manner and concerns a shepherd boy who has had his heart removed by *vile* in the night. Two multiforms from Banska Krajina and Syrmia open with a very poetic tableau of a sky decorated with stars and a flock of sheep roaming freely without their shepherd (Ciganović 1884.102; Dungjerović 1891-2.197).<sup>228</sup> This leads them into the most common opening of the shepherd's mother attempting to wake him. In those multiforms with the opening tableau, the mother angrily chastises the young shepherd for not tending the sheep, while the others have her calling on him innocently. Our protagonist, however, cannot rise at her beckon and tells her so. He cannot rise because *vile* have removed his heart in the night.<sup>229</sup> Hearing this odd statement from her son, the mother asks him if he recognized the *vile*; he has indeed. In nearly every multiform he identifies the *vile* as his mother, his

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<sup>227</sup> Bošković-Stulli's article is a perfect second step in the sort of research plan that I have envisioned here. Once the local variants are understood in their fullest, understandings of temporal shifts are deepened and the very large variation in comparative songs from more distant regions is clearly contextualized.

<sup>228</sup> The oldest published multiform (Vuk I.237) opens with the same starry night episode. Here the protagonist is woken by his sister and only two *veštice* have attacked him in the night, his mother and his aunt (FBS).

<sup>229</sup> Or in one multiform the character states that they have drained his energy/ tired him (*umorile*) (Dungjerović 1891-2.197). In two multiforms collected at some fair distance (the island of Brač [Ostojić 1880-3a.124] and south-central Slavonia [Ilić 1878b.261]), an additional trouble is added to the protagonist's night when he first tells his mother that he spent the night serving coffee and fetching water for Turks.

sister and his love, with rare examples replacing his love for an aunt or another family member (Dungjerović 1891-2.197). He then relates what each of them did to him. The first *vila* (usually the mother) removed his heart, the second (usually the sister) held a plate to receive the heart, or cooked and ate it (.197), while the third (usually his love) most often stood and watched or cried. In one song from the Vrhovac region (Kamenar 2013.24), while the mother is pulling out his heart, the love begs her not to, asking her in turn who will plough the fields, dig up the mountain, and reap the crops if his heart is devoured. The mother tells her to be silent; the mother will perform the tasks in his stead.

This song tradition belongs entirely to the lyric songs, but an unnamed singer from Mostar seems to have drawn the idea of *vile* devouring and removing hearts out of its natural context and employed it as an independent motif in a narrative song (MH V.162). In the song, the widow of Omer-beg is pursued by Hasan-Aga, but only agrees to marry him if he will accept her infant son Alija and raise him as his own. He agrees and gathers a wedding party to retrieve her. As they pass through the mountains heading back with him to his castle, Hasan-Aga forces her to abandon the child on threat of her life. Seeing no resolution, she climbs a fir tree and creates a small hammock to leave the baby in. She climbs down and goes to the Beg's manor. All rejoice at the manor except the widow who cries through the festivities. Around midnight she tells the Beg that her breasts are swelled with milk and begs permission to return to her baby. He consents and she sets off, but when she reaches the location she finds the child dead. *Vile* have drunk up his heart and ravens have dug out his eyes. She dies from the sorrow.

### Irregular Motifs

#### **Sing a Song about Character's Conscription**

Vuk I.125. When the Wedding Party Washes their Hands. From Upper Dalmatia.

This is a song to accompany ritual practice during a wedding ceremony collected by Vuk in Upper Dalmatia. Here a *vila* sings a song in a *kolo* about Jovo receiving a conscription letter for the military. Jovo tries to calm his bride and assure her that he will return to her but she is inconsolable.

#### **Give Maiden Gifts**

Vuk I.224. The *Vila's Posestrima*. From Upper Dalmatia.

A young maiden prays to the Morning Star to give her a gift of its brightness so that the maiden might decorate herself with it. She has a white *vila posestrima* who gave her a golden feather and pearls for her neck. The *vila* sings a song about God bringing the maiden a good marriage and of her qualities. Vuk suggested that the song may be a conventional wedding song that has had the opening section with the *vila* appended to it (Stefanović Karadžić 2006:69 n.80).

#### **Ask Deer What is Wrong**

Vuk I.370. The Deer and the *Vila*.

A buck is near a mountain eating grass but begins to feel sick and moan. A *vila* asks what ails it. It calls the *vila* its sister and tells her its troubles. It worries about its doe, she may be lost, captured by hunters or have fallen in love with another deer.

#### **Fight with Eagle over Mountain**

Vuk I.665. The Basil and the Dew. From Risan.

A small basil is talking with dew asking it why it has not fallen on the basil recently. The dew answers that it was occupied with a great wonder. The dew saw a fight

between a *vila* and an eagle over a green mountain. Both claim that the mountain belongs to them. Then the *vila* broke the eagle's wings. Its baby chicks cried out angrily but a swallow calmed them, telling them that she will take them with her to India.

**Respond to another *Vila***

Vuk I.739. Little Radoica's Love.

A *vila* from a valley calls out to a small village asking why the residents are so unhappy and not dancing *kolo*. Another *vila* answers her, "Shut up, *vila*! May your throat hurt!" (l. 5). No one can be happy while the leader of the *kolo*, Childe Radoica, is dying and leaving behind his love with their baby. After this, the song shifts to detail the tragic fate of his love and the child.

**Ask Eagle why Helping**

Vuk II.55. Marko Kraljević and the Falcon (Same song, but a little different). A blind woman from Grgurevci.

Marko Kraljević is lying by the side of the road, struck in the head by a spear. An eagle comes and makes shade for him with its wings and brings him cold water for his wounds. A *vila* calls from the mountain, asking the eagle why it is doing so much for Marko. The eagle explains how Marko once helped it and its babies.

**Does not Love the Singer**

Miošić-Kačić 1886.6. The Cause of the Youth's Death. From Brist.

Sung in the first-person, the singer-persona in this song mourns his aching heart. He has too many sorrows that have grown too heavy for him, all stemming from a *vila*

with a rosy flower.<sup>230</sup> He is going to die and then she and her friends will mourn him and realise that she loved him.

### **Send Animals to Bring Them Food**

MH V.41. The Eagle's Death. Ana Banović from Zaoštrog.

*Vile* send animals to fetch things for them: wolves for wine, a raven for cold water, an eagle for hogget. They all succeed and return except the eagle, who has not returned after three days. A *vila* looks down from their mountain to see what has happened. She sees the eagle below and chastises it for betraying them. It explains that it has not betrayed them. The shepherd caught the eagle while it attacked his herd and nailed its wing to its shoulder. It tells her that it is now heading into the mountains to die.

### **Custodians of Nature**

MH VI.90; Murat 1886a.73. N/T; How the Young (*Vila*) Will Please her Family. Kate (Palunko) Murat from Luka on the island of Šipan.

This motif stems from one of two songs sung by Kate Murat that employs *vile* and was collected in two MSs—that of her brother Vinko when she was in her mid-twenties and that of her son, Andro, when she was approximately 50 years-old.

In the song, *vile* are said to be the custodians of nature, helping it bloom in time for spring. The song then shifts to a story of two sisters, who may or may not be the aforementioned *vile*. These sisters move to various locations. One makes her home in the highlands (*zagorje*), the other on the coast (*primorje*). The one in the highlands bears children, while the coastal sister does not. The coastal one writes a letter to her sister,

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<sup>230</sup> 'Rosy face' is written in the MS and then stricken and replaced with 'rosy flower.' The emendation is in the collector's hand. Given that the shift is to a less coherent word choice, it most likely represents a misheard line clarified by the singer, though editorial tampering cannot be ruled out.

praising her luck and the social connections she has gained through marriage and childbirth. She begs her for advice so that she too can have such luck. Her sister advises her to go to bed late and rise early, to sweep her manor, braid her hair and fetch water,<sup>231</sup> then she will have all these things.

**Three *Vile* Decide What They Would Like Most**

Palunko 1886.192; Murat 1886a.87. N/T; What Each *Vila* Would Like the Most. Kate (Palunko) Murat from Luka on the island of Šipan.

The second of Murat's *vila* lyric songs collected twice. Young Marko is sitting under a fir tree beside cold water. He has a golden belt lying on one side of him and on the other a golden ring. Three *vile* sisters are watching him and they ask each other which of them wishes most for what. The first would have the ring, the second the belt, but the youngest would have Marko, then she would buy a ring, make a belt at home and play with Marko. Marko hears all this and replies to them that he is fair to look upon but he is not for them. A series of such songs were published by Vuk (I 447-452), a number of which he collected in the Dubrovnik region on the mainland across from Šipan. It can be assumed that the song is native to the region as well as being more widely dispersed; no region is given for Vuk's other multiforms. Murat's version is unique for replacing the common girls in the song for *vile* and the lad (Ranko, Janko, or Mićo in Vuk's multiforms) for Marko (Kraljević?).

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<sup>231</sup> These are quite notably the same tasks involved in the most common wager between the *vila* and the maiden in that motif.

**Poisoner**

MH VII.339. The *Vila* Poisoner. Ana Vinković from Nagykozár in Hungary.

This song was collected by Nikola Tordinac from an “exceptionally old woman” (*pristara žena*) born in a region of Hungary with a large South Slavic minority. The song was mis-cited by the editors of the MH collection in its published version.

Ivo is laying in the grass, he has a green dolman over his body and a silk kerchief over his face. His mother comes by and tells him to get up, for he is going to get his dolman and kerchief wet. He tells her to leave him, he is not worried about his clothing but about his beautiful maiden. He needs to escort her through Buda but the *vila* poisoner (*otrovkinja*) is there and will poison them both.

**Give *Vila*-beauty**

Ilić 1878b.278. *Vila* Stepsister (Maiden Takes *Vila* as Her Stepsister). From Drenovci.

This song is addressed above (see Give Equipment...). A maiden asks her *vila posestrima* for ‘*vila* beauty’ and ‘secret knives’ to respectively entice and bequeath to Ivo of Senj. The *vila* gives her both.

**Threaten to Cause a Rift between Maiden and Lover**

Ilić 1878b.310. The *Vila* and the Maiden. From Sibirj.

A mountain *vila* is boasting that she is going to make beautiful Mara grow cold to her love. Mara hears this and informs her brother who comforts her with the knowledge that their mother left them herbs that can overcome *vile*. He takes the herbs, finds the *vila* dancing *kolo* with others and throws the herbs at the *vila*’s breast, terribly wounding her.

**Noted as Unclean**

Pavlinović 1876a.6. Prayer Against an Evil Year. Most likely from Podgora, Bosnia.

This is another rare instance where *vile* appear in a religious song, here as expressly evil. The song relates many unique vignettes of saints and holy figures. Mary is following a cross as it flies across the sky, God gives keys to Saint Peter to open heaven so the angels can play and sing, Saint John is decapitated and the head is hung at the Pope's door, etc. In the song, *vile* are told to "Flee *vile*, you *irudice*, / Your mother is a pagan; / Your sister is a poisoner; / Damned by God!" (l. 9-12).

*Irudica* derives from a feminized *Irud*, a variant name form of the biblical Herod and often connected by informants with Herodias or her unnamed daughter, Herod's niece, who demands the beheading of John the Baptist in Matthew 14. In folklore of the region she is often named in prayers and charms that are still to this day recited by some against stormy weather (Ivanišević 1905:223; Rubić 1899:18; Ujević 1896:247; Zovko 1899:139).<sup>232</sup>

**Sings a Song to Make her People Happy**

Pavlinović 1876b.535. Gifts for the *Vila*. From Podgora, Bosnia.

In a golden mountain at the azure sea are two pearls. In a pearl is a white *vila*. The *vila* sings the songs of her people which pleases them. They come to visit her and bring her all kinds of gifts: A green wreath of bay leaves, a tassel made of pearls. The group also leads a horse to her and on the horse is a glove full of blood (?).

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<sup>232</sup> Cf. Romanian *irodia* (n. 5 in Introduction).



### **Drink Wine and Toast Each Other**

Pavlinović 1876b.539. *Vila* Toasting. Promina.

This is a queer song whose text mostly consists of an odd toast pronounced by *vile* and which reads like an incantation. In the song, white *vile* sit below a *sundljikovo* (?) tree which grows under a pear tree. The *vile* are drinking wine and one toasts the other:

“Zdrav rumena i crljena,	Healthy ruddy and red,
“Kol’ te nosi, kol’ zanosi,	Who carries you, who carries you away
“Pod javor, zelen bor?	Below a maple, a green pine?
“Pod javorom čudan čoban,	Below the maple a strange shepherd.
“Čudno sviri, čudno dipli,	Strangely he plays a strange <i>diple</i> , <sup>233</sup>
“Čudno vara, da privarā;	Strangely he cheats to deceive;
“Nije lako privariti,	It is not as easy to deceive,
“Ka’ je ludo obljubiti”	As it is foolish to love-up.” (ll. 6-13)

### **Collect the Sick**

Pavlinović 1876b.544. A Ransom to the *Vila* for a Maiden. From Sibinj

This is a unique song that seems to link *vile* with the collection of the dead, if not specifically with illness. Last night a *vila* called to a village, no one replied from the village, except the mother of beautiful Kata. The *vila* asks if the village is healthy and happy. Kata’s mother replies that the village is healthy and happy except for beautiful Kata, who is sick. The mother asks the *vila* not to take the daughter, saying that she will pay the *vila*, that she will decorate her mountain with leaves and her land with green grass in the middle of winter when it is not time for them.

### **Want to Battle a Maiden**

Pavlinović 1876b.545. The *Vila* Does Not Accept Bribes. Gradiška

This song has been mentioned above for its use of the ‘Call with Secret Information...,’ ‘Dance *Kolo*’ and the ‘If *Vile* Took Bribes’ motifs. Unique to this song,

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<sup>233</sup> See n. 114, this chapter.

however, is the idea of the *vila* calling a normal human female to do battle with her, and that that battle should be in the form of dancing *kolo* and singing.

**Give Difficult Tasks to Daughter-in-Law**

Pavlinović 1876b.556. *Vila* Mother-in-Law and Latin Daughter-in-Law. Zenica

A white *vila* marries off her son in the Catholic part of town to a wise Catholic maiden. The maiden asks her mother-in-law if she can sit by her and spin silk. She tells her that she may, but proceeds to set tasks to her: “Sew pearls in a row and rock your son in your arms; / Sweep the house so there is no dust. / Fetch me water without a speck of dirt in it. / Stoke my fire so that there is no smoke” (ll. 10-3). The maiden replies to her *vila* mother-in-law, telling her that all of these tasks can be performed, but to do them she will require a peacock feather to sweep, a *muštrafa* (?) of gold to fetch the clean water and boxwood to stoke a fire without smoke.

**Get a Key to the City**

Pavlinović 1876b.561. To Whom Shall We Give the Village? Podgora, Bosnia.

This is a unique song that bears few linkages with the rest of the tradition. It might be interpreted as an old celestial myth in its reflection of heavenly bodies. Dew falls at a white *vila*’s manor. The *vila* picks a bouquet and brings it to a goldsmith so that he will make her a good key to open the door to a city. She wishes to see who is in the city. In the city are nine brothers and amongst them one sister. The brothers question whether they should give their sister in marriage to the sun or to the moon. They decide upon the sun, since it will warm her. The moon will be her father-in-law, and all the stars her *posestrime*. The Pleiades will be her little *djeveri* and the morning star her mother-in-law.

**Tell Horse-deer Where *Vila* Playground is**

Pavlinović 1876b.570. Maidens of Makarska. Makarska.

This song opens in the first-person with the singer-persona thanking God for a multitude of blessings regarding the beauty of the sea. This segues to a suggestion that none can ford the sea except a *vila* on a horse-deer (*konja jelina*, later *konjic Jelinko*). This opening leads into a vignette between the *vila* and the horse-deer. The horse asks the *vila* to reveal where the meeting place (*sastališće*) and the playground (*igrališće*) of the *vile* are. The *vila* discloses that their meeting place is on a coastal cliff, and that their playground is on the rocky beach at Makarska. The horse then asks the *vila* whether coastal maidens or young Makarska maidens are most beautiful. She tells it that Makarska maidens are more beautiful and describes their beauty.

**Send Bird to Investigate Character Who Loves *Vila***

Lazzari 1889.8. Dear Morningstar... Antica Bellavita from Prčanj.

Danica,<sup>234</sup> who refers to herself as a *vila*, awakens a nightingale and tells the bird to wake a group (not explained) and to carefully learn which hero is travelling in a mountain. The bird quickly rises, wakes the group and then goes to the mountain where the hero is leading a *vila* with him. The bird recognizes him as Mirko and asks him where he is going and where he got the *vila*. It further tells him that it was sent by Danica, the dearest and most celebrated of the *vile*. Mirko tells the bird that the *vila* is named Slavka and that she is his luck (a term of endearment) who was born alongside the sun and bathed in sun rays. The bird wishes them well.

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<sup>234</sup> Danica is the Slavic name for the Morningstar but is also a name commonly given to females. In lyric songs it is often difficult to discern whether the name is being applied to a female human character, or whether the character is a mythic personification of the star itself.

### **Spurns Love then Regrets and Kills Herself**

Lazzari 1889:9. Little Pearl. Antica Bellavita from Prčanj.

The collector Brno Lazzari admits to finding other multiforms of this song, but his is the only collected version I have come upon. This is most likely due to my sample producing a small number of lyric songs from Montenegro.<sup>235</sup> The beautiful *vila*, ‘Little Pearl,’ who is said to be the ‘crown of all the *vile*,’ spurns the love of Radmil, the shepherd. While grazing his flock near her in a grove, he comes close to her, sings about his love for her and then grows ill, but she remains cold to his suffering. He decides to kill himself by dressing in animal fur and hiding in a grove where Little Pearl often hunts. His plan is successful; she takes him for an animal, shoots him with a golden arrow and fatally wounds him. His dying words proclaim his devotion and she, seeing this, breaks her arrows, beats her face and bawls, crying out that only now she recognizes his faithful love. Chastising her own bitterness, she kisses him and slays herself, dying in his lap.

This is another lyric song that may concern a female human and not a true *vila*, but never provides enough insight for certainty. If the song only refers to a beautiful maiden, her notable role as archer deepens the metaphoric connection. Her role as huntress makes it more provocative and may suggest some of Pócs’ assertions that the *vila* reflects remnants of Diana cults in the region (1989:14).

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<sup>235</sup> Lazzari was suspicious of the song as a true product of the ‘folk’ and sought a literary source until he encountered enough multiforms from various singers (who claimed to have learned it from their mothers and grandmothers) to be convinced that the song did indeed derive from peasant singers (1889:6).

**Talks to Nightingale about Seasons and her Love**

Lazzari 1889.11. Just in view... Antica Bellavita from Prčanj.

A red-haired *vila* in an oak wears a crown of flowers and speaks to a nightingale about its fine voice, and the coming of spring. *Vile* are said to dance with shepherds by clear water.

**Character Wants them to Listen**

Lazzari 1889.19. Oh green... Joze Luković from Prčanj.

*Vile*, shepherds, and a number of plants and landscape features are implored to listen to the song which poetically describes nature and someone's beauty.

**Shine like the Moon**

Lazzari 1889.39. A nightingale sets off... Joze Luković from Prčanj.

This is a song with a very odd use of the *vila*. Here a nightingale tells a maiden that her lover is coming. She paces the house all night waiting for him but grows weary and begins to close windows with the aim of retiring. In a puzzling episode, she goes to close an upstairs window and sees a mountain *vila* emanating beams like the moon. The sight contributes nothing to the narrative as the maiden only proceeds to more window closing in lower rooms from which she spots her love, secrets him into her chamber and wears herself out making love to him all night.

**Wonder How People Are Dressed in a Village**

Kamenar 2013.23. Oh Korana, Quiet Water. From Vrhovac region.

See the 'In a Boat' motif.

**Explain Where Heroes and Beauties Are**

Ostojić 1880-3b.218. N/T. Anica Bilić from Studenci

A *vila* walks along the peak of Zavelim Mountain and is asked (either by the singer-persona or grazing deer) where the best heroes are. She suggests that Dalmatians

are the best heroes, and the most beautiful maidens are in the town of Klis. The most beautiful is Fata, the unwed. In a dream Fata threw herself on a fire, but it did not even mark her face. When Fata woke from the dream, she took a mirror and, seeing her face unscathed, went to the seaside, closed her eyes tightly and jumped into the sea.

**Bring Character Back to a Maiden**

Ostojić 1880-3b.265. N/T. Jele Matković from Medov Dolac.

Mara cannot do her washing because Ivan has driven Bedouin mares through the water, muddying it. She swears to her mother that she is going to curse him, asking that God send *vile* to grab him and return him to her sickly. If it works, then her body will be his bed and her kisses his honeyed salve. In no other song have I seen this image of God sending *vile*, although their ability to cause illness is in line with the tradition.

**Have Magic Bag that Produces Coins**

Ostojić 1880-3b.340. N/T. Mare Raos from Medov Dolac.

This is a short lyric song that borrows a motif otherwise confined to oral narratives—*vile* providing a magic bag that produces coins (see ‘Give Equipment or Magic Items’ in Chpt. 3). It is a rare example of such a trope bleeding into the register of song. The singer-persona in the song is called by a *vila* who tells him that she has a bag, one ell long, that is never without a sequin. “Trade the sequin, get drunk on wine, / To your and to my health” (ll. 5-6). The song then carries on to other topics.

## Non-*Vile*, Metaphors and Tradition-Reflexive Uses in Song

This final section is a small overview of the various uses of the word '*vila*' in the songs that actually do not refer to *vile*, refer to *vile* without their presence in the song, use other characters to mimic *vile*, or else reflect a tradition-referential use or intentional subversion of the tradition of the *vila*.<sup>236</sup> In short, these are the pesky uses of the *vila* that cause much extra work in the collection process, but prove informative regarding conceptions of the *vila* and her tradition. While many of these materials were collected and recorded, I have made no effort to be systematic and exacting; no numbers or percentages of attestation will be provided, but only enough examples to give a clear picture of the practices.

### *Vila* as Metaphor

As has already been noted, beautiful human beings are often referred to as *vile*. This is the case most often for young women, but is occasionally applied to young and beautiful men (MH I.55 l. 517; Međedović 1974:82). These metaphors take various forms but are often dictated by formulaic phrasings.<sup>237</sup> The attribution is often rendered in simile, such as when Gajo Balać introduces a female character as the leader of a *kolo* in one of his songs (Vuk III.35 l. 95) “that [maiden] was more beautiful than a white *vila*”

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<sup>236</sup> Many of the sayings and proverbs about the *vila* presented in Chpt. 4 are also drawn from this material.

<sup>237</sup> That is, the phrases are often formulaic without being formulaic (or as Bynum prefers, they are repetends not repetitions [Bynum 1978:15]). Compare for instance Balać's line “*Ta ljepša je od bijele vile*” (That [maiden] was more beautiful than a white *vila*) (Vuk III.35 l. 95) with Tešan Podrugović's “*Da je ljepša od bijele vile*” (That she was more beautiful than a white *vila*) (Vuk II.29 l. 59), or another unnamed singer's “*Ljepša cura no bijela vila*” (A girl more beautiful than a white *vila*) (Vuk IV.9 l. 24).

(*ta ljepša je od bijele vile*). More often, though, the beautiful girl will simply be called ‘*vila*,’ with only the context of the story, or earlier verses that reveal her name or call her a maiden, making apparent that the naming is symbolic (for example MH VII.420).

There are also odd uses of *vila*-adjectives and metaphors connected to humans, whose meaning is not always completely clear. In a song collected from an unnamed singer in the Lika region in the mid 1870s, a villain whips his men who scream at the lash like mountain *vile* (*oni cvile kano gorske vile*) (Delić 1877.25 l. 42). There is also the example presented above (MH I.65) where Marko Vujičić first calls the character Ana, a ‘*vilovna* maiden’ before shifting her to a full *vila* later in the song. In this song, the adjective seems to have sinister connotations of someone who is wily, dangerous, lives in a magic land with *vile* and is connected to dark forces. It appears again in a song by Ibro Topić where a taverness, Pava, rudely demands to know where a hero acquired his horse. He angrily responds, “Mind yourself, old Taverness Pava! / Either you’re *vilena*, or worse, you’re ill, / Otherwise you’ve gone a little hard with the drinking. / Why are you asking about my chestnut [horse]?!” (MH III.25 ll. 499-502) Possibly this same sinister aspect is suggested in the song “Banica of Syrmia” (MH VI.31) where a quite ordinary executioner with no magical trappings is referred to as ‘*vila*-like’ (*vileni dželat*) (l. 26).

Interestingly, horses are actually more often metaphorically compared to *vile* than are humans, and these examples are always formulaic. Most often the comparison here has to do with the speed and virility of the beast: “It was fast as a mountain *vila*” (*brza mu je kao gorska vila*) (Vuk II.66 l. 392); “The horse flew off like a white *vila*” (*Konj poleti kako b’jela vila*) (Murat 1886a.61 l. 74). When a hero mounts or rides his steed he is said



to be “*Na gavranu k'o na gorskoj vili*” (On his raven[-black horse], as [though he were] on a mountain *vila*) (MH IV.28 l. 625). The formula appears throughout the tradition with minor modulations based on the colour of the horse and whether the metaphoric connection is made with a mountain or a white *vila*.<sup>238</sup> The same formula makes a double-linkage with both the liveliness and colour of the horse when it is shifted to “*na dogatu ka na biloj vili*” (On the white horse like a white *vila*) (MH IV.43 l. 676). This colour connection features in another widespread formula where two characters require two horses from a stable. Whether retrieving them or calling for their retrieval they will be called for as ‘a *vila*’ (i.e. a white horse) and ‘a swallow’ (*lastavica*, i.e. a dark horse) (Vuk III.34 l. 140; Miošić-Kačić 1886.58 l. 54, 72 l. 83).<sup>239</sup> There are also rarer attributions of this metaphor, such as a song from an unnamed singer from Ričica where a horse is said to be ‘of *vila*-stock’ (*dogat mu je roda vilinskoga*) (Grgić 1881.20 l. 8), or another where a horse is oddly said to have *vila*-teeth (*zubi viliniji*) (Glavić 1887b.77 l. 87).

### ***Vile* Mentioned Outside the Context of the Song**

There are many examples in the songs where *vile* are mentioned by characters within the song, but have no actual appearance in or bearing on the events of the story.

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<sup>238</sup> So compare, even in the same volume, for instance “*Na gavranu ka na gorskoj vili*” (MH IV.26 l. 95) with “*Na dogatu ka na gorskoj vili*” (On the white horse, like a mountain *vila*) (.41 l. 1015), or with “*Na doratu ka na biloj vili*” (On the white horse, like a white *vila*) (.43 l. 676).

<sup>239</sup> The formula is stock, using a variant dative “*meni vila, tebi lastavica*” (for me a *vila*, for you a swallow) (Miošić-Kačić 1886.58 l. 54), or “*njojzi vilu, sebi lastavicu*” (for her a *vila*, for himself a swallow) (Hangi 1898.6 l. 103). It does occasionally appear in other formations “I gave my brother a swallow / I gave a *vila* to my dear” (*Lastavicu bratu poklonila / Vilu jesam dragom poklonila*) (ll. 148-9). Instances also exist where the textual stability of the more common phrase causes errors in the singing “To him she gave a *vila* swallow” (*njemu dava vilu lastavicu*) (Miošić-Kačić 1886.93 l. 55).

These examples vary widely and are seldom found in multiform. In one song, some ravens explain to a maiden that other characters have separated from her group in the mountains, “where *vile* spend their winters” (*u planini, đe zimuju vile*) (Vuk IV.45). While in the song “The Serbian Maiden” (Vuk I.599), when the beautiful Milica ignores the lightning and thunder above the *kolo* she is dancing with her friends, they all wonder aloud at her behaviour. She responds, “I’m neither crazy, nor am I particularly wise, / Nor am I a *vila*, to go about compressing clouds, / I’m just a maiden looking ahead of herself” (ll. 23-25; cf. a multiform in Ciganović 1884.7).

Old Man Milija of Kolašin sang a song to Vuk (Vuk II.40), where a young woman’s beauty is compared to that of a *vila* in a unique way. When the maiden presents herself to some young Serbian heroes, the singer remarks how Marko Kraljević stares in wonder at the maiden’s beauty, despite having seen *vile* in the mountains, and having a *vila posestrima* (ll. 406-8). Marko’s connection to the *vile* is again explored in a song from the young singer Iva Pisac in Dugobabe (Pletikosić 1889.5). Here, in a common theme, Marko Kraljević and Omer Blažević face off, each demanding the other move from the path and stubbornly refusing to concede the road. In an equally common theme, Omer tries to establish his right of way by proclaiming his high-upbringing while Marko retorts to this by explaining that his own upbringing was a rugged and naturalistic experience in the mountains and thus produced a stronger hero.<sup>240</sup> Perhaps drawing from

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<sup>240</sup> For a similar exchange between Marko and Musa see MH II.43 ll. 323-32. In those songs Marko is most often the comfortably born (see Popović 1988:32). For a very similar motif but from a female perspective and employing the *vila* see ‘Compare Childhood to a Beauty’s’ in the lyric songs.

the common idea that *vile* give birth to great heroes, Marko's description of his hearty rearing includes the fact that his grandmother was a *vila* (l. 73).

The idea that *vile* abduct children also arises in these asides. The song, "The Foundling Momir," which Vuk collected from Živana in Zemun (Vuk II.30), has a czar come upon the infant Momir while hunting. The baby has been abandoned and left under a grape vine, covered with leaves to protect him from the sun. The czar ponders how the child got there, wondering if the mother abandoned it, if its *kuma* (godmother) left it there to be blessed by the czar and given a gift, or if *vile* stuck it under there. Marjan Dundić of Grabovac on the island of Brač presented this concept again in an odd iteration (Ostojić 1880-3a.19). In his song "The Eagle Standard-Bearer," two young shepherds sleep together out of wedlock while pasturing sheep above Šibenik. The maiden, Marija, becomes pregnant, gives birth to a wonderful baby,<sup>241</sup> and news of the child spreads far and wide. Worried about the shame of her act, Mare says to herself,

"Što ću sada rodila se jedna	"What will I do now? I was born unlucky.
"Da b' u gori posić će me Turci	If I go into the mountains, the Turks will kill me;
"Da b' u stine odnit će me vile	If I go to the cliffs, the <i>vile</i> will take me away.
"Nesmim majci jedna na dvorove	I can't go to my mother in her manor;
"U mene je lipi brat Ivane	I have a beautiful brother Ivan,
"On će mene jednu pogubiti	He will kill me. (ll. 28-33)

No explanation is given in the song as to why *vile* would take her away in the cliffs, nor whither. In fact, later in the song a beneficent *vila* comes to Mare's aid with crucial advice. Obviously we see vestiges here of the idea of *vila* abduction which factors so

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<sup>241</sup> He is born with golden arms up to the elbows, golden legs up to the knees, stars on his fingers, a burning sun on his forehead, and shining moons on his shoulders. In his right hand he carries a sword. This trope has traditional precedent.

heavily into memorates and fabulates about the *vila*, but in this song the tradition is unclear and skewed.

### ***Vila* Roles Assumed by Others**

In many songs, the role of the *vila* is served by someone or something other than the *vila*. This can be in unassuming roles such as the ‘Call with Secret Information or Strategy’ motif, that are often filled by other heroes or female helpers (such as a *posestrima krčmarica* [taverness]<sup>242</sup>), or the ‘Impede Building’ motif where the nightly destruction of a structure is ascribed to no active beings but only to the wind (MH V.91). But there are also many examples where the role of a *vila* is taken by a ‘something,’ ‘someone,’ or ‘a voice,’ with no real attribute or character offered.

*“But something spoke from the mountain”* (MH II.2 l. 9).

*“Then someone called from behind the water”* (MH I.74 l. 171).

Since the role of the *vila* in these motifs is well-established and no effort has been made to substitute any real being, human or otherwise, in the motif, one has to wonder if perhaps the singers that defaulted to these uses had only heard the song sung thus and were trying to faithfully hold to the original (Lord 2000:28), or if perhaps the singers were not fond of using the *vila* (perhaps her pagan connotations) and knew that the tradition held another option (more on this in Chpt. 5).

Included here, too, are stylistic uses that are often interjected into songs without any purpose for the plot. In particular, songs where a character thinks he sees *vile* in the

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<sup>242</sup> For examples see MH I.48, 76; MH III.9. Cf. Miller 2008:14.

mountains, but which turn out to be his sisters or mother and sister (MH III.15; Kurtagić 1908-34.50), or where a character thinks that a *vila* is calling out to him, but he is informed that it is only a youth (Vojniković-Pezić 1887-8b.41).

### **Tradition-Reflexive Uses**

This important category is for those ironic uses of the *vila* that reflect on the tradition in a creative or humorous manner. These uses stand as stark testament to how culturally engrained many of the ideas of the *vila* were, such that singers began to play off the tropes in referential and sly ways.

This has already been encountered in a motif above where a story about a groom-killing *vila* acts as a cover to explain why an unhappy groom has not joined his wedding party to retrieve his bride (Vuk I.345; Dungjerović 1891-2.208). It arises again in a multiform of the ‘Impede Building’ motif from the Bosanska Krajina (MH V.91) where a Master Builder claims that it must be *vile* who keep knocking the minaret off of the mosque he is building, but it proves only to be a wind. When it comes time to demand the sacrifice that is central to the motif, however, the singer of the song employs a supernatural being akin to the *vila*.<sup>243</sup> The singer seems to have made an active choice in keeping the *vile* out of his song, though the purpose is unclear. The same occurs in the song “The Marriage of Master Maša,” where Hanka Kurtagić has ‘something from the mountain’ tell Master Maša where he can find water. When he arrives, he finds a maiden

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<sup>243</sup> It is a *dobri* (goodnick) in a dream that reveals the sacrifice to the Pasha. Oddly, it is given a male gender. It is likely that the singer was not familiar with this epithet and assumed it to be some other type of supernatural being.

sleeping on guard, rather than a *vila* (Kurtagić 1908-34.228). Hanka is obviously playing with the tradition when she has the protagonist shocked at this discovery, and proceed to ask the maiden whether or not she is a *vila*. It appears again in a lyric song from the Vrhovac region (Kamenar 2013.473) where a singer assures the listener that trampled grass in a field was not the work of *vile*, but a hero and maiden with sickle and scythe.

Most commonly, this aspect arises in the ‘Call with Secret Information...’ motif, but not, as above, with the *vila* simply substituted out for a human character. In four songs from various regions of Bosnia, a *vila* calls to her *pobratim* and delivers advice or secret knowledge. After the motif has been sung, the singer decides to rid the song of its magical tenor by revealing that the *vila* was no *vila* at all, but rather a range of human characters (MH IV.34; Čaušević 1888.6; Kurtagić 1943b.4; Rajić n.d.7). One would assume that these were all examples of singers ridding their songs of supernatural elements, ascribing a truth-value to historic accounts that lack the supernatural, and yet one of these singers is Ahmed Čaušević, who regularly employed real *vile* in his songs.

In Ivan Ćućija’s “Sibinjanin Janko and his Nephew Sekul” (Vijolić 1887a.34) where Janko and Sekul (oddly as opponents) are wrestling in a ‘Musa Battle’ motif, the elder Janko begins to lose the struggle and fears for his life. He calls to his *vile posestrime* for help, but they do not call or arrive. Rather, a young shepherdess calls to Janko to assure him that Sekul will weaken his hold. Hearing the shepherdess, Sekul assumes it to be Janko’s *vile* and loosens his grip to see whence they are arriving and what aid they might be providing the aged hero: Janko takes this opportunity to overcome his opponent.

### Odd Details

One final set of songs simply does not fit any other category. Three short songs are presented in Vuk's first collection under the title "The *Vila*'s Songs" (Vuk I.223). These songs do not employ *vile* (they speak of magic herbs and water for women and men), but rather Vuk collected them from a Bosnian in Vukovar who claimed that he learned them by eavesdropping on a *vila*, sitting on a rock and singing the songs on Velebit Mountain. Vuk also stated, however, that he had collected multiforms of the songs from others who did not claim such exciting sources (2006:69 n. 78).

### Slavonic Antitheses

A common poetic device in traditional songs of the region, Slavonic antitheses (also often called 'negative comparison') are short passages, almost like riddles, that present a number of suggestions as the answer to a phenomenon before refuting all of the suggestions and presenting the true answer. These are sometimes inserted as dialogue but most often open a song (see Koljević 1980:38-39, 113-114). *Vile* are often presented as one of the options to answer the riddle. Because the suggestions are always refuted this means that no real *vile* are used, but the suggestions for what might be a *vila*, the other options that are akin to the *vile*, and the (not always included) suggestions why this phenomenon is not a *vila*, are all revealing of singers' conceptions of *vile*.

The most common of these constructions asks what is shrieking or wailing (*procvili*, *cvili*, *vrišta*, *pišti*, etc.) in a particular area.<sup>244</sup> The options presented in this

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<sup>244</sup> See Vuk I.651, II.52, III.32, IV.1; MH IX.14; Milas 1884.22; Alačević and Alačević 1938.32.

antithesis are always that it might be a *vila* or an angry serpent, before it is revealed to be neither, but rather some hero wounded somewhere, or imprisoned, or any similar situations that would cause a man or woman to wail. In those multiforms where an answer is provided as to why it cannot be a *vila* or a snake, it is suggested that the *vila* would be higher up (*Da je vila, u više bi bila*) (Alačević and Alačević 1938.32 l. 3),<sup>245</sup> or that she would be in the mountains (*Da je vila, u gori bi bila*) (MH IX.14 l. 4). It is always suggested that the snake would be in the grass or on a rock, which explains the singer's confused response in one song that the snake would be on a rock and the *vila* would be in the grass (Palunko 1886.86).

<i>Mili Bože, na daru ti hvala!</i>	Dear God, thank you for your gift!
<i>Što 'no ciči u udbinskoj kuli?</i>	What is that wailing <sup>246</sup> in a tower in Udbina?
<i>Il je zmija, il je bila vila?</i>	Is it a snake? Is it a white <i>vila</i> ?
<i>Da je vila, u gori bi bila,</i>	If it were a <i>vila</i> it would be in the mountain,
<i>Da je zmija, u vodi bi bila;</i>	If it were a snake it would be in the water,
<i>Nit je zmija, nit je bila vila,</i>	It is neither a snake, nor a white <i>vila</i> ,
<i>Već je ono jedno momče mlado:</i>	Rather it's that one young lad,
<i>Sekul momče, Jankovo uzdanje,</i>	The lad Sekul, Janko's hope,
<i>A iz Senja, grada bijeloga.</i>	From Senj, the white city.

(MH IX.14 ll. 1-9)

Another common antithesis asks what is making a raucous or loud noise somewhere (the real answer being a party or a battle), suggesting that it may be such things as thunder, earthquakes, canon fire or *vile*. Here, particularly, the *vile* are often given a more elaborate presentation—they are on a particular mountain (Vuk III.51), are fighting each other in the mountains (*Al se biju po planinam' vile*) (MH IX.28 l. 6), or they are getting married (*Il se žene u planinam' vile*) (Miošić-Kačić 1886.66 l. 87). Yet

<sup>245</sup> See also Vrčević 1890:3, where a *vila* would be in the clouds.

<sup>246</sup> *Cičati* is literally to shriek or squeal, but this hardly works in English.



another common version seeks an explanation for something white over a city or mountain (Kamenar 2013.345; Ljubidrag 1892.58; Ostojić 1880-3b.223). Here the *vila* is compared with swans and snow as the other options.

Many less common versions occur as well; they ask such things ‘what is at a well’ (MH IV.29 l. 288), ‘what is rising on Fruška mountain’ (MH VIII.10 l. 1), ‘what is lurking in a dungeon’ (MH IX.28 l. 114), ‘what is spinning above the city of Senj’ (Kamenar 2013.96 l. 1, 403 l. 1) and, ‘what is echoing and clanging in the east’ (Pletikosić 1889.35 l. 1-2). The *vile* here are compared to swans (MH IV.29 l. 289), slaves or something hideous<sup>247</sup> (MH IX.28 l. 115-7) and deer (Pletikosić 1889.35 l. 3), among other similar suggestions. The *vila*’s *kolo* is also compared to fog or clouds rising (MH VIII.10 l. 2). There are two particularly interesting examples that are embedded into the story of their respective songs. In the first, a character asks of a maiden how she has come to be so beautiful, suggesting that perhaps her mother was a *vila* (Bogdesić 1884.23). In the second, which seems to be drawing inspiration from other *vila* motifs, a character asks of another what makes his tower shine, one of his suggestions being that perhaps he has immured a *vila* in the wall (Hangi 1898.52 l. 48).

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<sup>247</sup> Two of the answers here are not clear to me: “*Tko je tamo u tamnici tamnoj, / Al si vila, al si uvodina / Al si mlado roblje zarobljeno, / Koja li si gadna gadelina?*” (MH IX.28 ll. 114-7). *Gadna Gadelina* seems to be an invented nonsense-title to fit the meter and based on the word *gadno* (repulsive). The *uvodina* is quite opaque, possibly denoting something in water (*u vodi*).

## Conclusion

The *vila* of the narrative and lyric songs presents unique functions, ones that are less commonly commented upon in informant descriptions. Her depiction in the more specialized and esoteric realm of oral epic seems cemented in a tradition that has very ancient roots in Indo-European, Balkan, and Slavic arts of bardic singing. Here she is an armoured, supernatural maiden, who often transforms into a bird, has tangential connections with snakes and associates herself with heroes in battle, becoming their oath-sister and healing them. At times she forsakes this warrior nature to couple with these heroes and produce offspring, but inevitably returns to her proper realm in high mountains and in clouds, resting about or guarding lakes with her sister *vile*. Here the *vila* parallels such mythological cognates as Norse *valkyrjur/dís*, Indian *Apsarāses*, and other warrior bird women who engage in both battle and swan-maiden motifs and shift their positions between clouds and water bodies. When the *vila* is a negative force in these songs her zones remain the same, guarding water in what is most likely some South Slavic remnant of the Indo-European myth of the thunder god releasing the waters (Puhvel 1987:51; Toporov 1985:546), attacking characters on the field of battle, or firing arrows at young suitors from afar. She is a dancer and singer and a magical, white, spectral woman who at times hints to a darker, more bestial and demonic depiction that is also characteristic of other European cognates (Davidson 1964:62-5; 1988:92-5; Grammaticus 2008:94-6). She also has some connection to horses, but less as an aspect of

her being, and more as something beholden to her, or as a tangential connection through the heroes that ride them.<sup>248</sup>

The lyric songs employ the same register of the *vila*, but shift their focus away from heroic feats and battle into the realms of love and courtship, dance and play. Here the *vila* engages more heavily with female characters and non-heroic animals (deer and eagles rather than falcons and horses). Her role in these songs is usually smaller, more abstract and poetic, like the songs themselves. Here the *vila* is often compared to women, such that it becomes difficult to disentangle one and the other depiction and to be certain that a *vila* song is indeed about a *vila*. In lyric songs, the *vila*'s tasks in quests become domestic tasks of sweeping and fetching water, she calls out to young heroes, not to tell them that their troop is under siege, but the direction they must head to find true love. She is still a healer, she is still moody and deadly, she still flies and lives in mountains and clouds, but her actions are limited by the necessities of the genre.

There are shared formulaic-phrases and epithets that apply to the *vila* and fulfill the strict metrical conditions of the stichic, narrative and lyric songs of the BCMS singers. Her motifs, however, are fairly divergent within the sub-genres. While some motifs are shared across the lyric and narrative songs, many occur exclusively in one or the other, and many of those that bridge the divide bear a mark of their proper place and must be altered by the conventions of their new environment to adapt. The *vila* motifs that belong to the narrative songs seem to present a rigid stock of traditional expectations that are

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<sup>248</sup> In general, Indo-European supernatural females that are connected to horses seem to be a rarity mostly found in Celtic myth (see for instance the *Rhiannon* in the Mabinogi [Jones and Jones 1974:12,42] or the goddess *Epona* [Oaks 1986]). It is usually the dioskoric twins and their cognates that are paired with horses (Puhvel 1987:141-3).

highly variable in deployment, but not in kind. The ‘Water Guard’ *vila* is well known, and her role in the song is well established by the tradition; singers are, however, willing to innovate within this motif to resolve it in a number of ways—to play with it in a tradition-referential manner, or to make the motif gruesome and violent or playful and comical. These songs also provide singers more freedom for blending and splicing of traditional elements. Singers often transition their songs (both smoothly and awkwardly) through a succession of normally unconnected motifs, or else transplant episodes from one motif into another, weaving a dynamic tapestry of various motival threads. The *vila* motifs in the lyric songs, on the other hand, exhibit very rigid deployment and strong textual stability. For example, the ‘Wager with a Maiden’ is only sung in one specific way. If the singers of lyric songs wish to introduce some inventiveness into their *vila*, they are more likely to invent a new song from whole cloth rather than innovate upon one of the more established traditions. These various approaches to the *vila*’s motifs make sense, of course, as they mirror the style and technique of the songs *in toto*: narrative songs follow traditional themes but are highly dependent on the vagaries of their singer’s style, repertoire and skill and show more textual stability across a single artist’s oeuvre beyond the fundamentals of plot and characters. Lyric songs, in their brevity, show higher degrees of textual stability across various performers and are short enough for large sections to be memorized, even if formulaic methods are still employed to engage with them.

### Chapter 3: The *Vila* in Oral Narratives

The depiction of the *vila* in oral narratives proffers a substantial number of differences or shifts of focus from her depiction in songs. Oral narratives present a more communal understanding of *vile* and are most often the source of the aspects recalled in informant descriptions (Chpt. 1). Her behaviour in terms of motifs reflects the concerns, needs and tone of the tales and the level of human life represented in them. Aside from legends and myths, most oral narratives (fabulates, memorates and folktales) depict extraordinary occurrences involving ordinary people rather than heroes, gods or other lofty beings. As with the protagonists of these stories, the *vila*'s roles often have a mundane, parochial, localized, and agrarian character. Less often encountered by heroes on quests for brides and glory, in this register the *vila* is instead met by farmers and peasants in their fields, or on walks through nature. The heroic connection of *vile* to their allies through the martial and amical relationship of *posestrimstvo* (oath-sisterhood) is relatively rare here (of 183 oral narratives in this study it appears in only five, and those all folktales and legends with heroic characters). Instead, examples arise of *vile* being presented in familial roles to other supernatural beings or being taken into *kumstvo* (godmother/sisterhood) with human beings, a reflection of community-level fictive kinship (Vuk Prip:218-21; Ivanišević 1905:261-2). There are, however, aspects of the *vila*'s depiction in oral narratives that seem to reflect a deeper cognitive division within the oral traditions that cannot be so easily ascribed to the format of the genre.

As mentioned earlier, the oral narratives are the only genre in which *vile* are described as having bestial, hooved legs;<sup>1</sup> they are often given other repugnant characteristics here too, such as an odorous smell, or physical deformities.<sup>2</sup> They are also seldom mentioned as having wings or flying (only 11% of oral narratives),<sup>3</sup> and nowhere transform into birds. Instead, in the oral narratives, the *vile* most often transform into reptiles and amphibians; of 183 oral narratives, the *vila* transforms into a snake in four tales, a toad in one and a horse in two.<sup>4</sup> There are also vestigial connections to snakes (Vrčević 1876:89), bees (Ivanišević 1905:254, 257, 259, Lovretić 1902:138; Zovko 1901:146, and even hippopotami (Đorđević 1953:71).

In the songs, the *vila*'s role as paramour in the 'Swan Maiden' motif is always passive. Heroic males take control of the *vila*'s fertility, often in very coercive manners and for their own ends, to produce strong and beautiful children that retain some measure of their mother's magic. The *vila* in oral narratives takes much of her power back and turns the table on these encounters, luring, abducting and beguiling handsome village men

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<sup>1</sup> ATU F231.2. Compare to *Jinn*, from Palestine to Morocco (Lebling 2010:165; Rothenberg 2004:51 n.5). In the Balkan context, of course, parallels must be drawn to the satyrs of ancient Greece and the god Pan (Borgeaud 1988; Gantz 1996:135). See also Botica 1990:31; Doniger 2004. Rare examples seem to link the *vile* to the *sirena* figure (*siren, mermaid*) (see 'Irregular Motifs' in Chpt. 1) and ascribe fish tails to them, but these are quite rare. Horse, goat, or donkey legs are overwhelmingly attributed to *vile*.

<sup>2</sup> Luka Šešo (2016:26) cites a manuscript from 1852 with material drawn from Sremski Karlovci where *vile* are said to have hollow backs like the Scandinavian *Hulder/Huldra* (Safron 2014) or the Swedish *Skogsrä* (Kvideland and Sehmsdorf 1988:217; ATU F232.1).

<sup>3</sup> Of note are two examples in Frano Ivanišević's collection from Poljica where *vile* tell humans to stand on their feet before their magic flight commences (1905:239, 260).

<sup>4</sup> Only one of these (Lang 1914:65) stands as a true example of the *vila*'s equine theriomorphy. The second (Mikuličić 1876:104-5) involves a set of three transformations in a 'Magic Flight' episode. The transformations are quite arbitrary and less dependent on the *vila*'s tradition. While the *vila* turns herself and her lover into a mare and stallion in the first iteration of the episode, she subsequently transforms them into a dewberry (*rubus caesius*) and thorn, and a priest and choir boy to evade her evil mother (104-5).

into her secret realms to use their bodies for her own pleasure. It is for the hapless men to desperately escape the *vila*'s wiles and return to their families or community.

**Table 4 Oral Narrative Locations by Number of Occurrence**

Habitat			Encountered at/in		
Mountain (High)	<i>Planina</i>	18	Mountain (High)	<i>Planina</i>	2
(Low)	<i>Gora</i>	4	(Low)	<i>Gora</i>	3
Cave	<i>Pećina</i>	13	Field	<i>Polje</i>	4
	<i>Spilja</i>	5	Ninth Hill <sup>5</sup>	<i>Deveto/i Brdo/ Breg</i>	3
	<i>Topina</i>	1	Forest	<i>Šuma</i>	3
Chasm/Pit	<i>Jama</i>	7	Spring	<i>Izvor</i>	3
	<i>Bezdanaka/ja</i>	2	Mill	<i>Mlin</i>	3
Cliff	<i>Stijena</i>	4	River	<i>Rijeka</i>	2
	<i>Greda</i>	1	Creek	<i>Potok</i>	2
	<i>Pole</i>	1	Chasm	<i>Jama</i>	1
Water (undefined)	<i>Voda</i>	5	Water (undefined)	<i>Voda</i>	1
Manor	<i>Dvor/Dvorac</i>	3	Lake	<i>Jezero</i>	1
City	<i>Grad</i>	2	Tree	<i>Drvo</i>	1
House	<i>Kuća</i>	2	Cloud	<i>Oblak</i>	1
Karst	<i>Krš</i>	2	Cemetery	<i>Groblje</i>	1
Domed Rock Peak	<i>Kuk</i>	1	Loretto, Italy	<i>Loret</i>	1
Hill	<i>Brijeg</i>	1			
Spring	<i>Vrilo</i>	1			
Lake	<i>Jezero</i>	1			
Puddle	<i>Bara</i>	1			
Cloud	<i>Oblak</i>	1			
Lea	<i>Ledina</i>	1			
Forest	<i>Šuma</i>	1			
Shieling <sup>6</sup>	<i>Stan</i>	1			
Among Humans		1			

The *vila*'s habitat is also notably shifted in the oral narratives. While she is still often found in high mountains and craggy peaks (14%), the greater stress placed on her dangerous interactions with villagers, and her participation in domestic roles finds her

<sup>5</sup> See 'Dance and Flute Competition' below.

<sup>6</sup> This term is of Scottish origin, but has a long precedent of being used in English since the language lacks a native term. The word describes temporary cabins and huts, or clusters of such shelters, used by pastoralist societies that practice transhumance for their summer grazing in hills and mountains. The BCMS term *stan* is used for such shielings, but was also used in many regions to describe any type of dwelling or home (in the modern language it is primarily used for flats/apartments).

needing a specific home in those locations. In the tales the *vila* is largely represented as a subterranean, almost chthonic, being, most often inhabiting caves, chasms and pits (16%).

There is also a surprising lack of names and epithets for *vile* in the oral narratives. It is most likely that the songs use epithets in a way that strives to increase the listener's familiarity with particular *vila* figures. Since the *vodarica vila* who guards her lake, or Marko's *posestrima* Ravijojla will appear in multiple songs, it helps for their names to be a foundational piece of knowledge in the listener's imagination. The *vila* of oral narratives is meant, in contrast, to be more realistic than fantastic, and particularly in the fabulates and memorates, which make up the largest constituents of oral narratives. It is her otherness with regard to the community of humankind that is stressed here; providing names for her suggests a familiarity that might diminish verisimilitude and suspense. Some similar epithets to those in the songs are used: The '*Zloradica vila*', who in one folktale, as her name suggests, does evil (*raditi zlo*) (Vočinkić 1892:28,29); the '*kriva* (lame/crooked) *vila*,' who is named due to her lame leg (Dučić 1931:274); and, the '*komska and lovćenska vila*' named after the mountains upon which they live (Kom and Lovćen in Montenegro) (271, 274). Surprisingly, the common title '*gorska vila*' (low-mountain *vila*) appears only once (Kukuljević 1851:98). Though their number is quite small compared to the songs, most epithets in the oral narratives bear the mark of being of a type applied for taboo purposes. They either reflect the nature of the *vile*—'*dobrice*' (goodnicks) (Lovretić 1902:121), '*čestitice*' (clean ones) (Mikuličić 1876:40, 204) and '*nesretnice*' (unlucky ones) (Lukić 1911-2:9), or reflect titles of respect—'*babe*'



(grandmothers/old women<sup>7</sup>) (Lang 1914:137) and ‘*gospače*’ (mistresses/ladies) (Kukuljević 1851:99).

The *vila* of oral narratives very seldom heals characters and, when she does, the act seldom resembles the tradition in songs (Compare the ‘Heal’ motif in Chpts. 2 and 3). There is also a preponderance of male figures in these tales. Often called *vilenjaci*, they are regularly the male human consorts to the *vile* presented in the descriptions, but also occasionally appear as though they are more akin to male versions of *vile* (Banović 1918:194-5; Kotarski 1918:51; Lang 1914:137).<sup>8</sup> The *vile* in oral narratives are depicted as domestic and rural creatures who live in an invisible or underground realm that mirrors human society (akin to elves, fairies, *Jinn* and other comparable beings). Because of this, it seems that tale tellers were prone to populating this world with male beings to complement the female.

Three notes must be appended here about the presentation of the *vila*’s motifs in the oral narratives. First, it is important to remember that oral narratives are performed in a much freer structure and form than songs. Without the dictates of metrical constriction, oral narrative traditions are passed down more openly in formats governed predominantly by thematic linkages, held by what Lord termed a ‘tension of essences.’ As such, motival

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<sup>7</sup> This term can be used pejoratively. It is not clear from the context how it is intended here.

<sup>8</sup> Alaric Hall has convincingly demonstrated that the name *Ælfe* in the earliest Anglo-Saxon sources referred exclusively to male supernatural beings and was only later extended to female beings, possibly through contamination from Celtic or Latin influence (2007:75-95, 161-6). The *vila* represents an opposing phenomenon. The earliest evidence in BCMS regions suggests that male supernatural counterparts for *vile* were quite rare and no single name was used for them. Today, with the globalized spread of media materials from other countries the name *vilenjak* has come to be applied to male *vile* of any sort in popular culture. Any small, spritely male beings in American and Western European movies and books, including Santa’s elves, are translated into the BCMS languages as *vilenjak*.

categories in oral narratives are more often thematic rather than structural, although some elements are shared in close proximity. There is very little fixity of formulaic composition or textual stability in these traditions, but rather clusters of ideas, images, episodes and behaviours that link various traditional materials into motival categories.

Second, the reader will find more mention of Antti Aarne, Stith Thompson, and Hans-Jörg Uther's Folktale and Motif Index (ATU) here, predominantly in the folktale subsection. Since those scholars' system was created for these materials, it is useful to make note of their index here for comparative purposes despite my reservations with the system (pg. 18 above).

Finally, although this section, like that of the songs, will be divided into sub-genres, it is difficult to separate every motif by sub-genre. Though many fall into a single section, there is much overlap. It is good to remember that story tellers in the region made no distinctions about their stories, referring to them all as 'tales' (*pripovijetke/pripovetke*). Because of this, motifs here are allotted to the sub-genre in which they most often appear, with discussion of various uses within each description.

## The *Vila* in Myths

There are very few myths about the *vila*. By the time that these oral narratives were collected, the large questions about the universe and the role of mortals within it had long been answered by the three major religions in the region. The most common myth regarding the *vile* is one that reveals their origin, and it is little wonder that these myths are woven into the larger tapestry of genesis stories of the Abrahamic faiths.

### Regular Motifs

#### **Children of Adam and Eve**

70% Myths (7 tales). Wide Distribution. Dependent Motif

The most common myths about *vile* describe their origins as early children of Adam and Eve. One account from Boljun in Istria, though quite vague in explanation, presents a very startling and mixed aetiology of Christian and pagan elements denoting all sorts of monsters, giants and humans as Adam and Eve's spawn (Novljan 2014:328). Another from Ljubuški, Herzegovina, tells that *vile* were the first daughters of Adam, but they were so beautiful they drove all who gazed upon them to madness, and so fled into nature for shame of the pain that they caused (Zovko 1899:144).

The most common variant of this myth, though, uses an explanation commonly used throughout Europe to describe the origin of 'hidden peoples' (ATU F251.4).<sup>9</sup> In these stories Adam and Eve have a large number of children, which God asks them to bring before him. Either because Eve is ashamed of her fecundity (Lukić 1893:130), or

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<sup>9</sup> The most common variant in the ATU Index is housed under tale 758 and motif A1650.1 "The Various Children of Eve" where the division of their children is used to explain inequality among humans. Motif F251.4 "Underworld people from children which Eve hid from God" represents the variant used in *vila* myths. Cf. Rothenberg 2004:30 for *Jinn*.

because either parent fears God will kill the children (which is a fair concern given God's track record with Abraham, the Egyptians, and others) (Đorđević 1953:71), they hide a number of the children from God in their home. Various numbers of these children are given—six, seven, 30, often half of the children, sometimes the most beautiful. Offended by this deception, God curses the hidden children to become *vile*<sup>10</sup> and to live in mountains and water. God's ironic revenge in this tale provides explanation for the *vile*'s purported invisibility:

God only said to them, "As many visible, that many invisible." From that time the hidden children became invisible.... And today there exists a visible and invisible world, since they, just like we, multiply and die just as we visible people. (Lovretić 1902:121)

Adam and Eve's denial of their children might also serve as a useful explanation for why *vile* collect denials (Ivanišević 1905:255-6).

### Irregular Motifs

#### **Fallen Angels**

Zovko 1892:233a-b. The Origin of *Vile*. From Bosnia and Herzegovina.

A tale from an undisclosed location in Bosnia or Herzegovina describes how God gave a tour of his kingdom to all his angels. The angels are warned not to look to their left side when they come to his third heaven, but a number do and see golden wonders that God has created. As punishment, these angels immediately lose their wings and turn into

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<sup>10</sup> Oddly, in one oral narrative, the hidden children are turned into *vile* and hippopotami (Đorđević 1953:71)!

gorgeous women. They are sent to Earth to be *vile*. Those that accept their fate become good *vile*, those spiteful toward God because of their punishment become evil *vile*.

**Jesus's Vain Sister**

Đorđević 1953:71. N/T. From Cetinje.

In a myth collected in Montenegro, another biblical origin is given to *vile*. Here, they descend from a vain sister of Jesus Christ. One day, when she claimed to be more beautiful than Jesus, he cursed her to live in mountains and water for her blasphemy. She retained her beauty, however, as a reminder of the cause of her downfall.

**Invent Wine**

Kotarski 1918:51. N/T. From Lobar.

The only myth that does not concern the origin of *vile* has them, instead, discovering oenology.

*Vile* once watched how goats grazed about a cave. Grapes were growing at the cave and the goats jumped about on the ripe grapes and licked the juice off of the rocks. The *vile* came close and tried that juice and they liked it so much that they picked the grapes and stamped them with their feet and drank. From that drink they were joyful, and sang without end. From that time grapes have been crushed in a barrel.

## The *Vila* in Legends

Legends deal primarily with an older historical past that often corresponds with the feudal imaginary of the Medieval Period and early Renaissance. Because of this, they regularly involve the same heroic characters who inhabit narrative songs and have the *vila* responding in similar form. This does not mean that the depiction of the *vila* in legends is identical to that of the *vila* of the narrative songs, but that here she comes closest to the border of songs and oral narratives. Her primary function in the legends is to provide explanation for the fantastic powers of great heroes, as well the existence of grand structures.

### Regular Motifs

#### **Built a Structure**

8% Legends (2 tales). Distribution Unclear.<sup>11</sup> Dependent Motif

Attestation of oral narratives about *vile* building structures are quite rare, which is surprising given how often they are linked to construction and demolition in narrative songs and how many topogonic descriptions exist linking important places in peasant social mapping to the *vile*. It is possible that such stories existed but were not heavily collected at this time. It may also be that the role of social mapping was served well enough by simple descriptions rather than elaborate narratives. Perhaps the cultural resonance of the *vila* in other oral traditions meant that it was enough to simply say that a

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<sup>11</sup> In both cases it can be assumed that the oral narratives derive from the regions concerned in the plots (Kotor in Montenegro and Krapina in northern Croatia), but have no explicit attribution.

space or structure was altered or created by their actions. This study's sample provided only two structures built by *vile* and both are early attestations in much truncated form.

In his dictionary, Vuk Stef. Karadžić related a legend of a *vila* who helped the medieval Serbian Czar Stefan build the coastal city of Kotor. When it is completed, the czar throws a fête and boasts of his great exploits, taking full credit for the building. The *vila* defends her role in the construction for which the czar indignantly slaps her face. Infuriated, the *vila* poisons all the wells and drives the guests mad. The czar begs for forgiveness and she takes pity, magically altering one of the wells to produce healing water. Vuk relates that the tale is used to explain a certain spring in the city that always runs, even in times of drought (Stefanović Karadžić 1852:294).

A second legend is presented by Ivan Kukuljević Sakcinski who was told it by Ljudevit Gaj, the important Croatian statesman, language reformer and failed political ideologue (see Despalatović 1975). The tale is unique and from a less-than-ideal source, but draws in aspects of cultural history and the idea of immurement that is so commonly connected to the *vile* in the 'Impede Building' motif.

At Krapina there is also, behind Stahinska Mountain, below the old Jewish city, a cave which the folk call the *Vila Chasm* [*Vilinska jama*]. *Vile* lived there once. In one folktale, one Vulina, the sister of Čeh and Leh,<sup>12</sup> sought shelter with those *vile* when her brothers persecuted her for betraying them to a Roman official—her lover, but enemy to the brothers and her

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<sup>12</sup> Čeh, Leh and Rus (sometimes Meh) are legendary brothers in tales found in a number of Slavic countries from the 13<sup>th</sup> to 19<sup>th</sup> centuries. Their stories are most often variants of a founding legend in which they follow various prey on a hunting trip and end up settling the nations of three major Slavic groups—the Czechs, Poles (Lechites) and Russians. The separate attestations of very similar stories amongst disparate Slavic groups speaks to the immense time-depth that the legend must boast. In some Croatian tales, the brothers are given a sister (interestingly most often named Vilina) and father, King Hrvat (Croat) who founds the Croatian nation before his sons venture off. In a Polish source, the *Wielkopolska Chronicle*, dating from the 13<sup>th</sup> century, their father is said to be Pan, a prince of Pannonia (the basin where present day Slavonia is located). See Đurić 2007:11; Sakač 1940.

people. The brothers traded the *vila* a beautiful ox with golden horns for their sister. Between the ox's horns sat a child holding a golden apple in its hands. The brothers then immured the sister under the doors of Krapina City. (Kukuljević 1851:99)

### **Shade and Suckle**

33% Legends (8 tales) 6% Fabulates (4) 9% Folk Tales (3). Wide Distribution.  
Dependent Motif

The most common plot of this motif is treated in detail above in the narrative songs. The employment of the motif in legends follows very closely to the most common format in the songs. Here, a heroic protagonist (most commonly Marko Kraljević) as a young shepherd shades a *vila* or her child from the sun, and is rewarded with a draught or three from her breast that bestows to him superhuman strength. The legends place marked emphasis on the *vila* not only bestowing strength, but also secret knowledge to Marko about where to find his famous horse Šarac. In one legend the *vila* even nurses Šarac to give the horse its great abilities (Vasiljević 1894:155). A legend from Istria (Jelušić-Štrkov 1886-7.1), as in the narrative songs, presents that region's unique variant of having the *vila* first take the form of snakes (Žiža 1914:373). Legends also reveal a tendency to replace the single gift of strength in the narrative songs with a tripartite endowment—the *vila* gives the protagonist wisdom, strength and his horse (Zorić 1897:270), or else strength, his horse, and the ability to call upon the *vila* whenever he is in need (Hör I:580). While the gifts are legendary in nature, the tripartition in this circumstance owes to the oral narrative format; the tendency becomes common when the motif is employed in folktales.<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>13</sup> Of course, 'three gifts' are also found in the lyric songs, but in a different format and under different circumstances (see 'Offer Magic Gifts to Spare Life' in the lyric songs).



In folktales and fabulates, this motif consistently loses its suckling episode, abandons the *vila*'s child, and often adds two or three *vile* in place of one. Although these alterations might reflect a connection between the suckling episode and the heroic tone of legends, an equally valid explanation might derive from the fact that many fabulates that employ this motif have women as protagonists. It is possible that the homosexual undertones of a woman nursing from a *vila* might have been unappealing to tellers and explain the abandonment of the trope. Protagonists in the fabulates are most often working villagers—shepherds (Korenić 1896:144; Đorđević 1953:101-2) or harvesters of wheat (Sajvert-Pokupska 1897-1905:556)—who give shade to the *vile* and are granted wishes in return. Rather than the stock heroic strength and horses, in fabulates, the gifts range widely and imaginatively from luck (Kukuljević 1851:97), to unique clothing (Đorđević 1953:101-2), to endless hanks of yarn (Sajvert-Pokupska 1897-1905:556).

It is most likely that this motif was not commonly drawn into folktales, as attestation is scarce. The clearest examples are drawn from two folktales collected in Krasica on the Croatian Littoral by Fran Mikuličić. In both, a young protagonist gives shade to three *vile* and is granted three wishes/abilities in turn. In one of these, the protagonist asks to be able to transform items at will, that any woman he wishes will spend the night with him, and finally for a wagon that drives itself (Mikuličić 1876:50-3. See below). The second tale has the *vile* grant the protagonist the ability to transform into an ant, a bird, and a lion (40). Beyond these two tales, the motif arises tangentially in a folktale from Sekurič in Eastern Serbia, wherein the protagonist spends the night in the cottage of a kindly old crone who warns him that her daughter is an evil and cannibalistic

*vila*. The old woman advises the character that his only salvation lies in telling the *vila* that he has suckled from a *vila* and so does not fear her (Čajkanović 1927:484).

**Give Power or Ability**

42% Legends (10 tales) 14% Fabulates (9) 2% Memorates (1) 13% Folk Tales (4). Wide Distribution. Independent Motif

One of the most common roles for *vile* in oral narratives is to bequeath various heroes and protagonists with special powers or abilities. In most cases this act is brought about through the ‘Shade and Suckle’ motif. For the legends, which are primarily concerned with heroic characters, the ‘Shade and Suckle’ motif is almost the exclusive manner by which powers and abilities are bequeathed, with heroes as children receiving exceptional strength, swords and horses from *vila* benefactors. Only two legends contradict this pattern: The first is a simple descriptive tale from Ljubuški, Herzegovina which attributes the incredible and awful power of the hero Janković Stojan to a gift given him from the *vile* (Zovko 1901:147-8). One can imagine this legend in a fuller telling including a ‘Shade and Suckle’ motif, as the tale never discusses the manner by which Janković received his gift. The second legend presents a unique example, concerning the origin of the first *vrač* (a sorcerer or folk healer) and how he came to gain his power (Lovretić 1902:121). This legend will be treated at length below.

The ‘Give Power or Ability’ motif becomes more varied and distinctive when the motif is drawn into other genres and heroic protagonists are replaced by common villagers, shepherds and the youthful ‘everymen’ of the folktale. Fabulates and memorates tell of *vile* giving various people magic coins that return to their purse after being spent (Ardalić 1917:304-5), the ability to sneak in and out of prison at will (303),

and the power to find a meadow (presumably with a water source in it) whenever thirsty (Hovorka 1897-8:3). More notable examples include a *vilovnak* in northern Croatia given incredible hunting powers, who never misses his mark (Lang 1914:137); a maiden from a village near Mostar who is rewarded by the *vila* with a beauty that grows stronger every day until she reveals the magic to others and withers away (Đikić 1899:71); and, in a humorous tale from Oštarije in Croatia with an unfortunate peasant whose nervous slip-of-tongue has him ask his kind benefactress for an enormous head (*glava*) rather than the large cow (*krava*) he had hoped for (Pribanić 1899-1901:15).

The *vila*'s gift of beneficial abilities are mostly absent in folktales. There is one notable example drawn from two Montenegrin tales where a *vila* offers a protagonist the gift of '*njemuški*' (elsewhere *njemušti*) language—the language of all animals.<sup>14</sup> While one tale has the character rejecting this offer for a more imperative request (Dučić 1931:275), the other tale is worthy of some inspection for comparative purposes:

They tell the tale that while the *komska vila* [the *vila* of Kom mountain] was bathing in Plavsko Lake, an *aždaja*<sup>15</sup> wounded her leg and she remained lame [*kriva*, lit. crooked/curved/bent]. Thus she was called "*kriva vila*". Her *pobratim* Glavat Lešev came to be with her in her sickness and wished to slay the *aždaja* in revenge. He overcame the *aždaja* and for this the *vila* gave him "*njemuški*" language. She warned him, however, never to tell anyone about it or else he will die instantly. Thus Glavat got *njemuški* language and understood the conversations of beasts, birds, fish and altogether all living beings... (274)

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<sup>14</sup> Dictionaries do not tend to provide an etymology for this word, but it is seemingly derived from the adjectival term for 'German,' *njemački/nemački*, which itself is an early, etic ethnonym derived from the word *nijem/nem*, meaning mute, and thus 'those who cannot speak (our language).' See also Vuk Prip.3; ATU 670.

<sup>15</sup> A serpent/dragon/wyrm. For *aždaja/haždaja* see n. 94 in Chpt. 2.

While this oral narrative begins in legendary form and shows strong parallels to the tale of Sigurðr/Sigfried's battle with the dragon Fafnir,<sup>16</sup> from this point the tale shifts into a standard folktale. Upon acquisition of *njemuški* language, the protagonist Glavat proceeds to use his power for a very common story-pattern (ATU 670 'The Man Who Understands Animal Languages') that runs a close cognate to similar versions in the region (see Vuk Prip.3).

### **Guard or Control a Spring**

13% Legends (3 tales), 2% Fabulates (1 tale). Montenegro and Dalmatia. Independent Motif.

There are a number of oral narratives that posit a connection between *vile* and mountain springs/fountainheads (see 'Reveal 77 Springs' below). Three legends from Montenegro describe *vile* as having the power to control the flow of water in springs, while one fabulate from Poljica, in Dalmatia, describes how *vile* guard a spring and knowledge of it. For the legends, one has already been explored above, where a rebuffed *vila* has her revenge by poisoning the wells of Kotor. The other two represent multiforms of one tale,<sup>17</sup> best related by Vuk Vrčević:

They say the *vila* from the peak of Kom mountain called the *vila* on Lovćen Mountain, telling her to open a few more springs in Lovćen. She heard her, but did not understand. Rather, it seemed to her that she had said to "close a few more springs in Lovćen." So, rather than opening, she closed all

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<sup>16</sup> As outlined in the Poetic Edda's *Fáfnismál* (Sigfusson, et al. 1907:172-9), the Prose Edda's *Skáldskaparmál* (Anderson 1880:197-8) and the *Völsunga Saga* (Magnusson and Morris 1907:79-84).

<sup>17</sup> Dučić and Vrčević present a number of similar oral narratives and seem to have drawn some of their material from the same sources. Unfortunately, they are not consistent with citing these sources. Since both were writing on material collected in Montenegro, one cannot be certain if they are citing the same materials or simply encountered multiforms of the same tales from different tellers. Some tales shows enough differences in their forms to suggest that the authors were indeed dealing with multiforms (see 'Milk Chamois' for example), but others are not so clear. I have tried to err on the side of caution and treat all as separate oral narratives.

the springs, such that thereafter people in Montenegro do not have a lot of active springs, as they once did. Especially on Lovćen Mountain. (1876:89)

The idea that *vile* control springs seems to have been deeply ingrained in folk culture. Not only do the tales attest to it, but also springs were commonly designated as belonging to *vile* (Dučić 1931:270; Vrčević 1876:89). A fabulate from the Dalmatian coast concerns one such *vila* spring (*vilensko vrilo*) discovered by a grazing cow that is later killed by the *vile* for uncovering it (Ivanišević 1905:256). After its death, the spring takes on the form of a cow and is said to be marked by locals as a deadly place.

### **Bathe**

13% Legends (3 tales) 9% Folktales (3) 5% Fabulates (3) 4% Memorates (2). Wide Distribution. Independent Motif

While *vile* in songs only bathe as the introductory episode to the ‘Swan Maiden’ motif, the practice is more widely attested in oral narratives. Many examples here (particularly legends) still belong to the ‘Swan Maiden’ motif (Čajkanović 1927:148-54; Dučić 1931:273; Vrčević 1876:88), but *vile* coming to bathe in rivers, lakes and seas also set the scene for encounters with humans in fabulates and memorates (Dragičević 1908:450-1; Ivanišević 1905:257-8). In folktales, bathing *vile* are attacked by serpents (Dučić 1931:274) or overheard by wanderers (Vuk Prip:87-9) in critical, but fairly distinctive, episodes in various story-patterns.

### **Sire a Great Lineage**

8% Legends (2 tales). Montenegro and Dalmatia. Dependent motif.

Two legends outline the source of a noble family or institution deriving from the relations of a *vila* and a human man. Such tales are easily constructed; both examples in this study use common oral traditions of *vile* fraternizing with men and then simply link

the past and present by revealing the name of the human man. I would assume that this type of ancestral pedigree was commonly claimed. Take for example the recognizable tropes in this legend relayed by Stevan Dučić:

While bathing at the sea, one ‘Baranin’ stole the wings of a *vila*. When the *vila* came to him he married her. [Later] when he had married off his son, he gave the wings to her that she might dance at the wedding. She flew off into the clouds, then yelled at him, “I want half the children!” They had two girls and two boys. He gave her the girls and kept the boys. From the boys is derived the Brotherhood Divanovići, who are named thus, by folk belief, after their wild [*divlja*] mother, the *vila*. (1931:273)

### Irregular Motifs

#### **Find and Raise Child**

Vasiljević 1894:155. *N/T*. An old man from Svrljig in Eastern Serbia

A legend hinted at by Al. Vasiljević describes how the hero Miloš Obilić was born to a mare<sup>18</sup> and then found and raised by *vile*.

#### **The Good Escape their Caves**

Kukuljević 1851:98. *N/T*. Unknown source from Dobrota on the Montenegrin coast

In a region where *vile* are said to live in labyrinthine caves, a legend is told of a wise and virtuous man from the town of Dobrota who centuries ago escaped their cave with God’s aid. Kukuljević Sakcinski explains that such salvation is not common in more recent times, since none are sufficiently good and wise.

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<sup>18</sup> In many early sources, the hero Miloš Obilić is named Miloš Kobilić (lit. son of the mare). This name led to (or derived from) many oral traditions where a mare gives birth to the hero. See Koljević 1980:156-60, 164-8; Popović 1988:26.

**Guard Culture Hero**

Kukuljević 1851:98. *N/T*. Unnamed source from Montenegro.

In Montenegro, in the Rečkoj sub-region found below the ruined city of Obod, there is some magical cave. The Montenegrins tell a tale, that in it sleeps the grandfather of their Crnojević Ivan.<sup>19</sup> Mountain *vile* guard him, and will wake him from his sleep when the time comes for him to again unite Montenegro, Ravni Kotor and the azure sea.

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<sup>19</sup> Ivan Crnojević was Lord of Zeta and a Turkish vassal ruler of regions of current day Montenegro in the 15<sup>th</sup> century. He is a well-regarded figure in Montenegrin history, and founder of the city of Cetinje (Domljan 1984:245). His grandfather, Đurađ Đurašević was a lord of a region of Zeta, and a voivode to the Serbian Despotate under Stefan Lazarević (Popov 2009:65).

## The *Vila* in Memorates and Fabulates

Of all oral narratives, the *vila* is employed most commonly in memorates and fabulates. The *vila*'s ambivalent moral stance, dynamic nature, vast lore and connection to nature made her a fine supernatural being for the random encounters depicted in these tales, as well as for the elements of magic realism that memorate and fabulate telling must have brought to rural living in oral societies. The two genres have been combined in presentation here because of the overwhelming amount of overlap between them. Aside from a small number of examples, they share most of their motifs. Sadly, the type of intensive research that might have allowed some reflection on the concept of belief among tellers is lacking from this time; little comment can be given on the degree to which those who told memorates truly believed that they or others they knew had encountered or had dealings with *vile*. Simply stated, the large majority of memorates follow the same narrative traditions and story-patterns as fabulates. This may mean that when tellers encountered inexplicable phenomena, they interpreted them in traditional narrative patterns; or, it may simply mean that fabulates were re-branded as personal encounters, or encounters of friends and family, to lend an air of veracity to a story. Both phenomena are familiar in folklore research (Dégh 1996; Honko 1964; Šešo 2011) and the latter explains many memorates in this sample where protagonists are named with unrealistic or ridiculous sounding names (see for instance, Mar Đon Đuraš and Prenek Pilju in Dučić 1931:272, 273), or with very vague names (often simply a first name, or a first name with an ethnonym, such as Mare 'the Vlach' [Banović 1918:195]). It is important to note that, of all the traditional forms of story and song in the region,



memorates and fabulates have carried on most competently, even into the present day, when most others have died out. Recent field research by Luka Šešo in the Dalmatian hinterland has revealed a number of the story-patterns presented here that are still known and told today (Šešo 2016).

### Regular Motifs

#### **Simple Encounter**

33% Memorates (15 tales) 6% Fabulates (4). Wide Distribution. Dependent Motif

This category loosely links a number of memorates and fabulates that do not have very strong plots, but only involve humans encountering *vile*. Surprisingly, these stories are quite standardized and include only a small number of variants with several recurring tropes. Common examples include people simply hearing odd noises (whistling, horseback riders following them, laughter), which they equate with *vile* being near (Banović 1918:197; Rubić 1899:3); coming upon *vile* as they bathe in a spring, creek, or pond in the forest (Dragičević 1908:450-1; Vrčević 1876:89;); meeting *vile* while walking on a path (Dučić 1931:272-3; Ivanišević 1905:257); seeing them while grazing or herding animals (Rožić 1908:99; Rubić 1899:2); entering caves (often mountain caves that are difficult to reach) and coming upon *vile* (Banović 1918:195-6; Vrčević 1876:89); or, most commonly, people who see or hear *vile* dancing *kolo*, mistake them for humans and draw near to join the dance, before realizing their mistake (Ardalić 1917:303; Filakovac 1905:145; Lukić 1911-2:6; Zovko 1901:146-7).

Stress is often placed on the shock of seeing *vile*. Some, such as Luca Pitlović of Klakar, relate this encounter as a positive event that filled them with awe:

I was already a girl of marriageable age when I saw a *vila*, on the barn. She sat on the Catherine window and combed her hair. That was in the summer. I had gotten up very early, around three o'clock, so I went to fetch water for my mother. It was dawn already and the sun was just ready to rise. It was beautiful out, warm and peaceful. I looked toward the barn and the *vila* sat there brushing her hair. She was all in white, barefoot and had long hair. Well, she was combing and braiding her hair. I saw her well, and for some time, then I went inside for my sister Roza, so she could see her. But when we came back out she was gone. (Lukić 1911-2:6)

Others relate how, upon discovery, the *vila* fled in fright (Dragičević 1908:450). But such positive experiences are rare and far outweighed by those that describe the incidents as deathly serious and frightening. Upon seeing the *vila*, most stories relate the protagonist fleeing in fear, crouching out of sight and slowly crawling to a safe distance before fleeing (Ardalić 1917:303; Zovko 1901:146-7), or hiding behind walls so as not to be seen (Ivanišević 1905:257; Rubić 1899:2). An unnamed informant (or perhaps the collector himself) recounts the following in Ivan Zovko's collection from Ljubuški in Herzegovina:

I had just sat down on a steep cliff on the side of a field, and behind a little hill there was a small flat field. Just as it was beginning to get dark I heard some buzzing. I put my hands to my ears and turned toward the sound and stood listening. At first it seemed to me that a swarm of bees was let out and buzzing, that they couldn't calm down or enter the hive. I listened a little more and realized "those aren't bees." "What could it be?" I thought to myself. And, like that, I set off madly down a small path along the side. When I got there, more than 20 *vile*! And lemme tell ya; they all held hands and danced and sang. They came and came to one spot, then turned back, the *kolo* never returned to one spot. When I saw them there I froze. I couldn't move an inch, neither forward nor backward. If you were to kill me, not a drop of blood would drop. I had gone pale as a sheet. A fog came over my eyes. I didn't know where I was nor what I was. I had found myself in an evil place which I could never have dreamed of. Serves me right, I wouldn't have been there if I didn't want to see everything. After a bit, I came back to myself. I bent over and crept and crept on all fours until I had gotten myself out of there and could breathe a little and calm myself. That night I fell asleep well,

once I had raced home. I talked in my sleep, but I slept sweetly, slept like the dead. It was hard for me to wake. (1901:146-7)

Many informants express a desire to have seen more of the *vile*, but all admit that to do so would have been too dangerous. Those encounters that end in contact (and even some that do not) usually end with the protagonist fleeing to the safety of home only to fall ill. Unlike the only slightly disconcerting deep sleep of the informant above, most accounts relate that, upon arrival, the protagonist fell into a bitter illness, went insane (Vrčević 1876:89), or remained debilitated in some way for life (Dragičević 1908:450).

### **Kill Someone in Nature**

5% Fabulates (3 tales) 4% Memorates (2). Wide Distribution. Dependent Motif

A number of simple fabulates and memorates outline incidences where humans (and animals) are murdered in natural environments (forests, caves, mountain ranges, etc.) by *vile*. Some of these narratives carry a moralizing and even environmentalist message to justify the *vila*'s actions. Throughout all, one gets the functionalist's sense that such narratives grew naturally and reactively in attempts to rationalize unexplained or tragic deaths. From the Kuči region of Montenegro, Stevan Dučić relates two tales where *vile* murder humans. When the body of a woman is found beaten in the waters of a *vila* spring, tale tellers surmise that she was punished by the *vile* for visiting the spring by night (1931:270). The second tale, a memorate, tells how one Božo Mićunov Bezijovac fell into a chasm after he and a friend stole some alcohol intended for a celebration (272-3). When his friends try to draw the body out with a rope, a mysterious hand continually cuts the rope with a knife every time it nears the mouth of the chasm, plunging the

victim's body back to the ground. Some time later, a man from Podgorica encountered a peculiar woman nearby who told him that she was the one who cut the rope.

Two oral narratives drawn from regions quite distant from one another (one from Otok in Syrmia and one from Poljica in Dalmatia) reflect a curious variant of this motif that, once more, draws a connection between *vile* and bees. Josip Lovretić of Otok relates a fabulate detailing a man who climbed a great tree to gather honey from a bee hive (Lovretić 1902:138-9). As he neared the hive he called below telling those nearby that two women would not let him proceed, then plummeted to his death. Later a *vrač* (local healer) explained to his family that these two women were *vile* who caused him to fall. In Poljica, Frano Ivanišević related a similar tale about a man who climbed a steep cliff at Gornji Dolac to reach an immense beehive hidden behind a great stone slab (1905:259). This man gathered six skins of wax from the hive when a *vila*'s voice from inside the hive called to him, telling him that he had taken enough. When he disregarded the warning and took a seventh, the *vila* cursed him and he died within the day.

This murdering in wilderness seems also to apply to a very vague fabulate presented by Ivanišević about *vile* of a lea who kill a steer headed for nearby water (259), although the tale also shares parallels with another of Ivanišević's tales where a cow is killed by *vile* for revealing their spring (256-7).

#### **Beat/Kill in Retribution**

22% Fabulates (14 tales) 13% Memorates (6) 3% Folktales (1). Wide Distribution.  
Independent Motif

The *vile* in oral narratives are as vindictive and violent as those in the songs, but for a much wider range of reasons, and are prone to violently beating and killing those

humans who slight them. Most often, *vile* in the oral narratives harm those men and women who accidentally or intentionally harm them or their children. They commonly also exact revenge upon those who reveal secret *vila* knowledge, or the fact of having been aided by *vile* or having fraternized with them. Other grievances include humans playing music they do not like (Lang 1914:138), seeing them when they wish to be hidden (Lovretić 1902:122), finding their secret springs (Ivanišević 1905:256-7), insulting them (Sajvert-Pokupska 1897-1905:556), insulting their animal-legs (Ardalić 1917:302), or trying to stop them from taking horses to ride (Lukić 1911-2:9). For those male human lovers, or *vilenjaci* that the *vile* deem to belong to them, marrying human women often evokes a sinister jealousy from the *vile* that does not end well (Dučić 1931:272; Kukuljević 1851:99). Tales from Dalmatia and Montenegro sometimes include an episode where one *vila* beats the protagonist while another begs her to stop. Sometimes the jilted *vila* lover beats her man, while her friend begs her not to (Dučić 1931:272), while in others it is a random *vila* that beats a ‘loosed-lipped’ protagonist while his *vila*-lover begs for clemency (Ivanišević 1905:258).

The punishment of the *vila* is always declarative and brutal in comparison to the slights that engender it. The slights of protagonists in the tales are often minor and unintentional, while retribution is swift:

Niki Ante Brničević, whom they called Macić, went to pick chestnuts. Above in Pečina in the caves are lots of holes. And what did he do? The devil had him throw one chestnut in the cave through a hole. From inside the cave a voice called out like a human voice, “Hey! You hit my child with that in his cradle. Damn you! Your root will disappear, there will be neither remnant nor offspring in your lands!” And, my God, that’s what happened. He was married, had two children, all of them died in short time. He was just left with an empty house. (258-9)

Though the wrath of the *vile* is seldom in comparative measure, it does not mean that it is always unjustified, as a memorate from Kaštel, in Croatia reveals:

In Kaštel, Volarička was a milkmaid. Then, one time, she stood by the wood stove and the boys sat around the table at dinner when, all of the sudden, a *vila* came into the kitchen. She was beautiful, beautiful as you can just imagine. She had gorgeous, long hair, right down to the ground. She was dressed in clean, white clothing that also draped to the ground. Every part of her was beautiful, except that her legs were those of a goat and on her hands she had long claws. The milkmaid asked her, “Will you maybe eat since you’ve come to the stove?” - But she [the *vila*] just shook her head that she will not. And, at that, one lad jumped up. He was from Brodarac. Well, he sat beside the *vila*, grabbed her about the waist and said to her, “Look what a great pair we two would be.” At that she just looked at him and left: she was offended. And suddenly that boy was cold throughout his body, he couldn’t catch his breath, and, my God, around morning his luck ran out and he died. One shouldn’t mix with *vile*.” (Sajvert-Pokupska 1897-1905:556)

### **Cause Bounty**

Fabulates (4 tales) Memorates (4) Folktales (2) Legends (1). Wide Distribution.  
Independent Motif

The *vila* in oral narratives is a true nature spirit connected to fertility, bounty and abundance. In songs, the fertility power of the *vila* is limited almost entirely to her ability to produce children in union with heroes. That power is expanded in the oral narratives to connect her both to the nature she is imagined to derive from, and the crops that are central to story-patterns informed by the peasant’s agrarian village. While folktales make only passing use of this idea—for instance when a protagonist marries a *vila*, she brings abundance and great-growth to the flora and crops of his region (Mikuličić 1876:105), or the hill where *vile* come to dance *kolo* is extremely fertile ground to plant in (Čajkanović 1927:366-7)—the concept is central to a number of fabulates and memorates. Frano Ivanišević, from Poljica in Dalmatia, collected two memorates that outline how *vile*’s

singing causes the seas to swell with an overabundance of fish (1905:257, 260). In the tales, *vile* not only unintentionally cause this bounty by singing, but also actively aid humans of whom they grow fond to catch large hauls of hearty fish. Other oral narratives from Dalmatia outline how animals will wander off while being pastured, encounter *vile* or their habitats and then return pregnant (Banović 1918:195-6; Ivanišević 1905:256). Ana Banović of Zaostrog relates a tale told by her mother about an errant goat who disappeared with *vile* for some days and returned pregnant (Banović 1918:195-6). The kid it births grows miraculously into a billy the size of an ass.

Tales of the *vile* providing bounty often involve an element of forced reciprocity: *Vile* will steal someone's goats to milk them but rather than returning empty, the goats return with udders full to burst, dripping with milk (195); *vile* steal from someone's garden, and the crops return in abundance (Lang 1914:137-8). But this gift from the *vile* is dependent upon the good will of the owners, as Milan Lang outlines in his collection:

A story is told that one time the *vile* cut all the cabbage down in one man's garden, and the owner watching that said, "well, let that cabbage be a blessing unto them!" The second night in his garden ten times as much cabbage as there had been grew for him. Thus they returned, in abundance, that which they had taken. Many nights they rendered help and completed the tasks that the owner did not finish during the day. In the morning he would find, for example on his field, wheat, barley, rye and other grains reaped and bound in sheaves. But *vile* were also known to avenge themselves. They tell a story that the people of Tušini (a little village near the 'Vila chasm') could not stand that the *vile* reap their cabbage by night and take it away, one of them even shot at the *vile* when they came to the garden one night. From that moment on, all of his cabbage wilted and whatever he sowed in that garden afterwards did not take; nothing wanted to grow on that land. (137-8)

Indeed, the *vile* can bestow infertility as easily as fertility. This trope arises in connection to humans (Ivanišević 1905:258-9) as well as to crops, and proves yet another danger of

slighting the *vile*. Peasant tellers even contended that when the *vile* left humanity, diseases such as mildew appeared for the first time to afflict crops (Hovorka 1897-8:4).

### **Cause Illness**

13% Memorates (6 tales) 10% Fabulates (6). Wide distribution. Independent Motif

The *vila*'s ability to take vitality away from plants, animals and humans makes her an unpredictable and dangerous force. Oral narratives have already been presented which illustrate the *vila*'s ability to cast illness upon people who anger and insult her (Ivanišević 1905:258-9; Sajvert-Pokupska 1897-1905:556), but many tales suggest that simply seeing *vile* (Dragičević 1908:450; Lovretić 1902:138) or spending time in their presence causes (often fatal) illness (Ivanišević 1905:256).

One common story-pattern involves protagonists who step into a *vila kolo* in meadows or forests and are struck immediately by debilitating illnesses. The following memorate was told to the collector Josip Tomec of Virje<sup>20</sup> by a fellow villager Šimun Antolak:

I was cutting grass in the meadow when I came upon a *vila kolo*, where the *vile* had danced. There were 12 small rings, this big, like a sieve, and in the shape of one large ring. I wanted to leave that spot un-mowed, but it was a shame to me to leave that grass that was in the middle of those rings. I cut in those rings too. But in a terrible moment some kind of wind blew me and immediately I became completely terrified; a chill caught me, my head hurt and I barely made it home. Six weeks I was laid up in bed, not a single doctor could help me until I gave myself over to some old women and those crones rubbed me with some kind of lard. But they told me that I would never be healthy, and see, look, on my neck. Something is always wet, and there's no way and no way and no way to get better. (Tomec 1898-1903:595)

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<sup>20</sup> On this collector, see Jurić in press.



Memorates and fabulates that depict *vile* causing illness, always include such descriptions of the amount of time for which the unfortunate protagonist of the story fell ill and conclude with any lasting illness that is left over after (if) the individual recovers. These illnesses are often descriptive but lacking any medical clarification and range widely, including blindness (Vrčević 1876:89), Kyphosis (“remained roundbacked ever after”) (Dragičević 1908:450), what reads like a stroke (“his left side was taken from him,” “one side of his entire body, from head to foot, dried up of life”)<sup>21</sup> (Dučić 1931:270; Vrčević 1876:88), and mental disability:

Today there still lives in Split one Stice Idra, who is stupid, and has difficulty pronouncing words including, with most difficulty, those that he has just that moment heard. Many tell there that, when he was still just a child, *vile* took him to Mrjan mountain. They kept him there for a number of years, and they made him how he is today. (Carić 1897:709)

The mental illness that *vile* can inflict also includes their tendency to cause madness in humans who encounter them. This idea is commonly suggested in *vila* descriptions (see Chpt. 1), but also appears in three fabulates from Montenegro and northern Croatia where, again, the affliction is sometimes cast upon individuals (Kukuljević 1851:99), or simply a product of encountering them (Vrčević 1876:89).

This propensity to cause illness is attested widely in supernatural beings similar to the *vila* (Briggs 1976:25-7; Feldhaus 1995; Rothenberg 2004:31; ATU F362). The exact nature of the relationship between figures intrinsically connected to fertility (Barber 1997) and illness merits further comparative work.

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<sup>21</sup> “The word ‘Stroke’ for a sudden paralytic seizure comes directly from fairy belief. It is an abbreviation of ‘fairy stroke’ or ‘elf stroke’... (Briggs 1976:25)

### **Dance *Kolo***

13% Memorata (6 tales) 13% Legend (3) 5% Fabulate (3) 6% Folktale (2). Wide Distribution. Independent & Dependent Motif

As in songs, a number of oral narratives involve *vile* dancing *kolo* (ATU F261). For many oral narratives this functions as an independent motif, most often as simple window-dressing to the tale—the *vile* are encountered dancing *kolo* and then some more important action unfolds. In a small number of cases, the motif arises in its role as a simple episode in a Swan Maiden motif when the *vila* regains her stolen items, dances *kolo* and flies away (Ardalić 1917:302; Vrčević 1876:88). In a number of fabulates and memorates, the motif becomes dependent (Filakovac 1905:145; Lukić 1911-2:6; Zovko 1901:146-7). As an account which carries the weight of veracity, a protagonist coming upon *vile* dancing *kolo* and then fleeing from the scene carries enough suspense to serve as its own tale without the need for additional motifs or episodes appended.

The deployment of this motif in oral narratives is simple enough not to merit much further investigation. Only one fabulate from Samobor in northern Croatia (Lang 1914:137-8) deserves very brief mention. In this tale, *vile* dancing *kolo* are described as being visible to passersby as flashing lights in forests or fields. This depiction seems reminiscent of Will-o'-the-wisps, *ignis fatuus*, and other mythological phosphorescences (Hand 1977; Walhouse 1894; ATU F369.7; F491).<sup>22</sup>

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<sup>22</sup> For a good example of the aid this thesis provides, see Pócs 2018:258 where this example is used to describe Croatian *vile*, and 'Balkan fairies' in general, with no indication that the account is a rarity in the tradition.

### Drive/Ride Man

2% Memorates (1 tale) 2% Fabulates (1). Syrmia. Dependent Motif

Two oral narratives from the traditional region of Syrmia include a motif that is most often associated with witches in European oral narratives.<sup>23</sup> In these tales, *vile* ride human men to exhaustion as though they are horses. A fabulate, most likely from Tolisa in Bosnia, relates how a *vila* rode her *vilenjak* and riled him to the point where he beat his leg against a poplar pillar and broke it; he is left with a limp for the rest of his life (O. Nedić 1898-1902:252). The collector, Ivan Filakovac of Retkovci in Croatia, related a more dramatic and detailed variant of this motif in a memorate.

How the *vile* hurt Joza Sibalić, born in Retkovci and a member of my mother's household, who later died from his wounds. This is how my mother told me the story: I was young, but I remember well that impoverished grandfather of ours, Joza. That year grandpa Joza had been a tenant at the shieling in Nadiševci (Retkovci district near the Retkovci cemetery as one heads to Ivankovo). He was herding cattle not far from the cemetery and when dusk had fallen, Grandpa Joza set off to make his way around, back to the shieling. When he was quite near the cemetery he saw two white women, sitting below a hornbeam tree along the road. As soon as he came up to them they grabbed him and said, "come with us!" He saw now that those weren't women at all but *vile*. "I will not!" said Grandpa Joza. Surprisingly, there appeared there a wagon and in it was a piper, the gypsy Mia from Gradište (a village beside Cerna). The *vile* hitched grandpa to the wagon, sat on it, and whipped and drove him toward Ivankovo. Grandpa Joza had to pull the wagon because the Nogoodniks [*Nedobrice*] whipped him. When they drove past some cross, racing, Grandpa Joza grabbed the cross and prayed, "My sweet Jesus, protect me from these Nogoodniks!" But it didn't help him at all, they whipped him so hard with the crop that he had to continue trotting and with his hand he broke off a chunk of the cross. From Ivankovo the *vile* drove Grandpa Joza to Kovar to a dance, then from there—what else could he?—to

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<sup>23</sup> The motif is found widely, but most often credited to witches, including in the ATU Index (ATU G241.2). This makes sense for the regional context, as many oral traditions from Syrmia tend to blend the figure of *vještice* (witches) and *vile*. See particularly Lovrečić (1902:121-2, 138-9), where the name *vištica* often seems to denote *vile* (they consort with *vilenjaci*, are called *dobrice* [goodniks] and *nedobrice* [nogoodniks], and dance in a *vila kolo*). That collector also alternates between using two dialect variations for the names of witches (*vištice* and *vještice*) and two forms for the male paramours of *vile* (*vilenjak* and *vilovnjak*).

Vrpolje, under an oak by the village, to the baptism of a *vila* child. When that was over, the *vile* drove him back toward Ivankovo, all the while whipping him, so that he didn't trot but flew in front of that wagon. From Ivankovo they headed back to Nadiševci, where the dawn nearly caught them. As soon as the cock crowed, from the highest shieling, [signalling] that the dawn was breaking and the sun rising; all at once the *vile*, the piper and the wagon disappeared, and Grandpa Joza lay half-dead and beaten in front of his cottage where his brother Bartol, my grandfather, found him in that state. They took Grandpa Joza home and I saw him, purple and blue about the body like a plum. As soon as they offered food for him to eat, the *vile* ate that all up on him, neither giving him nor leaving him anything. His brother Bartol would ask him, "Brother, Joza, really, did you see anything?" He would reply, "Yes, I see, brother, here are two *vile*, standing beside me. They've eaten up all my food and given me nothing. They always call me to them, telling me to go with them, but I will not, I will not!" Then he would begin to speak, like that, laying in the bed, "I am not yours! I am my dear Jesus' and Mother Mary's! Here you go, here!" then he would slap himself on his bottom with his hands and give the finger to the *vile*.<sup>24</sup> On the eighth day, that Grandpa Joza of ours died. (1905:145-6)

Not only is this memorate notable for its narrative colour, it is interesting to see the final episode here that is reminiscent of the Greek myth of Phineus and the harpies as presented in Apollonius' Argonautika (II 187-201).

### **Take Person Away**

19% Fabulates (12 tales) 13% Memorates (6) 8% Legend (2) 6% Folktale (2). Wide Distribution. Mostly Dependent Motif

*Vila* abductions are a prevalent motif in oral narratives, with a particularly high occurrence in fabulates and memorates. Where the *vila* of the songs mostly abducts children and raises them to avenge their fathers in battle ('Take Child Away' in Chpt. 2), the *vila* in oral narratives abducts children, women and men, and for various reasons.

Typical accounts of *vila* abductions are usually quite similar: The person often simply

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<sup>24</sup> He actually shows the *vile* multiple *fige* (*pokazivo figu za figom*). To show *fige*, in the region is a vulgar gesture of the hand where one makes a fist and inserts one's thumb between the index and middle finger.

vanishes, or else is carried off by *vile* into the air (usually in pairs, presumably for each arm) (Ivanišević 1905:255-6; Zorić 1897:300-1). In two fabulates from Poljica in Dalmatia, the abductees are carried off by a strong wind or whirlwind that the *vile* control (Ivanišević 1905:255-6).<sup>25</sup> Family, friends or communities will search in vain for the abductee who reappears the following day (256, 259-60), or else months or years later, often found in the same location where they were spirited away. They are always found bewildered, often carrying gifts that the *vile* gave them (259-60), or with the *vila*'s less attractive gifts of illness (256) or physical or mental impairment (Carić 1897:709; Ivanišević 1905:239). Often, the victim is not permitted to tell where and with whom he/she has been (Ivanišević 1905:255-6, 260; see 'Not to Tell'). Those abductees who speak of their abductions often tell of being taken about various mountains and cities or carried over the ocean. Many are brought to fields or mountains to join in celebrations and *kolo* dancing with other *vile* (Ivanišević 1905:256; Lovretić 1902:121), or are taken to the *vile*'s caves (see 'Fancy Home' below).

When brought to caves, they are often treated to endless feasts and good living amongst the *vile*, until they are finally set free or returned home (Dučić 1931:272; Đorđević 1953:94; Ivanišević 1905:239, 261; Zorić 1897:300-1). These bounteous feasts are the most common trope used in tales where children are abducted,<sup>26</sup> although a tale from Grac in Herzegovina suggests that *vile*'s (here golden) food offers no sustenance to

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<sup>25</sup> For the connection of *vile* to whirlwinds see n. 76 in Chpt. 2.

<sup>26</sup> Perhaps the most shocking and enlightening data to come out of Luka Šešo's recent field research in the Dalmatian hinterland is his interview with one Jure Bajo who claimed to have been abducted by *vile* as a child (2016:239-40). The subsequent explanation of the events by his near neighbour Jane (241-2) offer considerable insights into a functionalist understanding of one of the motivations that might prompt such tales, both in the recent and distant past.

those kidnapped, who are later found jaundiced and thin (Đorđević 1953:94). Antun Carić tells that, on the island of Hvar, children were well treated by *vile*, but were abducted to serve them (Carić 1897:708-9). Young boys and men may also be abducted and trained in the *vile*'s arcane knowledge for the purpose of turning them into folk healers (Kukuljević 1851:99; Lovretić 1902:121. cf. Hore and MacRitchie 1895:126 in Irish lore).

Beyond these various examples, however, the primary target of *vila* abductions are attractive young men whom they lure (Ivanišević 1905:261) or force into their caves for sexual purposes (Dragičević 1908:449; Duić n.d.:4-6; Sajvert-Pokupska 1897-1905:556; Vrčević 1876:89). These men are often forced to choose a *vila* from the group to mate and cohabit with, no matter their marital status at home (Duić n.d.:5; Kukuljević 1851:98); they are seldom allowed to leave (Duić n.d.:4-6; Sajvert-Pokupska 1897-1905:556; Vrčević 1876:89). An old woman from Gorski Kotar presented this motif in a highly typical and illustrative fabulate that she told to the collector Adam Duić:

Many, many years ago a man disappeared from the village. The people wondered what happened to him and especially his wife who pined for him and bemoaned the small child he left behind with her.

After a year had passed he stumbled into the house late one night. Of course that was a great wonder. Now he tells them all a tale about how he had gone out far into a black, dense forest. He stumbled upon and fell into an abyss which he couldn't see because it had overgrown with brambles and various grasses. All at once, he found himself in a wonderful room. In the center of the room stood a golden table and around it sat 12 girls of truly angelic beauty. All 12 spun silk on golden distaffs, and in their hands chirped golden spindles. All of that extraordinary shine, all that beauty blinded him so, and he didn't know what to do. All at once he forgot about his wife and child. He stood there like he was spellbound. One *vila* spoke to him in a dear, sweet voice and soon they both fell in love. From then, he lived there with that *vila*, like with his wife. Later he even had a beautiful little son with her. But then one day the memory of his wife and child awoke in him, a memory of the warm sun, flowering fields and meadows of home.

Some kind of nightmare pressed on his heart and an unspeakable pain overcame his body and soul. And once, when the *vile* left somewhere and he was completely alone by himself, he ran away. That same man, so it is told, was only two days at home, but then already on the third night he disappeared. I guess his *vila* took him back to her *vila* manor. (n.d.:4-6)

Kukuljević Sakcinski relates a similar tale (1851:98-99), but here the man is allowed to go home with the warning that he must return at least once every eight years to please his *vila*-wife. He betrays this order and spends the rest of his life avoiding, but constantly compelled toward, the cave the *vile* inhabit.

Finally, in a folktale collected from Petar Vujučić from Majske Poljane in Croatia, the babies of a czar and czarica are stolen by *vile* immediately after their birth and taken away (Čajkanović 1927:208-11). It is left to the protagonist of the story, a man transformed into a dog by his cruel wife, to track down the *vile* and retrieve the latest abductee from their clutches. When he finds the baby, the *vile* are bathing it in a river, but no motive is ever presented for the *vile*'s actions.<sup>27</sup>

### **Fall in Love with Character**

6% Fabulates (4 tales) 4% Memorates (2) 4% Legends (1) 3% Folktales (1). Wide Distribution. Independent Motif

While *vile* very often kidnap the men they like against their will, the *vile*'s romantic connections in oral narratives are not always predatory molestations. A number of oral narratives include true romantic unions between human men and *vile*, and even *vile* who pine with unreciprocated love for men. This motif is variously employed in conjunction with a number of others in different generic forms.

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<sup>27</sup> Readers may notice a trend that surfaces in the background of various genres and motifs of *vile* baptizing or bathing babies. This trope could use further explication.

For fabulates and memorates the motif is often in the service of a ‘Beat/Kill in Retribution’ motif. Such tales open with a young herder whom a *vila* grows fond of and aides with a ‘Help with Tasks or Chores’ motif (see below), or simply begin with a statement that the protagonist had a *vila* lover. When this man/lad betrays the *vila* or tells others about her aid, he is beaten or killed by her or by other *vile* (Dučić 1931:272; Ivanišević 1905:258). In other tales, the *vila* will help a young lad and seemingly groom him until he becomes sexually mature and the two can be married (Novljan 2014:439-42; Zorić 1896:230-1). For one legend, this union leads happily into a ‘Sire a Great Lineage’ motif (Zorić 1896:230-1), while others draw the plot into the ‘Golden Rasudenac’ motif of the folktale (Čajkanović 1927:148-54; Mikuličić 1876:97-107; Novljan 2014:439-42) where the *vila* places a stipulation on their union, that the husband may never call her a *vila*.<sup>28</sup> The Singer Josip Stepančić of Belaj in Istria finishes his folktale in this manner, while another, unnamed Istrian fabulator reined the story back into a fabulate’s form by adopting the ending from a ‘Swan Maiden’ motif and having the incensed *vila* leave her husband, returning secretly to feed her children (Ptašinski 1890-9:210).

Two variants of this motif are notably unique. Ivan Kukuljević Sakcinski presented a fabulate from Slavonia where a *vila* becomes so fond of a cowherd that she follows him home and shadows his every movement. She even stands watch over his head at night while he sleeps, guarding him. The protagonist’s feelings are not presented, but his housemates become concerned and distraught enough with her presence that they

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<sup>28</sup> This is a common folklore motif ATU C31. There is a close parallel to this in the Caucasus in the character Lady Isp (Colarusso 2002:139-43).



run her out of the house with the aid of a priest (1851:101). Finally, Tomo Dragičević recounted a fabulate from Žepče, in Bosnia where *vile* conduct predatory group kidnappings of unsuspecting men, but where one of their rank falls in love with a certain victim. When he is returned to his normal life she continues to pine over him, watch him, and sing mournful songs about her love for him (1908:449).

**Fancy Home (*Vila Manor*)**

11% Fabulates (7 tales) 7% Memorates (3). Wide Distribution. Independent Motif

Fabulates and memorates which recount humans abducted by *vile* or invited into their homes, regularly include grandiose descriptions about the *vile*'s living conditions. Although one fabulate collected in the village of Hrnetić, in the Kordun region, includes *vile* who live in an underwater city (Sajvert-Pokupska 1897-1905:556), standard tales involve *vile* who live in caves. Accounts of visits to *vila* cave-homes seem perforce to require a description of their elaborate, ornate and gold-leafed chambers (Ivanišević 1905:261-2), which are invisible from the outside. The *vile* eat at tables made of gold (Duić n.d.:5; Ivanišević 1905:259-60) or marble (Vrčević 1876:89), rock their children in golden cradles, eat golden food (Đorđević 1953:94) and spin yarn on golden spindles and distaffs (Duić n.d.:5). It is notable that these glorious caves are regularly referred to by tale tellers as '*vila manors*' (*vilenski dvorovi*) (Duić n.d.:6; Kukuljević 1851:99), which most likely explains what is meant by this phrase when it is used in songs without any clarification or solid description (Ilić 1878a.1; Vijolić 1887a.47).

### **Give Wealth**

11% Fabulates (7 tales) 9% Folktales (3) 4% Memorates (2). Throughout the Dalmatian Coast and in Montenegro. Independent Motif

*Vile* are prone to rewarding the humans they interact with by bestowing upon them great treasure and wealth. This most often arises in a solidified and dependent ‘Secret Gold’ motif (see below), but is also deployed independently as bags of gold given to humans (Bartulin 1898:269-70) or in simple statements of wealth, treasure or gold given to people (Vuk Prip:223; Carić 1897:709; Dučić 1931:271-2). One unique fabulate, from Lobar in northern Croatia (Kotarski 1918:51), includes an odd detail that is reminiscent of tales more often found in north-western Europe. In this tale, *vile* grow fond of a herder’s pig and offer to buy it from him. Rather than simply give the herder money or gold, they instruct him where he might find a cauldron full of gold buried underneath a walnut tree.

Alternately, some oral narratives seem to give the impression that *vile* horde and protect their gold in a manner akin to Western European depictions of dragons and harm those who try to take it from them (Ivanišević 1905:257-8; Vrčević 1876:89). Even when treasure is freely given, as with the ‘Cause Bounty’ motif, it usually carries with it a moral obligation of good faith. Such obligations are benign in the ‘Secret Gold’ motif, but see a deadlier iteration in other oral narratives, such as the following from the island of Cres, that remind listeners that *vile* are often naïve in nature, but not to be crossed:

So it was once, when there was a great famine there [Cres island], a young lad went off for oak galls which he could later sell (for use for ink) and make some money from. The whole day, until night, he walked about, but he couldn’t find any anywhere. Completely distraught, he sat below an oak and began to cry. Suddenly, an extremely beautiful *vila* appeared to him, she drew near him and asked, “What’s the matter? Why are you crying?” “How can I

not cry? There's a big famine, I ain't got nothing, there's no jobs, so I set off hoping to find an oak gall, sell it and get a little money. The whole day I've been searching, and I still haven't found a single one. I left hungry and I will return hungry, and who knows what will become of me. I'll surely die of hunger. That's why I'm crying!" "God bless you, don't cry. If you walk a little with me, you will see that you'll find an oak gall." The youth followed her keeping quiet the whole time. They came to a pool. The pool was thickly surrounded with oaks and they were all full of galls. "You see," said the *vila*, "here are many galls, as many as you please, but don't pick them tonight, go home and come back in the morning. "Sure," he said to her, "but I might die of hunger before morning, it's already been many days since I've eaten anything." "Don't worry about that. You'll set off happily home, and I'll give you what you lack to tide you over until morning. Just wait a little for me, I'm going to go get it." She left and quickly returned carrying three bags and says to him, "see, here's three bags: In this first one are some oak galls, that you can sell, in this second one is food to tide you over until the morning, and in the third is gold, as much as you please. See, you won't die. Take this and go home, but you may not tell anyone who has given this to you, if you do, woe unto you. But tomorrow come and pick oak galls." Thus he went home happily after promising the *vila* that he wouldn't tell a soul. When he got home, he thought to himself, "My God, I'm rich, I don't even need to go for oak galls, I'll just stay home and live well, since the *vila* gave me all that I could need." Thus he stayed home. Before he was poor and wore whatever he could, now he was rich, he could dress more nicely. So he dressed well and lived in peace. But people began to wonder how he got rich and began to ask him. He didn't want to tell, but people tempted him today, tempted him tomorrow, they egged him on until he told them. From that day on he began to get poorer and poorer, until he became what he had once been. Now it made sense to go pick oak galls. He went out for them but when he came to the pool he didn't find a single gall. He began to cry. The *vila* heard him and came to him and said, "Oh, so you came after all, did you? Wait, I'll teach you some respect, then you'll keep your word next time. You told everyone that I helped you, well so be it! Now instead of oak galls I'll give you this!" When she said 'this' she took a small log and hits him with it until he bleeds all over and his leg is broken. "You carry *that* home now!" she said to him, then left. That's how it happened to him, since he betrayed her, if he hadn't she would have always helped him but, like this, nothing. (Bartulin 1898:269-70)

### **Secret Gold**

6% Fabulates (4 tales) 4% Memorates (2) Central Dalmatia, Split to Hvar. Dependent Motif

A lovely motif, ‘Secret Gold,’ shows up in memorates and fabulates from central Dalmatia, and involves a simple story-pattern concerning gifts from *vile*. In these oral narratives, humans will come into contact with *vile* in positive interactions and will be graced with a mysterious gift. On the mainland these are wrapped in a kerchief (Ivanišević 1905:239, 259, 261), or secreted into the protagonist’s bag (Banović 1918:196-7), while tales from Hvar have the *vile* openly giving the character a bag (Carić 1897:708). *Vile* will warn protagonists not to look at the gift until they return home. The characters set off on their way but, half-way home, curiosity overwhelms them and they peek at their gift. The protagonists are alarmed to find that the *vile*’s gift is a mass of leaves (Banović 1918:196-7), corn husks (Banović 1918:196-7; Ivanišević 1905:259-60), birds feathers (Carić 1897:708), or coal (Ivanišević 1905:239, 261). Perplexed by this and perturbed at having carried this weight in vain (particularly the coal) they dump the contents out on their path and continue home. Upon arrival they find that one husk, feather, leaf or lump of coal has been caught in a fold of their clothing, bag, or shoe and that it has miraculously transformed into a gold sequin. The characters race back to where they emptied the others out, but always find that their fortunes have disappeared. A beautiful fabulate from Poljica illustrates the motif in a charming manner:

Some woman was walking along the water when she came upon a toad on the path. She turned it around with her foot and as a joke said, “There, *kuma* [goddaughter]! Off the path!” That same night someone called her in front of the house, “*kuma, kuma* [reciprocally, godmother], get up, I need you for something!” The woman got up, and there in front of the house was a beautifully-dressed girl. She said to that woman, “Come on, follow me.” The

woman didn't really question it, she just followed her, my God, as though she'd been with her a hundred times before. They had gone a little distance from the house when they came upon a road which they took to a large cliff which is called 'Orje'. Here some sort of door in the rock opened on its own and they entered inside. Dear and merciful God, what beauty! Large golden rooms decorated with all sorts of ornaments, nothing less than in heaven (God forgive me!). In those rooms there were a number of maidens, all like that one [girl] who came with her. My God, real girls with human bodies, just that each and every one had mule's legs to her knees. That girl said to the woman "you're my *kuma*. You know last night, when you walked by the water, what you said." Then the woman remembered the toad and what she had said, "go there, *kuma*." "I'm a *vila*," she said, "and these are my friends. I brought you here to treat you and give you gifts like my *kuma*." Then they brought breads of every colour, and all sorts of other food before her. Well that woman asked her *kuma*, "But my *kuma*, what kind of bread is this and food of all sorts of colours?" The *vila* told her, "These breads, wine and everything that you see, that came to us through denials [*nika*]. When a man is asked for something but denies having it, let's say grain or greens, when it's green it all comes to us, therefore the bread is green,<sup>29</sup> and so it is with all other things." The woman stayed with them for a long spell and chatted. When she was ready to depart from them, that *kuma* of hers left and brought out a gift wrapped up in a kerchief. She said to her, "Here, bring this with you, but don't look at it until you get home, then when you get home, sprinkle it with water." The woman took the gift in her apron, got up and headed home. Her *kuma* saw her out and they said goodbye. She carried that kerchief in her apron, all the while fondling it and wondering to herself, "My God, what might that be?" She opens it, and what is it? Coal. She dumped it all out from the kerchief and her apron and went home. One little chunk of coal somehow got caught in the creases of her apron and she spotted it when she got home. She took holy water and poured some on it. The coal turned into a golden sequin. As quickly as possible she leapt to go and sprinkle the other coal. She raced back to the spot on the path where she dumped them, but damned if she found even one little scrap or piece. That *vila*, her *kuma*, came and collected them all before she returned. (Ivanišević 1905:261-2)

From the island of Hvar, Antun Carić relates a fabulate where the curious protagonist empties his bag of feathers only to have them transform into poisonous serpents (1897:708). It is only by the grace of one of the *vile* that the character is saved.

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<sup>29</sup> The teller here seems to be attempting to construct a logical explanation for two traditional elements—that *vile* eat denials and that their food is green.

She then commands him to gather the feathers and follow their instructions properly. This is the only protagonist of this motif who is allowed to keep his gold.

### **Hurl Insults**

3% Fabulates (2 tales). Dalmatia and Bosnia. Independent Motif

Two fabulates include *vile* who hurl insults at humans, the first in a humorous exchange (Ardalić 1917:303), the second more malicious (Žuljić 1904-11:557). The two collection sites are at a fair distance from one another, do not represent zones of common continuum, and the examples are not related in form, such that more data is required to understand the motif fully, if it represents one at all.

### **Leave *Kolo* Ring**

7% Memorates (3 tales) 3% Fabulates (2). Wide Distribution. Independent Motif.

Given the important role of the *vile*'s *kolo* dancing in oral narratives, it is no wonder that many fabulates and memorates deal with the trampled circles they leave behind. Many of these have already been discussed above in the 'Cause Illness' motif, where stepping into a *vila kolo* ring causes a person to take deathly ill (Dučić 1931:270; Tomec 1898-1902:595; Vrčević 1876:88-9). Others have been explored in the 'Simple Encounter' and 'Dance *Kolo*' motifs where humans will come upon *vile* dancing by night and flee from them, but return the next day to find the trampled imprint that verifies the event's occurrence (Filakovac 1905:145; Lukić 1911-2:5).

Most of these accounts give some description of the rings, including their approximate diameter (Two fathoms round in Slavonia [Lukić 1911-2:5b], or 20 ells in diameter in Montenegro [Dučić 1931:270; Vrčević 1876:88-9]) and other descriptive elements. For most tales, the *kolo* ring is signified only by trampled grass, although other

markers are mentioned in various accounts. The *vila*'s *kolo* is variously said to be recognizable by dry grass (Đorđević 1953:113), mushrooms that grow in the ring (Kukuljević 1851:100), the area remaining ever-green despite droughts (Dučić 1931:270; Vrčević 1876:88-9), spittle or phlegm left on the grass around the ring by *vile* (Filakovac 1905:145), a spring found in its centre (Dučić 1931:270), or by a raised knoll in its centre where their piper sits (Đorđević 1953:114). Some also describe the ring as a spoked wheel (Filakovac 1905:145) or as a series of smaller circles united into one large ring (Tomec 1898-1902:595). Oddly, in the oral narratives, the rings left by *vile* in fields and forests are almost always referred to as a *kolo* (wheel, thus describing its shape and connecting it to the *kolo* dance that creates it), while in songs it is much more commonly referred to as an *igralište* (playground).

### **Left Us**

3% Fabulates (2 tales) 2% Memorates (1). Wide Distribution. Dependent Motif

Three oral narratives from Samobor in Northern Croatia and Duvno in Tropolje further elaborate the idea presented more widely in informant descriptions about the *vile* leaving humanity. Given the number of instances in which this motif was mentioned in descriptive accounts, it is surprising to see how few oral narratives employ it. As always, this might be a simple case of deposition, although it may also be that the idea was less often narrated and only anecdotal. From Samobor, collector Milan Lang recounts two oral narratives about the departure of the *vile*. The first regards a clan of *vile* who lived in a cave near the neighbouring village of Tušin (Lang 1914:137). When drunken men from

the village dared to fire weapons at the *vile*'s male leader<sup>30</sup> and killed him, the *vile* left in outrage. A crucifix left in their cave and found by locals stood as proof of their habitation. A second fabulate focuses with more detail on the historical relationship between humans and *vile*, relating how humans began to play instruments that *vile* are not fond of and began to offend the *vile* often enough that they left the caves of Samobor and took their luck with them (Lang 1914:137-8; cf. Briggs 1976:94-6).

The theme of human indecency driving the *vile* away returns in one of Stojan Rubić's narratives about the *vile*'s departure:

One old-timer who's 90-years-old told me the tale that in our region the most *vile* were on Zavelim mountain (on the border of Herzegovina and Dalmatia). He says that *vile* disappeared from there because a couple of men from Roško Polje sacked a church in Dalmatia, and both were Christians, but *hajduks* [bandits]. They overnighted in Zavelim and began to divide the loot in the night. One of them was rapacious and killed that other one. From then on the *vile* vanished from Zavelim. (1899:1)

### **Milk Chamois**

2% Memorates (1 tale) 2% Fabulates (1). Montenegro. Dependent Motif

Two multiforms of a single oral narrative are presented in collections by Stevan Dučić (1931:273) and Vuk Vrčević (1876:89). In these tales, a man is hunting in mountains when he hears a *vila* call from a cave to a shepherd herding chamois in the mountains. The *vila* calls the shepherd to bring the animals to her so that she might milk them, but the shepherd replies that he dares not for fear that the hunter will kill him or his

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<sup>30</sup> This is another tale presenting the oral narrative's higher propensity for including male *vile*. Their leader here is called a *vilovnak*, one of the many forms that is usually used for human men who fraternize with *vile*, but here, seemingly a more supernatural being. Lang writes that these *vilovnaci* are also known as *kosmati čovek* (hairy man) (1914:137).



animals. While the multiform in Dučić ends on this queer scene, the version in Vrčević has the *vila* curse the hunter's eyes to explode, which they do upon his arrival home.

**Perform Domestic Tasks**

11% Memorates (5 tales) 8% Fabulates (5) 4% Legends (1) Wide Distribution.  
Independent Motif

There is a marked domesticity to the depiction of *vile* in oral narratives. Many of the less crucial aspects of their representation in tales contribute to a depiction of their world as mirroring human society in simple and benign ways. Many oral narratives include descriptions of *vile* engaged in domestic tasks that contribute little or nothing to the plots of the tales, often only setting the scene. This motif also serves to link *vile* to their most common habitats through domestic praxis, turning their caves, rivers and pools into village-sites of their secret *vila*-world.

There are tales where *vile* spin silk or wool in their caves (Duić n.d.:5; Ivanišević 1905:259-60;), gather wheat and dehull grain in nearby fields (Dragičević 1908:451; Kukuljević 1851:98-9), wash and beat their laundry at pools and rivers (Ivanišević 1905:239; Ptašinski 1890-9:210), bleach or dry their linens in forest trees (Ivanišević 1905:260) or at their cave entrances (Vrčević 1876:88); or bake bread and brew coffee in their caves (Ivanišević 1905: 258, 261; see ATU F271.10). These depictions are often presented in passing and very seldom figure into tales as key plot points (Dragičević 1908:451 and Kukuljević 1851:98-9 are clear exceptions). Most often, the *vile* are performing these tasks when humans come upon them. This motif, however, seems to contribute to and draw from an understanding of *vile* as living similar lives to humans in their magical realms, only set apart from and parallel to the world of humans. This

conception makes those liminal areas where the world of the *vile* overlaps with the world of humans all the more enticing, but also frightening, forcing one to ponder what lies in their depths.

Mate Proso from Gata also told me that at Prosik above Zakučac in the morning you can smell the scent of coffee, and in the afternoon the aroma of hot bread, as though you just took it out of the oven. That's at the hour when *vile* drink coffee and eat bread. "But Mate, did you ever really smell that?" I asked him. "By the sign of God, the holy cross," he says to me, crossing himself, "I did a hundred times pass by there at that time and smelled the beautiful aroma of bread and the scent of coffee so that I would stop to savour the joy and sweetness of that spot." (Ivanišević 1905:258 n.1)

### **Reveal 77 Springs**

3% Fabulates (2 tales) 3% Folktales (1) Montenegro and Bosnia. Dependent Motif

Two fabulates from Montenegro and central Bosnia, as well as a folktale from Montenegro represent multiforms of a single motif regarding the secret knowledge of *vile* (ATU 500). Filip Trivić of Ljeskovica, Bosnia, told the simplest form of this tale to Tomo Dragičević (1908:450). In his multiform, two brothers dare to spend the night in a dangerous mill and fall asleep beside each other with one's legs crossed over the other's and their bodies covered with a blanket. In the dead of the night two *vile* enter the mill and take the brothers to be a single creature with two heads. Astounded at the sight, one of them exclaims, "...by my 77 Bosnian springs I've never seen a single torso with two heads!" This multiform, however, is truncated; one requires knowledge of other versions to fully understand the motif.

A multiform from Montenegro presented by Vuk Vrčević (1876:89) has two men make a bet that they will learn how many springs exist on Sutroman Mountain. They know the *vile* to be privy to this knowledge and so intentionally dress together in clothing

that makes them appear to be a two-headed man and set-off to a known *vila*-spring. They find two *vile* there who puzzle over them. One exclaims, “By the 377 springs that are in Sutroman, such a man with two heads I have never seen before!” Vrčević collected another version in folktale form years earlier in the Bay of Kotor and sent it to Vuk Stefanović Karadžić for inclusion in his collection (Vuk Prip:101-3). In this tale, a man unearths a treasure chest guarded by a dragon, and can only gain access by learning the number of springs in a mountain. After unsuccessfully trying to count them, the man rests under a tall fir tree where he overhears a *vila* and *vilenik* squabbling with each other on the tree’s top. The *vilenik* demands some knowledge from the *vila* who swears by the 77 springs in the mountain that she does not know. With this secret knowledge, the man heads off to claim his treasure.

### **Sing**

15% Memorates (7 tales) 5% Fabulates (3) Wide Distribution. Independent Motif

The singing of *vile* is given more importance in oral narratives than in songs. While only a simple compliment to their *kolo* dances in songs, or else alluded to as background for the ‘Punish Singing’ motif, in fabulates and memorates, singing becomes a crucial aspect of encounters with *vile*. Humans who stumble upon *vile* are often drawn into these encounters by their singing (Carić 1897:708; Ivanišević 1905:257, 260; Lukić 1911-2:6; Zovko 1901:146-7), or else frightened away by their singing (Rubić 1899:3). Oral narratives from Ljubuški in Bosnia (Zovko 1901:146-7) and Poljica in Dalmatia (Ivanišević 1905:257, 260) also present the unique idea that the *vila*’s singing sounds like the angry buzzing of swarming bees.

### **Swan Maiden**

5% Fabulates (3 tales) 8% Legends (2) 3% Folktales (1) Wide Distribution. Dependent Motif

The ‘Swan Maiden’ motif in oral narratives follows the same plot and episodes as in the songs (see Chpt. 2), but is often much briefer in telling and carries into other oral narrative motifs not found in the songs. As expected from their content, the use of this motif in legends most closely mirrors the use in narrative songs, and indeed, it is only in these that the *vila* is said to have wings or a winged dress (Dučić 1931:273; Vrčević 1876:88). In all other oral narratives, it is only clothing or crowns that are taken from the *vila* to gain control over her reproductive power. While the *vila* is most often found bathing when her clothing is stolen, some oral narratives have her washing her laundry (Ptašinski 1890-9:210) or sleeping on a karst (Ardalić 1917:302). For those multiforms where the motif concludes normally, the celebration at which the *vila* flees is consistently her son’s wedding, and without exception, the *vila* divides her children with her husband (Ardalić 1917:302; Dučić 1931:273; Vrčević 1876:88). Some tales, however, do not conclude with any of the common song episodes but bring the motif into a form more suitable to oral narratives. Thus, a multiform from Kuči in Montenegro simply has the *vila* take her clothing back from her hunter husband and flee into the mountains where she later kills him with her arrows (Vrčević 1876:88). Other multiforms conclude the motif with a partial or complete ‘Golden Rasudenac’ motif (below), having the *vila* and her husband’s union spoiled by a proscription by the *vila* and the husband’s careless words (Čajkanović 1927:148-54; Ptašinski 1890-9:210).

## Take Horses

11% Memorates (5 tales) 6% Fabulates (2) Wide Distribution.

A large number of informant descriptions outline the *vile*'s propensity for riding people's horses at night, a motif that is well attested in memorates and fabulates (ATU F366.2). There are three major variants of this motif that occur. There are tales of *vile* who actively steal horses from their owners, hostlers or other handlers while they are being pastured (Kamenar 2013:330; Rubić 1899:2; Sajvert-Pokupska 1897-1905:555); stories of horses put to pasture that disappear and are found later at a fair distance from their pasture, or in impossible locations in mountain peaks (Ivanišević 1905:258, 262; Rubić 1899:2-3); or tales of horses found in their stables in the early morning soaked in sweat and with braided manes<sup>31</sup> (Dragičević 1908:449; Lukić 1911-2:9). For those oral narratives that do not include sightings of *vile*, it is left to markings and signs, often interpreted by a friend or family member, to determine that the *vile* have been taking the horses. A horse that is wet with sweat in the morning, "like [it] had bathed" (Lukić 1911-2:9), that has its mane braided in beautiful tight braids, or is found in odd places (Ivanišević 1905:262; Rubić 1899:2-3) has usually been taken by the *vile*. If the horse's owner tries to unbraid and comb-out the horse's mane, it will be braided again the following morning (Sajvert-Pokupska 1897-1905:555). If the owner tries to stop the *vile*

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<sup>31</sup> Compare this concept with the English 'Elflock' or 'Fairy-lock' which is used to denote a matted braid in a horse's mane or a human's hair (also the disease *plica polonica*). Accounts from Western Europe seem to depict natural dreadlocks and were seen as ill-omens or signs of slovenliness. See for examples Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet* "This is that very Mab / That plats the manes of horses in the night / And bakes the elf-locks in foul sluttish hairs" (i. 4.88-90) and King Lear "Blanket my loins, elf all my hair in knots" (ii. 3.10), or Thomas Lodge's "his haire is curld, and full of elues-locks, and nitty for want of kembering" (1596:62). In contrast, the braids that *vile* leave seem to denote actual braids, are often described as beautiful (Dragičević 1908:449) and sometimes include lovely yarn plaited into the weaves (Lukić 1911-2:9). Both are said to return despite the efforts of a brush. I have found no instances of humans having their hair braided by *vile*. See also Butler's surprisingly similar accounts of the *Lutin* in Canada (1991:9).

from taking his horse they will beat him horribly, or find the horse wherever he has hidden it (Lukić 1911-2:9). Thus, a *vila* riding one's horse is treated as a minor nuisance that must be tolerated. Most tales suggest that this vigorous riding does no harm to the horses (9); they are still able to work by day, and, in fact, become more beautiful and healthy. Others suggest that such horses become ornery and difficult to manage (Kamenar 2013:330; Rubić 1899:2)—as one old timer in the village of Lug explained to his friend, “as though they’ve become *vila-y*” (*k’o da su povilenila*) (Rubić 1899:2).

All of these oral narratives follow one of these three major story-patterns and include at least some of the major points mentioned but adapted to a unique personal narrative. Notable exceptions to these standard narratives are: Mato Perin of Vrhovac's memorate where his horse, once ridden by *vile*, throws riders when it passes churches and chapels (Kamenar 2013:330); a fabulate from Poljica that offers apotropaics to keep *vile* off of horses (Ivanišević 1905:258); and a memorate from one Mržljak (a surname) of Hrnetić who was physically pulled off his horse by a *vila* before she stole it (Sajvert-Pokupska 1897-1905:555).

### **Take Women's Clothes**

6% Fabulates (2 tales) Bosnia. Dependent Motif

Informant descriptions from Bosnia and Herzegovina suggesting that *vile* steal women's clothing by night (see Chpt. 1) are drawn from a local oral narrative tradition that is attested by two fabulates in this study's sample collected in neighbouring Zenica and Vareš in central Bosnia.<sup>32</sup> In the first multiform, collected by Mijo Žuljić in Vareš

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<sup>32</sup> It is notable that Đorđević was only aware of one of these fabulates. He suggested that the *vile* in the tale were not actually *vile* since they dance *kolo* beside a mill (1953:114). This is one of many confusing claims

between 1904 and 1911, a man overnights in a locked mill when two women appear inside the mill and begin to insult and tease him (1904-11:557-8). He knows them for *vile*, since no human could have entered the locked mill, and so takes a firebrand and begins to beat the one closest to him. The *vile* flee his dangerous assault, while the one he struck complains that he is not only hurting her but burning the *entari* (Ottoman long-coat) of the wife of a local Turk. In the morning the man sends his wife to visit the Turk's wife to ask to see her garment. She draws it out of a chest and finds that it is scorched and burnt in one area—proof that the *vile* had taken her clothing while she slept.

The second multiform was collected by one Old Woman Todorica in Zenica a decade earlier (Čajkanović 1927:410-1). Here, the setting of a mill at night, the Turkish *entari*, and the episode of the revelation in the morning are retained, but the teller brings the rest of the story into very different and entertaining directions:

There was a miller and he had a mill beside some forest. One evening he brings grain in and pours it out to grind it. When it was some time at night, the miller heard some song and became frightened. He peeked out through the handrail on the balustrade [he is above the mill's main floor, surely on a catwalk]. He sees *vile* dancing *kolo* and singing. On one of the *vile* he recognizes his wife's golden *entari*. Once the *vile* had danced and sung a bit, the elder of the *vile* speaks to them, "Go now, each whom God did not mention [?], and bring butterfat, honey and grist."<sup>33</sup> The *vile* set off quickly and brought [those things]. They started a fire and cooked halva. They ate the halva, but could not eat it all. Then the old *vila* spoke, "That which has remained, we shall leave for that miller." Hearing this, the miller ran out of the mill and into the field to the *vile*, they flee and the miller grabs a chunk of

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found in Đorđević's work that are easily alleviated with a more thorough study. His assertion seems quite odd in the first place—songs are full of *vile* dancing in any number of places, and I have seen no multiforms of this tale with other beings employed in the *vila*'s role—but multiformity secures the tale as a true tradition for the *vila*, if only localized to Bosnia.

<sup>33</sup> While this list might indeed be a delicious recipe for halva (presumably the grist is sesame seeds), it notably includes some items that are often cited as food for *vile* (lard and honey). The choice also relies on the fact that, in BCMS languages, these ingredients all alliterate with the letter 'm'—*maslo* (butterfat), *med* (honey) and *mlivo* (grist).

halva and throws it at the *vila* wearing his wife's *entari*. That *vila* says to him, "Give thanks to God, miller, that the rooster crowed, otherwise I would ensure that you well remember at whom you threw halva." The miller returned to the mill, gathered his grist and quickly headed home. When he got there, he asked his wife, "Where is your *entari*?" "What is wrong, good man? My *entari* is in my chest." "Give it to me, woman, that I might see it." The wife opened the chest and gave him the *entari*. He looks it over and sees a stain from the halva, "Last night your *entari* was on a *vila*." (410-1)

### **Tangled Hair**

6% Fabulates (2 tales) 2% Memorates (1) 4% Legend (1) Dalmatia and Herzegovina.  
Dependent Motif

After the 'Shade and Suckle' motif, 'Tangled Hair' is the most common stock motif in which human helpers gain powers and attributes from the *vile*. Here a human stumbles upon a *vila* who has her exceptionally long hair tangled in a briar. She begs the human to disentangle her, but warns, pleads, or threatens that he/she not break a single strand. When the person succeeds, she awards them with various gifts, most often super-human strength (Ardalić 1917:304-5; Đorđević 1953:102). This gift may also lead the story into another motif, such as a fabulate from Bukovica in Dalmatia, where the *vila* gives her saviour a magic thaler (see 'Give Equipment or Magic Items'), or a memorate from the village of Vrtiješ near Mostar where the *vila*'s aid leads to a 'Help with Tasks/Chores' motif (Đikić 1899:71).

In a fabulate from the Pelješac peninsula in Dalmatia, a youth walking in the mountains stumbles upon *vile* dancing *kolo* who are startled and flee (Hovorka 1897-8:3). It is in this pandemonium that the *vila* tangles her hair in the branch of a pine tree. When asked what reward he wishes for freeing her, the youth innocently tells her that he is thirsty and would like a drink of water. She, in turn, grants him the odd power of being able to find a meadow whenever he wishes (presumably because all meadows have fresh



water flowing through them). A legend from the area around Dubrovnik places Marko Kraljević in this role and has the *vila* give him his incredible strength and transform his nag into his heroic horse Šarac as his reward (Đorđević 1953:102). Here the *vila* warns Marko that if he should break even one of her hairs he shall be a coward for life.

### **Throw Stones and Sand**

7% Memorates (3 tales) Central Dalmatia. Dependent Motif

Three memorates from Poljica and Zaoštrog in central Dalmatia relate how *vile* are known to throw rocks and sand at people from cliffs above them. Mare ‘the Vlach’ of Zaoštrog told the collector Stipan Banović about her love of climbing high cliffs and how two *vile* once exited their cave, high in the cliffs, to throw sand at her (Banović 1918:195). The same motive-less attack was experienced by Ive Čogić of the same village (195). She suggests that *vile* regularly cast sand down at women from high cliffs, though (seemingly) she never climbed high enough into the cliffs to actually see the *vile*. Both women fared better than their male counterparts who were attacked with rocks hurled at them by invisible assailants. Though the attack on Čogić’s brother Jozo is also described as unmotivated (195), Bulić Stipan of Dubrava is said to have been attacked with reason. He claimed to have been struck with rocks by *vile* when he unknowingly took one of their gold bars which he found on the ground whilst grazing his sheep (Ivanišević 1905:257-8). Once he removed the bar from his bag and returned it to the ground, the assault concluded.

### **Fraternize with Priests**

2% Memorates (1 tale) 2% Fabulates (1) Poljica in Dalmatia. Independent Motif

Among the many oral narratives about *vile* that the collector Frano Ivanišević of Poljica submitted to the editors of the *Zbornik*, two include priests fraternizing with *vile*. The South Slavs are certainly no strangers to oral traditions that ridicule or lambast the priestly class. However, given that Ivanišević was a Parson (*župnik*), it is notable that his are the only oral narratives about *vile* to employ this motif. Since Ivanišević never revealed the tellers from whom he collected this material, it is difficult to judge just how they came into his possession. One might expect a clergyman to be insulted by tales that suggest that priests associate with pagan, demonic creatures and that tellers would be cautious not to tell them in the presence of a man of God. If he collected these from local tellers, then he must have been known to be of good spirits about such tales, possibly even seeking them out.<sup>34</sup> Another intriguing possibility is that Ivanišević told these tales from his own memory. It can only rest on conjecture, but it is possible that these oral narratives provide a window into tales that were told amongst rural clergymen at the time.

The first tale Ivanišević presents is the more innocuous of the two (1905:239-40). In it a young deacon, Matij Kadić, regularly attempts to finish his priest's training, but is constantly distracted by *vile* who have taken a liking to him and regularly take him away from his home and studies by means of a range of common oral narrative motifs. Though he finally becomes a priest through a fantastic seven-year vigil of prayer and penitence in a cemetery, he is forever known amongst his peers as a *vilenjak*.

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<sup>34</sup> Ivanišević did employ two assistants in his collecting, Jozo and Pere Simunić (1803:184). It is possible that one of them collected these tales.

The second tale presents more sinister implications about men of the cloth:

Some priest named Barnaba was known and esteemed for his prayers. He prayed to God for the sick, against spells and coercion, and removed charms. Some little girl from Žrnovnica was pasturing sheep, then something happened to her; something raised her into the air and carried her far away. The next day she was returned to the same place whence she was taken. She didn't want to tell anyone at home where she'd been. But after that she took ill. Her father sent a lad to the priest Barnaba with some of the daughter's clothes, so that he might pray to God over them. After a few days, my God, the girl recovered. When it was autumn, the father of that girl wanted to show his love and gratitude. He picked *rumanija* grapes [a variety of white grape]: In his manor, he poured out new wine from his best batch and carried it to the priest as a gift for praying to God for his daughter and healing her. The little girl went with her father. They arrived in the evening and told him why they came. He received them happily and when it was after dinner, the little girl left with her father to go sleep. She says to her father, "My God, Papa, and that priest was there where they took me away to." "What. Come now! What do you know!" the father says to her. "He was, I swear by my soul, there were a bunch of priests and deacons in the room where those two girls took me and I remember that priest's face in my mind like I know yours. He was wearing the same hat and dark pants that he was wearing this evening." (256)

### Irregular Motifs

#### **Live Among Us**

Lovretić 1902:122. N/T. Unnamed teller from Otok, Croatia

This is another of Josip Lovretić's tales where the name *vištica* (witch) seems sometimes substituted in place of *vila* (see n. 23 of this chapter). Here *vilovnjaci* (male consorts of *vile*) and *vištice* are said to live among humans, disguised as them and undetectable without magical aid.

#### **Kill with Magic Belt**

Zorić 1896:230. N/T. Unknown teller from Otočac in Croatia.

A fabulate collected by Mate Zorić describes how a peasant attacked and blinded a white snake he found in a furrow while plowing his fields. A year later on a trip to

Loretto, Italy, the man meets a one-eyed *vila* who reveals herself to him as the snake he wounded. She calms him, claiming that she wishes him no harm, but has her revenge when she gives him a poisoned silk belt to give to his wife, who falls dead the second she wears it.

### **Kill Animals with Eyes**

Ardalić 1917:305. N/T. Unknown teller from Bukovica in Dalmatia.

A very odd fabulate about *vile* is presented by Vladimir Ardalić from the Bukovica region in the Dalmatian hinterland. Although the language and story are not always clear, the tale seems to suggest that *vile* can shoot something (arrows, bullets, laser beams?) from their eyes.

*Vile* can do as much evil to people as they can good. They can shoot with their eyes from side to side [*One mogu svojim očima bandu a bandu prostrijeliti*]. They tell a tale of how they came to the front of someone's house and shieling in which there was a lot of livestock: sheep and goats. They asked them how these tenants live, if they have enough meat to eat. They replied that they don't eat meat, only on holidays, since they don't have anything to slaughter. Then they beat/whipped [*ošinule*] the goats [*kozijač*] with their eyes in the courtyard, and immediately seven of theirs [goats] fell [dead I presume] and they said to them: "When you wish to have meat, here you are, so eat your fill and satisfy your fast."

The fairly confusing story seems to tie into the ideas of reciprocity and denials with the *vile*. Presumably the *vile* have come to ask for a little meat, and the farmers, wealthy in animals, lie about their slaughtering habits so that they need not share with them. The *vile* use their magic laser-eyes to kill an excessive amount of animals to punish the farmers for their selfishness.

### **Raise Cats**

Carić 1897:708. N/T. Unnamed teller from Hvar

In one of Antun Carić's fabulates from the island of Hvar, *vile* are said to happily raise cats. It is through the mischievous antics of one of these felines that an unfortunate captive, retained because of his honest appraisal of *vile* (see 'Pick Through their Hair' below), is finally able to escape their cave.

### **Swap Flour**

Dragičević 1908:451. N/T. Unnamed teller from Žepče in Bosnia

Tomo Dragičević presented this short fabulate that relates tangentially to the concept of denials and *vile* taking food from negligent humans:

They say that once a man came to a mill, poured out his grain into the hopper to grind it, but he did not mention God [i.e. say some prayer of thanks to God]. *Vile* swapped his flour, that is, they took his good flour away and left their own, some kind of green flour, in its place.<sup>35</sup>

### **Harmed by Iron**

Vrčević 1876:89. N/T. Unnamed teller from Montenegro

In a fabulate related by Vuk Vrčević, iron is presented as a particular bane to the *vile*. In this tale, *vile* will not allow sharp iron to be brought near them. By guile, a Turk tries unsuccessfully to assassinate a *vila* with an iron nail and knife to secure his freedom and is repaid for the deception (cf. ATU F384.3).

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<sup>35</sup> Compare with Ivanišević 1905:261-2 and Zovko 1901:145 where *vile*'s food is also said to be green.

**Baptize their Baby**

Filakovac 1905:145-6. N/T. Unnamed teller from Retkovci, Croatia

In a tale already outlined above ('Drive/Ride Man'), *vile* abduct a man and drive him like a horse. They drive him to an oak tree outside a village where they attend the baptism of a *vila* child.

**Comb Hair**

Lukić 1911-2:6. N/T. Luca Pitlović of Klakar, Croatia

When Luca Pitlović encountered a *vila* as a child, she found her combing her hair. This motif is more common to the descriptions, but also shows up in two narrative songs (see 'Comb Hair' in Narrative Songs). Undoubtedly, the idea was a well-accepted behaviour for the *vile* which simply did not get drawn into songs and oral narratives with great regularity.

**Steal Cattle**

Ivanišević 1905:257. N/T. Unnamed teller in Poljica, Croatia

Frano Ivanišević relates a tale of stolen oxen that closely resembles one of the common variants of the 'Take Horses' motif. Here, oxen are being pastured when the entire herd suddenly vanishes in the middle of the afternoon. Later in the day, they are found eight kilometers away from their pasture and a young shepherdess claims to have seen *vile* riding them.

**Leave Hair**

Rubić 1899:3. N/T. Ivan and Niko, two old men in Lug, Croatia

Stojan Rubić presents a great dialogue between two old men, Ivan and Niko, that he presumably overheard and collected for his MS where the two discuss their experiences with *vile*. After Niko describes a 'Take Horses' motif in memorate, Ivan

responds with a memorate about his encounter with a *vila* in his youth. As a child, while herding sheep in the early morning, he would often wash his face in a *vila*-spring in the mountains. One day when approaching the spring he heard singing and something unseen splashed the water. He crossed himself and fled from the scene, but relates how he returned later and collected the *vila*'s hair that was scattered about. He explains that as children he and his peers would collect that hair and braid it into a sort of keepsake in hopes that it would compel the *vile* to reveal themselves to them. Surely, some sort of natural fibre that would fall and scatter on a (probably wooded) mountain is in question, but no suggestion is made (by informant or collector) as to just what this hair really was. It is possible that the speaker is referencing the Lesser Dodder or Hellweed plant (*Cuscuta epithymum*), known in some regions as 'vila's hair' (Čajkanović 1994 IV: 258-9; Đorđević 1953:110), though the description is not clear.

## The *Vila* in Folktales

The *vila* of folktales seems to take two clear forms. In most cases her role in folktales mirrors her common behaviour in all oral narratives, although sometimes adapted slightly to the colourful story-telling intrinsic to the folktale genre. In those instances where she does not exhibit typical behaviour, her actions often follow very standard and generic behaviour for a wide range of supernatural and non-supernatural beings in European folktales (see for instance ‘Cast Sleeping Spell’ or ‘Changes Letter’ below).<sup>36</sup> It is fair to say that the generic tradition of the *vila* in folktales was not particularly strong. Her depiction here is often a transference of motifs from other genres, or else a quite passive insertion into roles determined less by her traditional traits and more by the necessity of any supernatural being to fill a function in the story-pattern. If Propp’s understanding of supernatural beings as simple place-holders in a story holds any water, the only examples are to be found here.

### Regular Motifs

#### **Not to Tell**

13% Folktales (4 tales) 6% Fabulates (4) 4% Memorates (2) Wide Distribution.  
Independent Motif

As many informants outlined in their descriptions, the *vile* of oral narratives have a common stipulation in their interactions with humans—those they interact with are never to tell that they have had dealings with the *vile*. Those men who have sexual

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<sup>36</sup> For a particularly clear example see Mikuličić 1876:97-107 where the first story-pattern has a supernatural father and daughter rather arbitrarily assigned as a vampire (*kudlak*) and a *vila* based respectively on their negative and positive roles in the tale, as well as general age and sex.



relations with *vile*, those given gifts or abilities by them, and those abducted by them are often warned and threatened that woe betides those who reveal the *vile*. Good luck, gifts and aid are provided to the tight-lipped (Ivanišević 1905:260-1; Lang 1914:65-7), while those who reveal are often abused (Bartulin 1898:269-70), abandoned (Čajkanović 1927:149; Mikuličić 1876:97-107; Ptašinski 1890-9:210), or murdered (Dučić 1931:272; Đikić 1899:71). A small number of oral narratives (mostly folktales) display a variant of this motif. Rather than characters denied the ability to tell about their interactions with *vile*, in these tales a *vila* gives herself to a man on the stipulation that he never say that she is a *vila*.<sup>37</sup> When the husband inevitably transgresses, the *vila* leaves him, in a ‘Swan Maiden’ fashion in one fabulate (Ptašinski 1890-9:210), or in a ‘Golden Rasudenac’ motif (see below) in folktales (Čajkanović 1927:148-54; Mikuličić 1876:105).

### **Dance and Flute Competition**

16% Folktales (5 tales) 8% Legend (2). Wide Distribution.<sup>38</sup> Dependent Motif

The ‘Dance/Song and Flute Competition’ motif is found in oral narratives as well as songs; particularly as a dependent motif in folktales and transposed into an ATU 321 Tale Type (Eyes Recovered from Witch) that, in other traditions, most often involves witches rather than *vila* cognates. Here, however, the *vile* never sing, only dance in competition to the protagonist’s flute (or occasional pipes). This motif shows a large amount of textual stability and varies in only minor details.

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<sup>37</sup> Or the phrase “a *vila* is a *vila*” (Čajkanović 1927:148-54; Mikuličić 1876:97-107). Readers may recall a narrative song that also adopted this variant (MH II.19).

<sup>38</sup> With a marked preponderance of attestation in the Kordun region.

Folktales with this motif always involve an abandoned or banished figure who finds himself in the employ of blind supernatural beings (a dragon in Čajkanović 1927:489-90,<sup>39</sup> but most often an old man, woman, or both) who live in a liminal and magical area or underground world. Often, after being caught stealing food from the blind pair (Čajkanović 1927:53, 459; Dučić 1931:275-6), the youth is taken into their employ herding sheep or goats. He is warned to herd the stock over eight hills, but not the ninth (*deveto brdo/deveti breg*). The protagonist's curiosity overcomes him and he drives the herd to the ninth hill where he is overtaken by three *vile* who challenge him to a competition—he shall play his instrument and they shall dance, whoever tires first loses. In most multiforms the loser of the wager will have their eyes removed by the other (Čajkanović 1927:459; Dobrosavljević 1892a:252), or else the *vile* will wager magic gifts if they lose, but take eyes if they win (Čajkanović 1927:53). The protagonist wins the competition and spares the *vile* their eyes, taking gifts or knowledge from them instead. In other multiforms the protagonist finds the *vile* sleeping and ties their hair together (489-90), or tricks them by betting that the winner of the contest will pick through the loser's hair (see below), and then ties their braids together (Dučić 1931:275. Cf. ATU F239.1), refusing to free them until they concede to his demands or needs. Inevitably, the youth's supernatural benefactors will turn on him and force him into an ATU 313 'Magic Flight'/D672 'Obstacle Flight.' The *vile* play a crucial role by providing him the knowledge or items required to initiate or escape that episode. Sometimes this means

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<sup>39</sup> The unnamed teller of this multiform brings the protagonist and dragon together in a unique and humorous fashion. As the young lad is nearing the monster, the dragon sneezes. When the boy comes to his attention, the dragon assumes that he has given birth to the youth by sneezing him out and so takes him as his son.

gaining the items required of a magic flight (most often a whetstone, a comb, and a gourd full of water, which will transform into mountains, forests and lakes), knowledge or healing items to return the benefactors' vision (often, incidentally the same three items [Dučić 1931:275-6], just the gourd with magic water [Dobrosavljević 1892b:268]), or the stolen eyes of the benefactors themselves [Čajkanović 1927:489-90; Dučić 1931:276]), as well as occasional knowledge of the true danger that the old couple pose to the youth (Čajkanović 1927:459).

This motif arises again in two legends concerning Marko Kraljević, with some variation and serving the very different needs of the legend's quarry in tale. The most marked variant is related by Kukuljević Sakcinski (1851:87-8) where Marko comes upon *vile* in the mountains who challenge him to a competition in hopes of overcoming him and placing him in chains. He outplays his opponents and when they have collapsed from exhaustion he gains their aid as his *posestrime* (oath-sister). A second legend from an unnamed teller in Istria relates an altered form of this motif, entered independently as an episode in a 'Shade and Suckle' motif (Žiža 1914:373). Here, after a young shepherd Marko has shaded two snakes, they transform into *vile* and dance to his pipes before rewarding him. While this teller removed the competitive aspect of the playing, it shows enough resemblance to argue its derivation.

### **Pick Through their Hair**

3% Folktales (1 tale) 2% Fabulates (1). Montenegro and Hvar Island. Independent Motif

Antun Carić relates how, on the island of Hvar, the *vile*'s beauty is not only marred by their animal legs, but also that their long hair stinks terribly (1897:707-8). The fabulates he presents describe the *vile* as child abductors who force children into service

in their caves. One of the tasks they are forced to perform is to pick through (*biskati*) the *vile*'s hair. Though it is conceivable that this is an odd word choice suggesting drawing fingers through the *vile*'s hair, the verb is used predominantly for delousing and this may be the suggested meaning. The *vile* of these tales are highly self-conscious. Abductees who flatter them about the beauty of their legs and the pleasant smell of their hair are released with gifts, those who tell the truth are branded liars and never allowed to leave for fear of the rumours they might spread.

This motif of picking through *vile*'s hair arises again in Montenegro in a multiform of the 'Dance and Flute Competition' discussed above where the protagonist wagers that the loser of the competition must pick through the loser's hair. The connection between these two is only tentative since the latter lacks much of the context of the former, and may only be a coincidental excuse for the protagonist to get to the *vile*'s hair. It could, however, speak to a wider motif that requires further examination.

### **Eats People**

3% Folktale (1 tale) 2% Fabulate (1). Syrmia and eastern Serbia. Independent Motif

Two oral narratives, one from Croatian Syrmia, and the other from eastern Serbia, depict *vile* as eating humans. This behaviour was most likely not common habit for *vile* in their various traditions, evidenced first by the small number of these tales, and second by the narratives themselves. The first example is drawn from a folktale collected from an unnamed teller in the village of Sekurič in eastern Serbia. This tale represents one of the many folktales where the *vila* name has been attributed to a role that is often filled by other beings in other traditions. Here, a young *carević* (the son of a czar) on a quest overnights with an old crone. She warns him about her *vila* daughter who devours people,

and gives him advice on how to outwit her (Čajkanović 1927:484). It is quite possible that the *vila* name has been applied arbitrarily, simply because the danger here needs to be a young, female supernatural being and the most convenient being that came to mind was the *vila*. It is notable that the teller gives more veracity to this *vila* by including a standard motif from her tradition. The crone-mother advises the young protagonist to escape the *vila*'s predations by telling her that he has suckled from a *vila* and so does not fear her.

The second example is a fabulate drawn from the village of Otok where *vile* are often depicted as monstrous and bestial and regularly confused with *vještice* (witches) in oral narratives. It is also a notable mark against this depiction deserving the ascription of the *vila* name that these supernatural beings are described as epicene. The fabulate itself is quite interesting and merits presentation in full:

Once there was a mother who had three sons and three daughters-in-law. She was always spinning, day and night, but never had anything to show for it. There wasn't any yarn, and soon she didn't even have anything to wear. One time her eldest son sat at the door behind a broom so that his mother didn't see him. His mother sat at the hearth and spun. She spun two spindles when 12 o'clock midnight struck and through the hearth descended a pair. You couldn't tell if they were male or female and they said to the mother: "Praise Jesus, crone. Give us something to eat, we're hungry." "But what will I give you when I have nothing?" "You have three sons; give us one." "I can't do that." "You have three daughters-in-law; give us one." "Nor can I do that." "You have all those grandchildren; give over one to us." "Heaven forbid! I've got this miserable [amount of] yarn that I have spun. I can give you that." They took that yarn, rubbed it about in the ashes of the hearth,<sup>40</sup> tore it up, devoured it and said, "Prepare more for us tomorrow." The son saw this and told his brothers how their mother suffers for them. Then the children clothed her and the daughters-in-law contributed yarn so that the mother didn't have to work so hard. Rather [the children] bought-off their lives with their own work and effort. The *vile* came for quite some time to see if the old woman's yarn would run out, but when they saw that it was no use, they left to extort someone else. (Lovretić 1902:138)

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<sup>40</sup> This vestigial connection of *vile* to ashes deserves further investigation.

### **Give Equipment or Magic Items**

22% Folktales (7 tales) 3% Fabulates (2) 4% Legends (1) 2% Memorates (1) Wide Distribution. Independent Motif

The *vila* of oral narratives also gives practical gifts to humans, though less commonly than the *vila* of the songs. This trope is nearly exclusive to the folktales, and predominantly manifests in three types of gift. Aside from a memorate of an abducted woman given a needle by the *vile* (with no further explanation of why) (Ivanišević 1905:259), a fabulate where *vile* give a man a *vila*-book full of medical knowledge (Kukuljević 1851:99) and a folktale where the protagonist is given a sword (Čajkanović 1927:483), the *vile* in oral narratives only ever give three items—the gifts required for a magic flight (See ‘Dance and Flute Competition’ above), a magic wand (technically a magic switch [*šibica* or *prutić*]), or else a magic coin or coin purse.

One legend from Otok regarding the creation of the first *vrač* (folk healer) (Lovretić 1902:121. See below) includes the gift of a magical switch which calls the *vile* to the *vrač* whenever he needs more healing herbs from them. The second example, a folktale from Belaj in Istria (Novljan 2014:441), which is presented in full below (see ‘Golden Rasudenac’), has a *vila* give such a switch to a very young protagonist as magic protection from a shadowy figure.

Finally, in a fabulate from Bukovica in the Dalmatian hinterland (Ardalić 1917:304-5) and a folktale from Samobor in Northern Croatia (Lang 1914:65-7), a *vila* gives the tales’ protagonists either a magical purse from which endless amounts of money can be drawn or, similarly, a magical thaler which, once spent, returns to his purse.

### **Heal**

9% Folktales (3 tales) 8% Legends (2) 2% Fabulates (1) Wide Distribution. Independent Motif

Unlike the *vila* of songs, the *vila* in oral narratives performs very few healing services. When she does heal characters, it very seldom mirrors the healing methods presented in the songs (picking herbs and creating a balm, administering it in threes, etc.). Only two oral narratives have *vile* picking herbs to heal a character (Vuk Prip:223; Vrčević 1876:89), all others reflect tropes that are unique to oral narratives: healing vision by providing the eyes themselves (Čajkanović 1927:482), whipping a character with switches to heal him of his illness (Lovretić 1902:121), causing a well to provide healing water (Stefanović Karadžić 1852:294), or providing healing water in a gourd (Dobrosavljević 1892b:268).

### **Know Where Healing Waters are**

6% Folktales (2 tales). Wide Distribution. Dependent Motif.

This motif is drawn from a famous folktale presented under the title of ‘Justice and Injustice’ in Vuk Stefanović Karadžić’s 1853 collection of folktales (1897:87; ATU 613) and collected by Vuk Vrčević in the Bay of Kotor. Jovan Srećković collected a multiform of this tale almost 40 years later in Sekurič, a village in eastern Serbia (Čajkanović 1927:482); this tale owes much to the two Vuks’ published version. In the tale, an unjust brother takes everything from his just brother in a series of wagers aimed to prove whether injustice or justice is better. Once the just brother has lost everything, even his eyes, his cruel brother leaves him under a fir tree in the woods to perish. That night *vile* come to bathe in a spring and discuss the leprosy which has afflicted the King’s daughter, commenting that the water in which they bathe could cure her and many other

illnesses. When the *vile* depart at cock-crow, the just brother heals his vision at the spring and proceeds to heal the princess, thus gaining her as wife and half her father's kingdom. When news reaches the unjust brother, he attempts to replicate his brother's luck by blinding himself under the fir tree. The *vile*, suspicious that they were previously overheard, seek out their eavesdropper, find the unjust brother and murder him.

**Help with Tasks/Chores**

6% Folktales (2 tales) 3% Fabulates (2) 4% Legends (1) 2% Memorates (1) Wide Distribution. Independent Motif

As with other European cognates, the *vile* are known to help humans with tasks and chores (ATU F346). The motif is found in wide geographical representation, but the extant examples are perhaps fewer than one might expect. *Vile* help humans who have helped them, been kind to them, shown them respect or with whom they fall in love, in a limited number of domestic tasks—most often harvesting grain (Đikić 1899:71; Lang 1914:137) and herding animals (Kukuljević 1851:101; Zorić 1896:230). In folktales, *vile* often aid characters who have been set impossible tasks by evil stepmothers (Dučić 1931:274-5) or malevolent beings who have taken the protagonist into their employ (Mikuličić 1876:99).

**Flee the Dawn**

6% Folktales (2 tales) 2% Memorates (1). Likely Wide Distribution. Independent Motif

The careful reader will have noted that the *vila* in oral narratives is often compelled to flee the dawn, always signalled by cock-crow. This motif arises in two folktales, one from Zenica in Bosnia, the other from an undisclosed location (Vuk Prip:88; Čajkanović 1927:411), as well as a memorate from Retkovci in Syrmia



(Filakovac 1905:145-6). It is also mentioned in a description from Brest in Istria (Mikac 1929:196).

### **Magical Coach**

6% Folktales (2 tales) Between Karlovac and Rijeka, Croatia. Independent Motif

Two folktales from neighbouring regions in Croatia include *vile* who give a human a magical coach or wagon that drives by itself with no need for horses. The first tale, ‘The *Vila*-Coach’ was collected from Jandra Tomić of Krnjak, a small village in the Kordun region (Čajkanović 1927:221-3). The story represents a variant of ATU 571 (“All Stick Together”) that is quite colourful and bawdy.

It was thus, there was a czar and he had a daughter, who never in all her life had laughed. Because of this the czar was very sad, so he proclaimed throughout the land that whoever could make her laugh would take her as his wife, and with her the empire. When the decree spread out amongst the people, all the best jokers and jesters from all ends of the earth began to gather, but all in vain. On a field there were two women harvesting and behind them a boy tying the sheaves. When they mentioned this, the boy said, “mother, I’m going to go make the czar’s daughter laugh.” And she replied [mockingly], “Go ahead, Beno, all sorts of intelligent people went and couldn’t get her to laugh, you go do it!” But the youth wasn’t deterred and set off. He headed off and was already fairly far from home when all the sudden along the road behind him, a coach came along with no horses pulling and musicians playing music in it. He watched and looked, but that coach moved on its own. Three maidens were sitting in it, one played a flute and the coach moved. When they came upon him, he said to them, “May God give you aid, *posestrime!*” and they replied, “God has already, *pobratim!* Have you taken us as your *posestrime?*” “I have,” says he, “are you my *posestrime?*” “We are,” they replied (and those were *vile*). They then give him the coach and flute and tell him that whichever direction he aims the flute and plays, that the coach will drive in that direction; stop playing and the coach stops. So he gets in and begins to play and the coach drives until he reaches a tavern where he spends the night. He parks the coach in their courtyard, eats dinner in the tavern, and sleeps in the coach. The tavern-keeper had three daughters who were in the habit of sleeping nude. This night, too, they undressed and went to bed, but on his coach there were three golden apples, and a light shone off of them into the eyes of the sleeping maidens. The daughters saw those apples and decided amongst themselves to steal them. That which they said, they did.

They descended to the courtyard, each grabbed an apple; but when they grabbed the apples, their hands became affixed. At the dawn, he rose and saw them, but paid them little heed, he began to play the flute and continue on his way. The coach set off, with the maidens hopping about behind it. Next he drove past a barracks, where soldiers were cleaning their laundry. Well when they saw those girls hopping along, they ran over to grab them by their breasts, and immediately their hands became affixed and they began to hop along behind them. Our hero turned and saw them, but paid them no heed, instead he simply continued to play on and drive. As he drew near the czar's manor, he came upon a house, and here an old mountain woman was cooking bread under embers.<sup>41</sup> When she saw that rabble about the coach, she took after it with her bread peel to strike one of the soldiers on the back. The peel, too, became affixed and with it, that old woman. Thus, all together they came to the czar's manor. When the czar's daughter saw this, she began to laugh uncontrollably. And the czar, seeing this, waved at the lad to stop the coach. He stopped the coach and went to the czar, and the czar said, "you have really made my daughter laugh, she who has never laughed before. Now she is yours." And he kept the lad with him, married him to his daughter, and gave him half the empire. And there he still rules, if he hasn't yet died. (221-3)

The second folktale, collected in Krasica, near Rijeka on the Kvarner Gulf, presents elements of this narrative, but not nearly as clearly. Here a 'Shade and Suckle' motif has *vile* granting three wishes to a youth. He asks for two magic abilities—to transform into anything at any time, that any woman he wishes will spend the night with him, as well as for a wagon that drives without horses and that will bring him home wood when he pleases (Mikuličić 1876:50). On his way through town, one of the King's daughters sees the wagon and insults him from her window, at which point he uses his second wish to spend the night with her and sets the plot in a different direction.

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<sup>41</sup> This probably refers to cooking under a *sač*, a sort of metal bell that is placed over food and then covered with live embers. This method of cooking was brought to the region by the Turks, but early became a common cooking method in local cuisine, particularly in Bosnia.

### **Golden Rasudenac**

13% Folktales (4 tales) Istria to Kordun, Croatia. Dependent Motif

This motif belongs to a number of multiforms that represent a variant of an ATU Tale 400 (The Man on a Quest for His Lost Wife). I have named the motif after the magical kingdom that appears in most multiforms. These folktales all vary quite drastically in their plots; though a number of episodes are shared across multiple versions. At their core they all share a *vila*-wife who leaves her husband, only mentioning the name of the city where they will see each other again. The husband must then ask various characters, until one (usually a celestial body or meteorological phenomenon) knows the location of the city and he can travel there and claim his bride. Since the multiforms are so varied and interrelated it might be easiest to give very brief outlines of each one; I will also give the full account of one multiform, that told by Josip Stepančić of Belaj in Istria, which presents, not only this motif, but a number of others which have been presented without example above:

‘*Vila is a Vila*’ (Mikuličić 1876:97-107) – A young protagonist goes to the underworld where he must perform impossible tasks or be eaten by a vampire (*kudlak*). The vampire’s *vila* daughter helps the youth with the tasks. Later, when her father demands that the youth marry one of his daughters, the *vila* teaches the youth how to identify her in a line-up of her identical sisters. Once united, they flee the vampire by stealing his fast moving boots. The vampire sends his wife after them but they constantly evade her by transforming into various flora and fauna every time she catches up to them in a ‘magic flight’ episode (ATU 313/D672). They live happily together, but the youth must promise never to say “a *vila* is a *vila*” to his bride. The *vila* brings great fertility to his lands, but

one year, when a great hail storm destroys all crops but his, he proclaims “a *vila* is a *vila*.” She leaves him, but returns every Saturday to tend to their children. When he discovers this, he sets off looking for her, asking the sun and the moon if they know where she is, before the Pleiades reveal her location. They send him to a *vila* manor where his wife lives with other *vile*, and give him a bear skin with which to conceal himself. The Pleiades also instruct him to hide under the table and steal the food of the *vile*, which he does, prompting a conversation in which the wife reveals her shame at leaving her family. He reveals himself and they return reunited.

‘*The Vila fled to Golden Rasudenac*’ (Mikuličić 1876:137-43) – Two defectors, a corporal and a soldier, wander the world until they come to a black and empty city. The only inhabitants are a *vila*, a number of devils and demons, and the mother of the devils who feeds the travellers and gives them a room. The *vila* corresponds with the soldiers through letters and instructs them on rituals they must fulfill to free the city of spirits. They succeed and the *vila* marries the corporal, but his attempts to be with her are foiled by a magical sleep that overtakes him three times. When he wakes from the third slumber, his wife leaves him, telling him that he will not see her again until Golden Rasudenac. He searches for her, asking three ancient men who live in underground caves, and questions a wide array of wild animals at their command. The third brother in the third hill controls clouds, one of which knows the location of Golden Rasudenac. The corporal arrives at the moment when his wife must marry a prince from a line-up of princes. She instructs her husband to join their ranks and then chooses him to the shock of the other princes who had earlier scoffed at his meagre accoutrements.

*‘Until Golden Rasudenac’* (Čajkanović 1927:148-54) – A boy sets off to see the world and meets an old man who shows him where *vile* bathe. He steals the clothing of one and makes her his wife. She lives with him but has him promise never to say “a *vila* is a *vila*.” One day, hail destroys all crops in the region except his own. He exclaims the phrase and his wife flies away, telling him that she will not see him until Golden Rasudenac. She returns occasionally to tend to their children and, when the husband discovers this, he goes looking for her. He asks the King of the *Bura* (a strong southerly wind that passes through the region during the winter), and the King of the Winds, but they have never heard of the city. Finally, he asks the King of the Clouds who gathers all the clouds together and asks them. One cloud knows the city and takes the husband there. When he arrives, he is forced to serve a lord there who sets impossible tasks before him. The lord’s youngest daughter is the man’s *vila* wife. She brings him lunch each day and completes the tasks for him with the aid of devils that she summons with a flute. The lord rewards the protagonist with marriage to one of his daughters, who are identical. He must pick his own wife out of a line-up and does so with her aid. They then flee the *vila*’s mother who constantly chases them. They evade her three times by transforming into various flora and fauna. They then return home to live happily ever after.

*‘The Cobbler’s Son and the Vila’* (Novljan 2014:439-42) –

A poor cobbler had a lot of children, well they lived poorly. One day he told his wife that he was going to set off and search for something for the children. He went. He walked and walked and came upon some gentleman. “Good day!” “Good day! Where are you headed?” “I’m off to search for something for my children.” “I will help you, I will give you whatever it is you wish, only you must promise to give me that in the world which comes first to you. The cobbler thought about his pig, dog, sheep and cow, that were pregnant, so he said to that man, “Good. I promise.” The man said, “I won’t

take that immediately, when it enters the world, rather when three summers have passed.” “Fine, I’m satisfied with that,” said the cobbler. Then that man gave him a great sum of money and said, “Buy whatever you need for yourself and your family, and when you use this up I’ll give you more, you will want for nothing.” They warmly parted. The gentleman headed on his way and the cobbler went back home. When he got home his wife wondered and asked him, “How is it you’ve returned so quickly?” “I’ve returned because you will be happy, you will have whatever you wish,” said the cobbler. “How did you get that?” “I promised some gentleman that I will give him that which first comes into this world for me.” “Woe is me,” she began to bawl, “How could you forget that I’m pregnant and am very near the end.”

They had everything, everything was very good for them; it was better than they could have ever imagined it could be, but his wife was always miserable. And she gave birth. It was a boy. They were very happy. And in that joy the mother forgot that in three years they would have to give that child to the gentleman with whom her husband had made his promise. The child grew beautifully; he was lovely to see. He was always healthy. A true joy to his mother and father, brothers and sisters. They lived like kidneys in lard.<sup>42</sup>

When the three years neared their end, that man who gave the cobbler the money told him to lead his child to such and such bosket and to leave him there when three summers had passed since his birth. When those three summers had concluded, in the house there was a great sorrow. The father took his son and led him to that bosket. When they were in its centre, he told him to sit there and to wait until someone comes for him, since he must set off somewhere. The child sat peacefully and the father, grief-stricken, went home.

When the father had been gone for a long time, the child began to call, “Papa, oh Papa!” But no one replied to him. The child began to cry. A *vila* came to the child and asked him why he was crying. He told her, “My Papa went off somewhere and didn’t come back. I called him but he didn’t reply.” “Hush, hush,” she said to him. She broke off some switches, then in a circle around herself she made a little fence of them. She placed three switches in his hand, then stood [him] in the centre [of the circle]. “Whoever comes, don’t walk outside the fence, even if they start luring you in every sort of way. With those switches you must hit whoever would try to come near you.” The child did this. After a little time, some gentleman came; he stopped in front of the fence and called the child to come to him. The child didn’t want to go. He offered him bread, candies, an apple and other lovely and good things, but the child wouldn’t allow himself to be enticed. He drew close to the fence intending to enter it but the child hit him with the switch. Suddenly the gentleman turned about and left from there. The child stayed for a little

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<sup>42</sup> This is an odd saying I have not found attested elsewhere. Presumably this is a happy state.

while longer in the fence but, when he saw that the gentleman was gone, he left there and set off in the direction that the *vila* had gone. He came to where *vile* resided. They received him beautifully and cared for him. It was very good for him. He grew up, and beautifully—he was a handsome youth.

All the *vile* were good to him, but she was best who had come to him when he cried for his father. She was eternally young and a beautiful girl. He fell in love with her. They married. She told him before marriage, “When we wed you will be able to do whatever you wish and say what you wish, but you may never say, “Oh you *vila*, *vila* Velebita [a large mountain in Croatia], let you be neither here nor there!”” They lived happily and contented. One day he, like this, as a joke said, “Oh you *vila*, *vila* Velebita, let you be neither here nor there!” She grew angry and drove him away.

He left. He walked and walked and came there where there were thieves. They received him very well. With them, he had whatever he wished. The *harambaša* [a leader of bandits]<sup>43</sup> had shoes. When he put them on, every step he took was a kilometer in distance. The cobbler’s son wondered at that. One time he told that *harambaša* that he would like to put on those shoes and see how one walks in them. The *harambaša* gave them to him.

He put them on and took two steps. He was already two kilometers away. He liked that, so he went farther. Thus he came to where there were winds. The first wind he came upon was the South wind. He asked him, “Where does such and such *vila* live?” He replied to him, “I don’t know about that, ask *Bura* [the cold southern, winter wind]!” He went to the *Bura* and asked her, “where does such and such *vila* live?” She replied to him, “I know that. I would show you but you wouldn’t be able to walk with me.” He replied to her, “Of that be not afraid.” And they went. He outpaced the *Bura* and had to wait for her since he didn’t know whither they were headed. She brought him to that *vila*, his wife. The *vila* was extremely joyful that her husband came back to her and kissed him all over. Afterwards they lived happily together, and they’re still living today, if they haven’t died.

### Host Lost Spouse

6% Folktales (2 tales). Krasica on the Kvarner Coast. Independent Motif

Two folktales in Fran Mikuličić’s 1876 collection involve a spouse searching for his or her magical partner, whom he/she finds living with *vile*. One of these (97-107) has just been outlined above, where a ‘Golden Rasudenac’ motif has brought a husband hidden in bear skin to the *vile*’s banquet. The second version is found in an oral narrative

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<sup>43</sup> From Turkish Haramibaşı = Harami (bandit) + Baş (head, leader).

multiform of the famous ‘Snake Bridegroom’ story (MH I.32; Vuk II.12; ATU 425A). An infertile couple pray for any type of child and give birth to a snake. When he comes of age, the snake is married to a frightened bride. On their wedding night, her fears are allayed when her husband sheds his skin, revealing a beautiful male form; but he returns to his snake form in the morning. His meddlesome mother learns his secret and convinces his young bride to burn the snake-skin. This causes him pain and prompts him to vanish. His bride waits three years for him to return but then searches for him, wandering the world before asking the sun, moon, Pleiades, and finally various winds who instruct her where to find him amongst *vile* in their manor. The winds teach her how to convince the *vile* to let her touch her husband, which will wake him from a magic trance he is under. When she succeeds in this, her husband awakens and their child (until this point unmentioned) chastises the father from his mother’s womb, for consorting with *vile* and leaving his mother to carry him for 11 years while she searched. Finally, everyone goes home to forgive each other and live happily ever after (Mikuličić 1876:8-11). This motif might have been a region-specific ending for tales that involve a search for a lost spouse.

#### **Teach Secret Knowledge**

6% Folktales (2 tales) 4% Legend (1) 2% Fabulates (1) Wide Distribution.

The idea that *vile* train local folk-healers (*vrač* and *vilenjak*) seems to have been a widely accepted idea in rural regions. There is ample historical evidence that a large majority of folk healers among the South Slavs claimed to have acquired their knowledge from *vile* (see Chpt. 5) and the idea seems to have penetrated oral narrative traditions with their focus on community-level events and rural life. While hints of this connection are found in many tales, there are three contained in this survey in which *vile* teach



knowledge of the healing properties of herbs to men or boys they have abducted or who force them to divulge the information. Two in particular provide detailed outlines of ritual initiations of folk healers into the ranks of *vile* and the knowledge of herbs and human illnesses that they impart to them. These healers are also given a magical *vila*-book, full of healing information (Kukuljević 1851:99) or a magic switch that helps them with their healing (Lovretić 1902:121). In Lovretić's account, the *vrač* is even instructed by the *vile* on the monetary compensation that he is allowed to request for his services (121). This tale deserves to be presented in full:

They tell the tale that in one village there lived a man with his wife and they had a feverish child. He was four-years-old when he fell ill and he was sick for three years; three times a day the fever shook him. When the child was seven-years-old, one night 12 witches [*vištice*] and one *vilovnjak* with a yellow beard, they stole that child and they took him into the sky below the clouds in their *vila kolo* and then to Aršanj hill. Here the witches genuflected to the child and greeted him, "Welcome, *Vila* King! Merciful to us, helpful to the world. You will be a *vrač* and an aid to the people." They gave him medicinal herbs, teaching him which herb heals every *vila*-wound, but they threatened him never again to accept even one grosch for his efforts (now *vračevi* accept 10 kreuzers). They also gave him a switch, so that if he runs out of herbs he can go to that place where his mother throws the ash after making lye. He is to stand on the ashes and whip three times with the switch and immediately they will come to him and bring him herbs. They taught him a prayer to recite and the folk saints to invoke, whichever saint he stumbles at [when he gets to his name in the list] that is his helper in sickness [surely against sickness]. The little prayer is this: "Anto Bono Boniparto, Anto santo velepanto, Anto sigo prepovigo, Anto mange čerepange, Anto silo saparilo, Anto tale dividale, Anto lemi natilemi, Anto pana dilovana, Anto saku karasaku, Anto vamem ustiamen."<sup>44</sup> He invokes the folk saints: "Saint Peter and Paul, Saint Luke, John, Saint Mark, Martin, Saint Bartholomew, Gregor..." thus, until he stumbles. When they had given the child the prayer, they sat to dine and drink wine from a *čutura* [a type of wooden canteen], and an old *vilenjak* gave the child all of it to drink to refresh himself. Thus they celebrated for two nights. On the third night the *goodnicks* [*dobrice*] stood in

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<sup>44</sup> All of this is gibberish language to represent magical spell casting. The informant seems to be using Latin- or Italian-sounding words to give the magic language an exotic sound.

two rows, they stripped the child naked and he had to pass through them three times while they harshly whipped him with switches so that his fever no longer strikes him. They gave him a *vila*-switch [*vilovski prutić*] so he can disperse them, the child waved his arm to the four corners of the earth and the *vilenjaci* and *vištice* flew off all over the world, to do harm, and they took him home to heal from his pain. Upon departing, an old *vilovnjak* hung his dirty *opanak* on the peak of Aršanj. They say that even today you can see that old *opanak* there. The *vile*<sup>45</sup> prepared that child in *češljugova wagon* [some kind of wild-grass wagon?<sup>46</sup>] and took him home to bed. In the morning his parents were beside themselves with joy, when they found their child healed of his fevers. For three more years he stayed in bed, and he didn't so much as taste food or drink, but despite this did not grow weak since the *vilenjaci* and *vištice* were serving him by night. When he rose after three years, he began to *vračati* [to work as a *vrač*]. Thus he became the first *vrač*, before him there were no *vračevi*. (121)

One unique account of clandestine *vila* knowledge is also found in a folktale collected from the teller Stanko Grijaković from the village of Mlakovac in Croatia (Čajkanović 1927:80-5). In this tale, the protagonist's enemy poses a deadly threat to him because of his knowledge of a 'poison bone' in the human body that, if pressed, can kill a person instantly. The villain obtained this knowledge after his *hajduk* (bandit) comrade was shot-through with arrows by a mountain *vila*. The villain captured the *vila* and tied her up, forcing her to heal his friend. As extra incentive for her release, she promised to teach knowledge of the poison bone (84).

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<sup>45</sup> Now *vile*, a shift from the earlier use of *vištice*.

<sup>46</sup> *Češljuga* is a name used for two types of tall grasses Wild Teasel (*Dipsacus sylvestris*) or less often Panicgrass (*Panicum gramineae*). *Kola* (plural of *kolo*) means wagon, but can also be wheels or rings. What is meant here by a *kola* of that grass is unknown (Hay wagon?). The editors, too, italicized this phrase without providing a gloss and were likely also confused by it.

### Irregular Motifs

#### **Bathe the Baby They Steal**

Čajkanović 1927:208-11. *Shuttle I*. Petar Vujučić of Majske Poljane, Croatia.

This motif has been discussed above. After stealing the babies from the czar and czarica (his wife) immediately after their birth, the *vile* bring them to a river and bathe (baptize?) them for unknown reasons.

#### **Change Letter**

Vočinkić 1892:1-38. *Beautiful Naljeva*. Unnamed coach driver from Valpovo, Croatia.

A courier given an important letter by a king comes upon the ‘Evil-doer’ (*Zloradica*) *vila* warming herself by a fire in a dense wood. She invites him to warm himself a moment and, when he does, she casts a sleeping spell on him and changes the contents of the letter with ill-intent. The act is repeated upon his return with a letter in reply. The trope is common more widely in Europe (ATU K1851), but the connection to *vile*, or *vila*-like creatures is not common. The *vila* does not reappear in the remainder of the tale, and it is fair to suggest that her use here is arbitrary and not traditional.

#### **Cast Sleeping Spell**

Vočinkić 1892:1-38. *Beautiful Naljeva*. Unnamed coach driver from Valpovo, Croatia.

See ‘Change Letter.’

#### **Make a Maiden out of Snow**

Vuk Prip:107-8. *A Maiden Faster than a Horse*. Unnamed teller in the Bay of Kotor

*Vile* make a maiden out of snow who comes alive.

It is notable that many irregular motifs here are derived from Vuk Stefanović Karadžić’s collection which is known to have been highly edited by the collector (in stark

contrast to his song collections). More intensive enquiry of the few remaining MSs of Vuk's collection might better clarify these motifs.

### **Kuma to Czarević**

Vuk Prip:218-21. The Czarica's Sheep Daughter-in-Law. Unknown Source

An evil czarica tries to marry off her son but he already has a lover and marries her instead. For the ceremony he takes a *vila* as his *kuma* (maid of honour<sup>47</sup>) and a *zmaj* (dragon) as his wedding party leader (*stari svat*). The two supernatural beings later act as aides in the youth's trials against his evil mother.

### **Blind and Mute**

Vuk Prip:221-3. *Vila Mountain*. Unknown source

While the *vila* of the songs regularly blinds her enemies, the *vila* of oral narratives does not. This folktale presents an exception where a group of *vile* discover an interloper on their mountain and curse him with blindness and (the very untraditional) aphonia.

### **Shoots with Arrows**

Čajkanović 1927:80-5. *Sentin*. Stanko Grijaković of Mlakovac, Croatia.

This folktale, in which a mountain *hajduk* (bandit) is shot by a *vila*, who is then caught, tied-up and forced to heal him by his confederate, has already been discussed above. This motif is absent from the oral narratives and is very clearly a novel borrowing from the narrative songs by the teller.

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<sup>47</sup> But here she seems to be more of a female best-man to the groom. Readers unfamiliar with the region might be confused by a second use of the term *kuma* here. See the Glossary for clarification.

### **Nursemaid**

Čajkanović 1927:387-8. Miloš Obilić Recognizes his Mother. Todor Falagić from the Herzegovinian Hinterland

The hero Miloš Obilić is born among a herd of sheep to a shepherdess impregnated by a serpent and left in the mountains to be nursed by *vile*.<sup>48</sup> This very rustic birth bears the indelible mark of a common trope in the songs.

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<sup>48</sup> All of these impregnating snakes are paralleled in the Russian hero Volkh Vseslavevich (Bailey and Ivanova 1998:6). Alexander the Great was also said to be sired by Zeus in the form of a snake. Odin may still be in the form of a snake when he seduces the giant Suttungr's daughter Gunnlöð (Skáldskaparmál 57; Hávamál 103-10).

## The *Vila* in Ritual Tales

There is a small number of tales outlining rituals regarding the *vila* or her kith and kin. These tales are structured most often as fabulates with descriptive accounts intended to lend verisimilitude to the rituals themselves as efficacious ways to interact with supernatural beings. It is clear from their fantastic nature, and often highly fanciful instructions, that most do not reflect real rituals that would have been performed, but only oral narratives meant to convey this sense (see Chpt. 5 for discussion of real rituals). The tales fall into the following four categories:

### **Rituals to Deal with Changelings**

40% (4 tales) Central Slavonia and Syrmia

The *vila* of the oral narratives, like many of her cognates in Europe and beyond, is said to steal newborn human babies and replace them with babies that are old and used, weak and sickly, that shriek and wail incessantly, or are secretly old men. The local term for a changelings is *podmetak* (pl. *podmeci*)<sup>49</sup> and women were warned to have someone reliable at the birth of a child, or to take hold of the baby themselves immediately upon birth, lest the *vile* steal the baby (Lukić 1893:130). In 1893, the collector Veljko Lukić tried to explain this phenomenon among the peasant class: “As far as I could grasp, I am convinced that the folk consider children who suffer from the so-called English sickness [*engleska bolest*, rickets] as *podmeci*” (130). The theory makes sense, although given various descriptions of these infants, it is conceivable that other illnesses and disabilities

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<sup>49</sup> This name is derived from the verb *podmetati* which, among other meanings, is used when something is placed somewhere, or something is replaced with something else with ill intentions or in an effort to fool someone. It is also the verb used for planting evidence at crime scenes. Some accounts and oral narratives use the vocative form of the term, *podmeče*, in place of the nominative.

were understood to be signs that one's true baby had been replaced, and cognate tales in other countries attest to this (Schoon Eberly 1991; Underwood Munro 1991).

These tales make clear that rural peasants understood that not all sickly children were changelings. Some children were believed to exhibit these problems because God willed it and so tales often include tests to first find out if one is dealing with a *podmetak* or not. A colicky baby might first be given cooked horned poppy (*makovica*, *Glaucium flavum*), or placed on a bread peel and into an oven behind the bread<sup>50</sup> (Lovretić 1902:138). If such human remedies did not help, then one was forced to determine if one indeed had a changeling. Petar Bajković, of Paka in Slavonia, recounted a tale for doing just that (ATU F321.1.1.1):

There was a woman who gave birth to a baby which remained in its body, like that, how it was born, and only grew in its head. When the child entered its eighth year, women convinced her to break as many eggs as there are days in the year. In the eggshells, she was to pour a little water, stoke a heavy fire and place them beside the fire like little pots. Then she was to soothe the child to sleep, place it beside the fire, and hide herself wherever, whence she will be able to see the child. She really did what the women told her, and hid herself in the attic and peered past the architrave, to see what would happen. When the water began to boil in the shells, the child woke, rose and said, “hmm, what is with my mother's pots? I saw that many pots when Czar Širim<sup>51</sup> was ruling!” When the child had spoken, she came out of hiding in the attic and said, “Aren't you a little freak!” But as soon as she said that, the child popped and disappeared! (Lukić 1893:130)<sup>52</sup>

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<sup>50</sup> Oral narratives always make this practice seem homicidal. This ‘baking’ of the baby is actually attested in folk ritual and connects the magic of the womb and the magic of the oven metaphorically. In effect, to finish the baking of the baby in the oven which was not completed in the womb. In true rituals, this was often done for extremely short amounts of time when the oven's embers had nearly cooled and only emanated a soft warmth (see Ryan 1999:178 for examples among Russians, Ukrainians, British, and Volga Germans).

<sup>51</sup> This seems to be an invented name. I have yet to find a monarch that fits it.

<sup>52</sup> Compare this with a multiform in the Grimm collection (Grimm.39). The Grimm story is perhaps the source of the tale.

Some accounts suggest that folk healers can heal or re-exchange (they are never very clear on the final outcome) the babies, but are powerless to help if the mother spills any of the baby's bath water or disposes of the water in her courtyard, rather than at the village's crossroads (Lovretić 1902:138). Most often, the best way to heal the baby is to threaten it with death, again most often at the hearth. One hopes that these traumatic accounts, such as Anica Ognjević's account (also from Paka), do not reflect real ritual practices of the time:

When such a child enters its eighth year, then the mother must stoke up her bread oven well. When the oven is really cooking, the mother takes the child and places it near the mouth of the stove, as though to pretend that she wants to throw the child in the oven. Then she yells out: "here is yours for you, give me mine." If the child is a *podmetak*, then the goodniks [*dobrice*] give strength to the child and the child begins to walk and speak, fearing that the mother will burn their child; if it is not a *podmetak*, it will remain how it is and how God fated it. (Lukić 1893:130)

### **Rituals to Save a *Vilenjak***

10% (1 tale) Vareš, Bosnia

Mijo Žuljić, from Vareš in Bosnia, is the only collector in this sample to have included a ritual aimed at saving the body and soul of a *vilenjak* after he has consorted with the *vile*. Of course, not all regions or informants saw such connections as harmful, but those that did must surely have had their own ritual tales of this sort.

Many people who spent a lot of time with *vile* have become imbeciles. All because of *vila* herbs. They [the *vilenjaci*] follow them [the *vile*], then when the time comes that they [*vilenjaci*] leave them [*vile*], God touch him with the holy spirit, then some [friends or family] would save them [*vilenjaci*] with the power and holy prayer of mass. But some [*vilenjaci*] would not be able to save themselves, rather they would never have peace in their hearts or bodies; everything would be a sort of torture tearing at them. Those are the *vila*'s doings. The *vile* charmed that man because he wanted to leave them, but since he is greatly weakened, he cannot. Then the *vile* would call him again, but he cannot [go?], he doesn't wish to. Then the *vile* charm that man



and he wanders about the mountains foolishly—but he’s not completely an imbecile.

Then his family would gather around him and for the mass, carry that power and holy water to him. They would bring him to church “under a dress”<sup>53</sup> and the priest would pray over him while they burn those charms from him and he again becomes a man, healthy like other people. No longer will he have that tearing pain nor those attacks. But some will die and without confession and without any kind of penitence and contrition, and they won’t even bury him in the cemetery but bury him outside of it. Others would simply go out into the forest and lay themselves out and die. (1904-11:556)

### **Rituals to See *Vile***

30% (3 tales) Syrmia and Bosnia

Josip Lovretić from Otok in Syrmia, presents a unique image of *vile*, and *vilenjaci* (and *vištice*<sup>54</sup> [witches]). Here *vile* and their kith are depicted as quite malevolent and demonic beings who live amongst humans, disguised as them (1902:122). Lovretić presents two ritual tales which explain how to see *vile*. The first is a ritual to reveal those *vile* who live amongst humans:

Whoever wishes to learn who in a village is a *vilovnjak* or *vištica*, he begins to make a chair on St. Lucija [Dec. 13] and finishes on Christmas Eve. He takes that chair at midnight and when the holy body and blood are lifted [at midnight mass], he stands on that chair and can recognize every *vilovnjak* and *vištica*. But he must leave the church earlier, because after midnight the *vištice* would kill him if they found him in front of the church. (122)

The second tale presents a frightening rite for encountering *vile* in the wild:

If someone wishes to see all the *vile* and *vilenjaci*, he must gather knees of the dead from a graveyard and then, just before Young Friday [the first Friday after Easter], he must place a large hoop from a cask on the ground. In the hoop he places wood and a pot full of water. At 10 o’clock he must light a

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<sup>53</sup> “*Odvedi bi ga u crkvu ‘pod haljine’.*” This seems to be an expression, but I have not found the meaning. From context, it seems to mean to secret the man to the church. *Haljina* (dress) can also carry an older sense, as in English, of ‘clothes.’

<sup>54</sup> As mentioned earlier, Lovretić’s collection often conflates *vištice* with *vile*, or uses either name at random. This might have been a characteristic blending of depictions from the region. See Pócs 1989 for more on this phenomenon, though bearing in mind that she conflates the issue to the entire Balkans, which is not supported by the data for most BCMS-speaking regions.

fire and cook the bones in that pot until midnight. He may not leave from the hoop, for then *vile* would tear him apart. When it's around midnight, so many *vile* will be gathered there that the earth will barely hold them. At one o'clock he must dump the cooked bones outside the hoop. Then the *vile* will fight over them but they won't be able to do anything to him because they may not enter the hoop." (138)

A third account presents what is most likely a more typical idea of rituals for seeing *vile*.

Derived from an unnamed region in Bosnia, this account reflects the sentiment that *vile* were often invisible to humans. It presents a humorous method for revealing them:

The folk believe that *vile* can be seen thus: If, during Shrovetide, a man was to retain a small piece of all the food and all of the things that he tasted those days, and then, in the evening, cooked all of it into a *kovrtanj* (a pastry, that is hollow in its center) and baked it a little, just so that it wouldn't crumble, after that he takes it and climbs with a torch up any large tree and looks through that pastry, then he would see all the *vile*, dancing and singing." (Lilek 1899:713)

### **Rituals to Protect from *Vile***

10% (1 tales) Island of Hvar

Antun Carić, from the island of Hvar, also related an account of how to protect oneself against *vile*, though here in their more common oral narrative home in caves and chasms.

Once more, this account includes the *vile* of Hvar's insecurity about their body image:

The chasms in which *vile* live are very deep. There are herdsmen who tell a story that they have thrown stones into such a pit, and then they would listen to how the stone tumbles for a very long time until it finally falls to the bottom. If you wish to throw stones into a *vila* chasm, or simply draw near to it, you must come at a particular time of day, like from the Ave Maria in the morning until before noon, or else from three or four o'clock in the afternoon until the evening toll of the bell, since in all other times they can come out of the chasm and pull in anyone who might happen near. They never come completely out of the cave, for they fear that someone might see them and tell the world about their horse legs. (1897:709)

## Conclusion

While the idea of the *vila* in oral narratives was quite obviously understood by peasant story tellers to be the same being as the *vila* of the songs, there are very clear functional divisions in the motifs and behaviour of the two.<sup>55</sup> Some song motifs found their way into oral narratives (a *vila* who shoots a character with arrows in the mountains, for example), just as certain motifs from the oral narratives made their way into the songs (magic coin purses), but these were most often exceptions to otherwise fairly clear divisions. The *vila* of oral narratives is exclusive in having hooved, bestial legs, kidnapping human men for sexual pleasure, wearing women's clothing by night, and other very specific motifs that were only told in oral narrative because the tradition demanded it. It is fairly safe to assume that, when questioned on these differences, the average fabulator would not recognize that distinctions were required, but only knew which stories were told about *vile*, just as singers knew which songs. Innovative tendencies of fabulators often brought aspects from one genre into another but, in general, the traditions held sway. As oral narratives were the quarry of more individuals—unlike the songs, one needed no special training nor instrument to tell stories—and since the *vila* of memorates and fabulates is posited in the lived world and social geography of the rural village, it is clear why most informant descriptions relate the *vila* as she is depicted in oral narratives rather than in songs.

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<sup>55</sup> This is what I originally labelled the division between the folkloric and mythic *vila* (Jurić 2010a; 2010b), a nomenclature that I have since abandoned due to contextual refinement.

Within oral narratives themselves, the sub-genres also show marked distinctions. While the most common tropes appear in all of them, there are distinctions. Owing to the subject matter and historical setting of their story-patterns, the *vila* in legends represents the clearest half-way point between her depiction in tales and songs. The *vila* in folktales is prone to having her name attached to quite disparate roles and motifs that serve the necessities of the story (often quite generic Indo-European or Eurasian folktale plots), rather than retaining her critical aspects although, in some instances, her own unique tradition seems to find its way into the tales. The *vila* of myth shares the same problem, but so little material remains from these traditions that it is difficult to say anything substantial. It is truly the *vila* in memorates and fabulates that shows the most marked distinction from the *vila* in song, and reflects the clearest image of what the average peasant in 19<sup>th</sup> century Croatia, Bosnia, Montenegro or Serbia imagined a *vila* to be. This is the *vila* of local ritual, the *vila* from whom local folk healers derived their power (see Chpt. 5), the *vila* that frightened people walking through the woods at night, and the *vila* that explained children with birth-defects, missing children, strangely shaped caves, ominous lights and bountiful crops. This depiction of the *vila* most clearly fits the comparison to elves and fairies that is so often ascribed to her without heed for her depiction in song; she is the domestic *vila* rather than the battle-ready *vila* of song. That distinction may help us better understand the history of the *vila*, or may further enlighten our conception of her cognates in cultures that have no recorded epic songs or heroic tales which include them.

## Chapter 4: The *Vila* in Minor Lore

### The *Vila* in Sayings and Expressions

There are a number of sayings and expressions that employ the *vile*. Some of these arise in informant descriptions, and were surely a common feature in regular conversation, but the greatest attestation remains in narrative songs, where a wide range of expressions were employed by singers in the speech of characters. These sayings always focus on a single aspect of the *vila* and many are specific to commonly understood traits of the *vila*. Others present a simpler use of the *vila*'s name as a generic dark force (pagan, anti-Christian, demonic). These sayings appear in variant forms that most often, and most notably, involve replacing the *vile* in the phrase with the devil (*vrag*, *davao*), devils, or other rarer replacements.<sup>1</sup>

#### Sayings in Informant Descriptions

Informant descriptions relay a small number of sayings. The collector Oskar Hovorka from Pelješac in southern Dalmatia wrote, “even today they say of a maiden who easily dances and to whom any job comes easily that she is ‘easy/light like a *vila*’ [*lahka kao vila*] and for a man whom luck follows everywhere, they call him *vila*-y, [*vilenski*]” (Hovorka 1897-8:4). Nikola Praidic of Jukinac explained that a maiden who is

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<sup>1</sup> So we find “Not even the devils could tie up Marko” (Ostojić 1880-3a.219 l. 27), “Which devil returned you [here]?” (Vuk II.66 l. 353), “Devil take you...!” (.94 l.271) as well as some rarer examples, such as when the *vila* is replaced by ‘harm’ (*šteta*), “may harm take you away!” (Šestić 1889.262 l. 302) or by a bird “If you were a bird, even if you had wings / Your wings would not carry your body [to safety]” (O. Nedić 1887.4 ll. 104-5).

thin and beautiful is said to be ‘beautiful like a *vila*’ (Praidic 1898:20), a common metaphor that is found in other regions (Novaković 1903-4:1040b) and throughout the songs as well. Finally, Stjepan Banović from Zaoštrog on the Dalmatian coast, related a local version of a common expression wishing for *vile* to take someone away. This phrase has been discussed above (‘Take away Scoundrels’ in the Lyric Songs) and appears in a number of songs (Bogdešić 1884 III 228; Dungjerović 1891-2 158; Pavlinović 1876b 546), but in Zaoštrog became grounded to a piece of local topography associated with *vile*. Locals here would exclaim “Let the *vile* take you to the red cliffs!” (Banović 1918:197) in regards to local cliffs in which *vile* were thought to live.

### Sayings in Songs

Sayings in songs are mostly relegated to a few highly common phrases, with some unique uses. The total number of these are quite small, such that definitive statements are often illusory.

#### **Regular Sayings**

A number of common sayings regarding the *vile* involve comments reflecting on the speed or strength of a character and their inability to be captured or caught in chase. All of these compare the inability through hyperbole, suggesting that not even *vile* could catch or capture the character. These phrases are widely distributed and similar in format, though malleable in formulaic variety.

*I za Vidom stali u poćeru;  
Ne bi Vida dostignule vile  
Neg' li konji mladijeh Turaka!*

They took chase after Vide;  
But *vile* could not catch [up to] Vide,  
Let alone the young Turk's horses.  
(Murat 1886a 2 ll. 115-7)

*Ne bi Marka vile ufatile,  
Kamo li bi Turci krajičnici.*

*Vile* could not catch Marko,  
Let alone Turkish Borderlanders.  
(MH II 8 ll. 17-8)

*Al govore Turci Janjičari  
Ne bi Ile saplajale vile  
A kamo li careve delije*

But the Turkish Janissaries said,  
“*Vile* could not overcome Ile,  
Let alone the czar’s warriors.”  
(Kučera 1884 237 ll. 50-2)

In the village of Donji Dolac near Split, a number of local singers used a similar formulaic phrase in a set of songs based on a single story-pattern. In these tales, an absent Christian hero learns that a Turk has sacked his home, killed his children, and taken his wife as his own. The hero races to reclaim his tower, unaware that his deceitful wife has happily received her new lover. The hero is betrayed, rendered unconscious by poison and tied up by his wife. When her Muslim paramour returns from hunting, she relates her success, but he is disbelieving, stating

*Ne bi Niku vile ulovile  
Kamo li bi take ženetine!*

*Vile* could not capture Niko,  
Let alone such a woman [as you]!  
(Banić 1885 37 ll. 140-1)

*Ne b’ Ivana uhvatile vile  
Pa mu bile savezale ruke  
Kamo li bi ‘nake ženetine.*

*Vile* could not capture Ivan  
And tie his white hands,  
Let alone a woman such as this.  
(Banić 1885 110 ll. 116-8)

The most common saying regarding *vile* is a simple phrase employed by a large number of singers throughout western Bosnia and Herzegovina. This saying is most commonly used in the banter between two opponents in heroic narrative songs, or else in warnings given to heroes by other characters to stress the dire position they are in or are about to enter. This phrase presents fairly tight formulaic fixity that focuses on the *vile*’s

feathered wings. In a song by Pavo Mikeljević of Vareš, the character Mujo Hrnjica reveals the ambush he has set for the hero Ilija Smiljanić, when he exclaims to the hero:

<i>Kurve sine, Smiljanić Ilija!</i>	You whore's son, Ilija Smiljanić!
<i>Veži, vlaš, ruke na plećima,</i>	Tie your hands, Vlach, <sup>2</sup> behind your head,
<i>Da si vila, pa da imaš krila,</i>	If you were a <i>vila</i> , and you had wings,
<i>Ne b' ti krila proniela tiela</i>	Your wings would not carry your body [to safety]
	(Šestić 1889 271 ll. 546-50)

Other multiforms stress the feathers of the *vila*'s wing, or else substitute the word 'body':

<i>Da je vila, pa da ima krila,</i>	If he was a <i>vila</i> , and he had wings,
<i>Ne b' mu pera iznijela tela,</i>	His feathers would not carry away his body,
	(MH III 11 ll. 373-4)

<i>Da si vila, pa da imaš krila</i>	If you were a <i>vila</i> , and you had wings
<i>Ne bi perje mesa iznosilo.</i>	Your feathers could not carry away your flesh
	(Šestić 1889 265 ll. 161-2)

A number of sayings that use *vile* involve the concept of them bringing or taking people. The most common of these are those curses that have been discussed above involving the phrase 'let/may the *vile* take you [away]' (Bogdešić 1884 III 228; Dungjerović 1891-2 158; Pavlinović 1876b 546), but other uses include a song from near Slavonski Brod where every time a hero embarks or departs, his speed is described 'as though *vile* took him' (*kao da ga odnesoše vile*) (Kučera 1884 237 ll. 30, 49). The *vile*, however, do not only take characters in sayings, but also bring them. Songs from various singers from the Bosanska Krajina include sayings uttered by characters as a curse about the unwanted presence of another:

<i>O djavole, Borčulović-Ibro!</i>	Oh, you devil, Ibro Borčulović!
<i>Koje t' vile meni donesoše?</i>	Which <i>vile</i> brought you to me?!
	(MH III 16 ll. 937-8)

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<sup>2</sup> Readers will recall that Vlach here is used to mean a Christian, not a true Vlach (n. 54 in Chpt. 2).



*Da si zdravo, Osman-bajraktaru!* To your health, Standard-bearer Osman!  
*Koji tebe vrazi donesoše,* Which devils delivered you [here],  
*Koje tebe dovijaše vile?* Which *vile* brought you?  
(MH IV 45 ll. 472-4)

Another song from Brčko in northern Bosnia uses the phrase ‘whence did the *vile* bring you?’ in a sense of indignation—a sort of ‘where do you get off?!’ (Nedić 1887 3 l. 410).

Finally, two songs from the singer Old Man Milija in Vuk’s collection reflect the well-attested comparison between beautiful women and *vile*. These sayings surely reflect a stock formula that the singer employed as they share strong textual stability with only a minor variation that shifts the focus of the verse (the word *brate* [brother in the vocative] in one multiform is replaced by the word *belći* [whiter] in the second). They are deployed in songs when a female character’s beauty is described:

*Ko j’ video vilu na planini;* Whoever has seen a *vila* on a mountain [can attest];  
*Ni vila joj, brate, druga nije.* Not even a *vila*, brother, is her equal.  
(Vuk II 40 l. 117)

*Ko j’ vidio vilu na planini,* Whoever has seen a *vila* on a mountain [can attest],  
*Ni vila joj belći druga nije;* Not even a *vila* is whiter than she;  
(Vuk II 89 ll. 146-7)

### Irregular Sayings

Two sayings appear with only single attestations in this survey, though both reflect very common ideas about *vile* or echo other metaphoric uses of the *vila* in other sayings. The first example seems to metaphorically extend the idea of *vile* as a dark force, to enemies in battle. When the character Janković Stojan tries to locate his *pobratim* (oath-brother), Todor of Zadar, in the smoke of battle after their wedding party is ambushed, he calls out:

*De si, pobro, od Zadra Todore?  
Kakve tebe savladaše vile...?*

Where are you, *pobratim* Todor of Zadar?  
What kind of *vile* have overcome you...?  
(Vuk III 24 ll. 508-9)

From a nearby grove Todor responds to his comrade:

*Brate dragi, serdar-Jankoviću!  
Nijesu me savladale vile,  
Već eto me tebi po avazu.*

Dear brother, *serdar* Janković!  
*Vile* have not overcome me,  
Rather, here I am at your call,

(ll. 513-5)

This call is repeated again as part of a standardized formula while the heroes try to locate their comrades in the haze (ll. 533, 538, 551, 557, 580).

The final example most likely draws on the idea that *vile* gather to dance and celebrate and follows a format similar to other sayings. This saying arises in a song by Pavo Murat, from Luka on the island of Šipan, when a character seeks reassurance from his sister, but receives none:

*“Pravo reci, draga sestro moja!  
Kad ja tamo u gjevojke dogjem,  
Hoće li mi zabaviti, sele?”  
A sestrice bratu odgovara:  
“Ni vile ti ne bi zabavile,  
Gje l’ Vlahinja Mletkinja gjevojka!”*

“Tell me truthfully, my dear sister!  
When I arrive there in the maiden[’s home],  
Will she entertain me, sister?”  
But the sister replied to her brother,  
“Not even *vile* would entertain you,  
Let alone a Christian, Venetian maiden!”

(MH I 68 ll. 109-14)

## The *Vila* in Riddles

Vuk Stefanović Karadžić presented nine riddles involving the *vila* in his various editions of his collection of folktales and riddles (1821, 1853, 1870, compiled posthumously in 1897). There are, however, a fairly limited number of ideas that cluster to her usage in these riddles. All are ‘True’ or ‘Descriptive Riddles’ (Abrahams and Dundes 1972:131), with much internal rhyming, and pose an enigmatic question in poetic form which require the listener to guess the object being described. Often the metaphoric connection between these are fairly opaque. Vuk, in proper fashion for the time, presented the riddles in simple lists of statements/questions and answers, without riddling contexts.

There are two riddles for which the answer to the riddle is ‘a *vila*’ and both of these focus on the idea that *vile* are born organically in nature from flora and dew (Đorđević 1953:70; Vrčević 1876:87. See Chpt. 2 n. 89 above).

Statement 44: A mountain gave birth to her, the dew nursed her, and the sun grew/fed her  
Answer: A *vila* (Vuk Prip:338, 385).

S 616: Born in a cloud, walked through the mountains, neither breast suckled nor grass grazed  
A: A *vila* (376, 405).

Both of these riddles focus on the natural birth aspects of the *vila*, but the second places her birth in a cloud rather than in a mountain. Foreseeing a metaphoric reading of a cloud birth as representing a ewe, the riddler has then taken steps to clarify and distance the puzzle from mammalian stock with its final two points.

A larger number of riddles use the *vila* in the initial statement/question as a metaphor in the puzzle. This must, of course, lend some understanding to conceptions of

the *vila* by revealing, as in the sayings, crucial, broad ideas that are linked to her.

Surprisingly, the most common metaphoric connection of the *vila* here is not with beautiful women, white objects, or things that fly, as one might expect, but rather with the sun. The only feasible explanation must be the conception of the *vila* as shining and radiant in her white otherworldliness, but the metaphor does beg some further explanation which cannot be pursued here.<sup>3</sup> There are three riddles that connect the *vila* to the sun or the dawn.

S 27: A *vila* sits above a city, wearing her hair about her neck. She waits for a [the, her] son of Paraćin [a town in central Serbia], coming to her from Ancona and bringing her a cup of wine.

A: When the sun rises in the east (Vuk Prip:336, 384).

S 128: A *vila* comes out from behind Cerovik [a town in Kosovo], and scatters one hundred branches from a golden towel.

A: The sun when it rises out from behind a hill (343, 388).

S 124: Behind a mountain a *vila* walks, carrying a wreath on her head.

A: Dawn (343, 388).

Another riddle works from the same celestial connection to *vile* but connects her to stars rather than the sun:

S 180: When the *vila* gave birth to her son, the empress made him cry.

A: A shooting star (347, 390).<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> Certainly proponents of Max Müller's Solar School would be pleased with the connection. It is notable that the *vila* is connected to the sun but not to the moon. John Colarusso has suggested that this might connect the *vila* to some older cognate goddesses of the dawn such as Vedic Uṣās, Greek Eos, Latin Aurora, and English Ēostre (p.c.).

<sup>4</sup> The exact meaning and metaphor here is not completely clear to me. "*Kada vila sina rodi, carica mu suzu proli,*" may also mean 'his empress shed a tear,' 'the empress cried because of him,' or even simply 'the empress shed a tear.' The answer reads "*Kad se prolije zvijezda*" (lit. when a star is shed, or poured over) which I can only assume means a shooting/falling star.

One riddle seems to be using the *vila*'s whiteness, while (perhaps unintentionally) connecting her to birds, albeit not her usual ornithological form.

S 515: A *vila* sits above a hayfork, waiting for her sons from white cities.  
A: A hen on her nest (369, 401).

Another riddle is a near exact multiform of riddle 27, and yet somehow produces a completely different answer, and one that is difficult to understand metaphorically:

S 125: A *vila* comes out from behind Peć [a town in Kosovo], lets her hair down along her back. She waits for a [the, her] son of Paraćin, coming to her from Rudine [a village in western Serbia] and bringing her a cup of wine.  
A: Gourd or zucchini [*tikva*] (343, 388).

Yet another riddle, whose internal logic I admit to being stumped by, has an uncommon word with several meanings for its answer. Unfortunately, none of the meanings produce a particularly logical connection to the question/statement:

S 315: In the centre of a village<sup>5</sup> a *vila* spreads her wings.  
A: Horse mill or dry stream (356, 395).

The answer, *suvaja*, can mean one of three things: a horse mill, a stream that is prone to drying up, or a town or location situated at such a stream. I cannot connect any of these to the idea of a *vila* spreading her wings with any surety.<sup>6</sup> It is also conceivable that the riddler was referring to a specific town or village called Suvaja (there are at least four in the region<sup>7</sup>) or a specific topographic location with this name (of which there are many). Perhaps there were characteristics of this location that lent themselves to the image of the

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<sup>5</sup> “*nasred sela*, might also be genitive plural “in between the/some villages,” and can also have a vaguer meaning, “in some place/ in such-and-such place” (my thanks to David Mandić for this final example [p.c.]).

<sup>6</sup> Colarusso has suggested that perhaps her spreading wings mimetically represent the spread of intense sunlight or heat and thus connect to the ideas of drought (p.c.).

<sup>7</sup> There is a Suvaja in north western Bosnia, one in southern Serbia, one in central Serbia, and both a Lower and Upper Suvaja in Croatia, inland from Zadar.

*vila* spreading her wings. Without the context of the riddling session, or information on the riddler or collection location, it is likely impossible to fully grasp the meaning.

## The *Vila* in Proverbs and Charms

In three sites in eastern Bosnia (Vlasenica, Srebrenica and Zabrđe), the collector Tomo Dragičević collected a number of formalized scripts of advice, which the locals called ‘*vila* laws’ (*vilinska pravila*) or else ‘*vila* advice’ (*vilinsko svjetovanje*). These are lists of folk wisdom, which locals seem to have memorized in formalized lists, that outline wise behaviour in common tasks. Many of the lists involve slightly cryptic language, which Dragičević explains after gaining clarification from his informants. Many of the informants’ accounts include vague statements that *vile* sang these laws, or provided this advice, though the laws themselves often do not mention *vile*. Here is one example:

In Srebrenica district the folk hold this *vila* advice: ‘Don’t brush yourself with your hand, Don’t hit a horse with its halter, Don’t call your dear by their name, Don’t hit an ox with its collar, Don’t break a baluster from a gate, Don’t keep a white rooster’ These rules the folk follow better than God’s ten commandments, not just in Srebrenica but throughout Bosnia and Herzegovina, and the meaning of each rule was explained to me thus: 1. Whoever brushes himself with his hand, they say, doesn’t have luck for very long, while wearing that shirt. 2. A horse may not be struck with its halter, because you lead a horse forward [*napredak*, lit. in advance] with a halter, and when you strike it with it, then the horse and your luck [*napredak* again, here ‘advancement’] goes into decline [*nazadak* lit. in reverse]. 3. A woman should not call her man by his name, since it is a shame. They say that one [woman] called hers, ‘hey you!’ and the Devil appeared in front of her and asked her ‘why are you calling me?’ She told him that he was not hers, and he retorted, ‘Well my name is also You.’ 4. It doesn’t do to strike your ox with his collar, because he is caught in it and works and suffers in it, so they say that he suffers the most from it. 5. with a dry switch/rod [presumably the balustrade from the gate], it does no good to drive an ox or any other stock, for the animals dry up from that—that is, they go in decline. 6. A white rooster isn’t worth keeping, since the house will be unlucky 7. One *vila* gave this advice: ‘Steer clear of a man who keeps a white cock, who brushes his leg on his other leg and brushes himself with his hand,’ a second *vila* replied, ‘Nor do I love, on my way, to meet with a man with flat soles, or a woman with whiskers and man with none.’ (1908:450)

Finally, Josip Lovretić of Otok in Sirmia, presented a charm or incantation that employs the *vila* alongside other supernatural beings. The charm is aimed at defending hapless human victims from another deadly supernatural being, the *Mòra*.<sup>8</sup> The spell reads “*Vila, vištica* [witch], *mòra* [Mare], *đavolica* [devil+dim. fem.], damned by God and by Saint John, you may not come to me. As much as there is sand in the ocean and leaves on a tree, always one more time” (1902:139).

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<sup>8</sup> This being is in name and representation, cognate to the English (Night)Mare. Like the *vila*, she is imagined to be a young beautiful woman, but one who sits on peoples’ chests at night or strangles them in their sleep. See Šešo 2016:58 or *ZbNŽO* 1:235-7.



## Conclusion

Common sayings, riddles, and proverbs that employ the *vila* provide some final, albeit minor, insight into peasant conceptions of *vile* in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, and help to fill in a complete picture of her use in oral traditions. Like the descriptions, most of these materials required no bardic skill and could have been expressed by any person at any moment in daily life. Those expressions in the narrative songs, like other formulae in the traditional singing, are often region- or singer-specific and would have traveled and been employed in songs like any other formulaic phrase. Whatever their context, all of this smaller lore importantly focuses on singular traits of the *vila* that were commonly understood to be apparent to the average listener, and to be guessable by the riddlee in the case of the riddles.

Incantations represent a different case, entirely. These materials belong to a specific ritual context and, given the connection between folk healers and *vile* in traditional BCMS cultures (see Chpt. 5), these traditions are a very important area requiring further analysis. I am aware of some other ritual spells gathered in the 20<sup>th</sup> century which invoke the *vila* or *samovila*, most often in healing and protection contexts (Petreska 2008; Radenković 1982), but was unable to fully explore them for this study. This is a productive area for further inquiry.<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> See also Foley 1995:99-135.

## Chapter 5: Critical Analysis and Further Discussion

### Some General Analysis of the *Vila* in BCMS Oral Traditions

#### Genres, Motifs and the *Vila*

The evidence given in the preceding chapters clearly demonstrates that there were marked differences in the traditional generic presentation of the *vila* in various oral traditions of Bosnia, Croatia, Montenegro and Serbia in the 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> century. Though the *vila* was not imagined by traditional fabulators as a multi-variant being, the traditions themselves dictated particular story-patterns and motifs, delineated from pathways that are lost to time, which show marked but consistent variation between generic formats. The explanation for at least part of these distinctions can be found in the genres themselves—for example, narrative songs and legends deal with heroic tales, and the *vila* takes on more martial and heroic qualities in them—but generic tropes cannot account for all of the differences. There could, in fact, be many explanations for the registers of the *vila*. Some of these distinctions may be due to the possibility that various older supernatural beings in the region were subsumed under the title of ‘*vila*,’ or that certain motifs were slowly adopted into her tradition from another’s (Ajdačić 2001:208). It may also be that, in some period before these materials were collected, various innovations became popular in the *vila*’s tradition that took her depiction in certain genres into widely different territory. Two of the starker distinctions seem to be due to peculiarities of the histories of the traditions themselves: The specialized training required

for the practice of singing long-form narrative songs to the *gusle* and the segregated social context in which they were performed seem to have retained a unique form of the *vila* who belongs only to the heroic epic and longer narrative songs. The folktales, on the other hand, seem not to have been originally a natural breeding ground for *vile*; there she seems to be often appended haphazardly to the tales, lacking some of her basic traits and following common models of behaviour exhibited by other figures in a wide range of European folktales.

At a superficial level of analysis one might make the following general observations about the generic form and function of the *vila* in oral traditions:

**Table 5 Basic Generic Markers**

Genre	<i>Vila</i> Depiction and Use
Informant Descriptions	Descriptions of the <i>vila</i> conform almost entirely to her use in oral narratives, and particularly in memorates and fabulates. Informants would commonly also mention one or two generally well-known story-patterns or names associated with the <i>vile</i> in narrative songs, but the motifs of <i>vile</i> in songs are generally absent from these accounts. This makes sense as singing was an elective art engaged in only by certain people.
Topogonic Descriptions	Topogonic Descriptions also employ the depiction of the <i>vila</i> found in memorates and fabulates. The existence of <i>vile</i> as real world phenomena is evidenced by geographical markers in caves and cliffs that are deemed to look like their stone furniture, &c.
Narrative Songs	The <i>vila</i> of Narrative Songs is depicted as a supernatural aide or foe to various martial heroes. She is sometimes armoured and often engages in battle, or projects arrows or insights from mountain-tops. As foe, she guards water sources in mountains or harms those who transgress taboos, as friend she serves as aide in battle, only abandoning her warrior role when she is abducted by male heroes and coerced into producing heroic offspring. She is seldom invisible and never has hooved legs. In narrative songs she resembles other Indo-European supernatural figures such as Norse <i>valkyrjur/dís</i> or Indian <i>apsarases</i> as

	<p>well as with supernatural women found in the 1,001 Nights, which may have Iranian roots (Jurić 2010b:79).</p> <p>The traditional motifs of the <i>vila</i> in narrative song are often quite rigid in form, and singers tend to innovate within the confines of the traditional pattern.</p>
Lyric Songs	<p>In Lyric Songs, the <i>vila</i> reflects her depiction in narrative songs, though focused on romantic story-patterns rather than martial. Motifs from other registers also seem to more easily seep into this genre. These songs exhibit strong textual stability in multiform, such that singers tend to innovate from whole cloth in this genre and a wide variety of imaginative uses are found. <i>Vile</i> are also commonly used as metaphors for women and many songs lack clarity regarding whether they exhibit real <i>vile</i>.</p>
Myths	<p><i>Vila</i> Myths are grounded heavily in Judeo-Christian conceptions of the order of the universe and cosmogony. <i>Vile</i> are associated with some innovations that aid humans, but most myths only explain the origin of <i>vile</i>.</p>
Legends	<p>Legends straddle the divide between narrative songs and oral narratives. Here, the <i>vila</i> associates with heroes of the narrative songs, and so often exhibits some behaviour from those songs' traditions. Legends also draw the <i>vile</i> into social geography, but here she is credited with the building of ancient man-made structures rather than the natural topography of the topogonic descriptions.</p>
Memorates and Fabulates	<p>Memorates and Fabulates present the most common conception of <i>vile</i> outside of the song tradition. In these tales, <i>vile</i> are depicted as nature spirits who live in caves and other liminal zones near human habitations. They have bestial legs, are invisible and can bring bounty to crops or cause illness and madness in humans. They mate with willing humans, but also abduct the unwilling for their own sexual pleasure, much more often than they themselves are abducted. They seldom heal but are credited with teaching secret knowledge to folk healers. The <i>vila</i> in these accounts is most comparable to Elves, Fairies, Jinn, and the other 'hidden folk' of Eurasian folklore and myth.</p>
Folktales	<p>The <i>vila</i> seems foreign to Folktales. Her motifs here tend to follow common behaviour of various young, female supernatural figures in Indo-European folktale story-patterns. Otherwise, her use simply borrows from her depiction elsewhere in songs and oral narratives.</p>

Ritual Tales	Ritual Tales present the same <i>vila</i> depicted in memorates and fabulates.
Riddles	The <i>vila</i> 's depiction in Riddles is sometimes obscure, but most often her role here falls to simple metaphoric associations linked to common aspects found in all her generic traditions—she's white and shining, she has wings, &c. Her role in riddles often reveals a celestial association, particularly connected to the sun and dawn, that is only encountered elsewhere in the lyric songs.
Sayings and Expressions	The <i>vila</i> in Sayings and Expressions also relies on metaphoric associations of beauty and speed, though she is also connected to various traits that show no obvious logical linkages (coming and going, taking, &c.). Her name may often be replaced by the name of the Devil or other beings.

Many aspects of the *vila* (her beauty, dancing *kolo*) span all genres and inform all understandings of the being, but the vast majority of motifs belong to specific traditions designated by genre and only rarely and irregularly intrude into others.

It must be stressed that these differences do not represent cognitive divides in the conceptions of singers or tellers, but implicit categories of traditional narrative patterns that are automatically engaged when a fabulator decides to tell a tale or sing a song. If a singer of heroic epics were casually asked what a *vila* looks like, he or she would invariably describe the beautiful young maiden, clad in white, with the legs of a goat, ass, or horse found in informant descriptions. However, that same singer, engaged in the performance of an epic song would *never* include those legs in a description of the *vila* in the song. It is the fabulator's devotion to the art of the tradition and the task of telling a story properly or truthfully (Lord 2000:23, 27-8, 99; Međedović 1974:51, 60; Parry and Lord 1954:239) that dictates these distinctions. For the traditional fabulator's conception of truthfulness is not beholden to historical accuracy or common perception, but rather to

the tradition. There is a wealth of examples presented in this thesis where readers can appreciate the fine balance that singers and tellers struck between the tradition and their own creative innovation. In fact, this imaginative and dynamic approach to the traditions is the very reason that some bleeding occurs between the traditional generic depictions. The traditions were neither rigid, nor immutable, but they had deep roots. A singer, in striving to innovate upon tradition, may indeed borrow from the tale traditions and, for example, have a *vila* give a magic coin purse in a song, but for most singers this transgression of traditional boundaries would cause dissonance. This singer would be considered to be singing the song ‘incorrectly.’

Some of these transgressions seem to be more marked than others. In songs, a *vila* will never have animal legs, but she may very occasionally be invisible, give a magic coin purse, or cast hot magic on a hero. There are *vila* horses in the songs, but they are never ridden by *vile* at night and *vile* never braid their manes. A *vila* will never kidnap a man to train him in the magic of folk healing in the songs, but she may take a child and teach it heroic abilities and train it to exact revenge. Even then, this motif will only be an independent motif, never dependent, and the examples of such songs are very few in number. Conversely, the *vila*’s predatory abduction of men for her own sexual pleasure only appears in oral narratives. The *vila* in tales will almost never become a *posestrima* (oath-sister) to a protagonist, but is more likely to enter a non-martial form of fictive kinship such as *kumstvo* (god-sister-/motherhood). Many of these examples owe their distinctions to the very specific traditional motifs and story-patterns of the various genera. When songs or tales enter motival territory that is shared between various genres, then the

finer distinctions inherent to the division seems to rest heavily upon the deeper phenomenological split between martial and rural settings. Story-patterns involving heroes and battles will tend to have heroic, martial *vile*; story-patterns set in the every-day milieu of village life, tend to have domestic *vile* who bake bread and entertain guests in their caves. The epic, narrative song is the genre par excellence to serve as vehicle for the exploits of the martial *vila*, and the fabulate and memorate are the same for the domestic *vila*. Other genres may be more divided in their depictions, but still fall to a general division of song-martial *vila* : oral narrative-domestic *vila*.

What is of critical importance is the fact that these differences in depiction are marked enough to be crucial information in contextualizing the use of a supernatural being. These dynamic, detailed and contextualized understandings of the *vila* move well beyond the simple depictions we find in traditional survey studies and their descendants. The *vila* offers a clear example that survey studies of supernatural beings must conduct their analyses with an eye to generic division and differing functional employment of their quarry in the traditional practices of fabulators, practitioners and believers if they are to be of any real use to scholars.

### Innovation vs. Tradition in *Vila* Songs and Oral Narratives

When one deals intensively enough with a wide range and number of oral traditions in their natural environments, it becomes increasingly difficult to accept analyses of traditional oral crafts that ignore the role of individual fabulators.<sup>1</sup> In this, Albert Lord's insights into oral traditions are indispensable. Some who have followed Lord's theories have placed more stress on the power of the tradition and the importance fabulators place on adhering to them (Bynum 1978:102, 321, 337, 347), while others have, conversely, placed more importance on the philosophical ingenuity expressed in individual innovation (Rebel 2013:106-26, 131-74). Whatever the perfect balance of understanding might be, what is of critical importance is the conceptual frame wherein oral narratives are recognized as being composed by innovative and imaginative tellers and singers who work within the conceptual boundaries of an accepted tradition, but actively engage with it in innovative ways.<sup>2</sup> This dynamic nexus between novelty and conservatism is in full display in the motifs presented in this thesis. The *vila* can lend further insight into how singers and tellers negotiated that territory when depicting supernatural beings.

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<sup>1</sup> See Tatar 1987:46-7 or Zipes 1993:41 for a contrary approach which relies upon simplifications of the 'cultural character' of folk tales.

<sup>2</sup> Whether this engagement is a conscious and intentional act is not an issue I will take up here, but is worthy of discussion. See Bynum (1978:102, 321, 337) on this point and the comments of Đemail Zogić as some counterpoint (Parry and Lord 1954:240-1). The wealth of interviews that Parry and Lord conducted with their informants are telling and well and worth reviewing (see those listed as 'Conversation' or '*Razgovor*' in Parry and Lord 1953, 1954; Međedović 1974, as well as those marked '*Pričanje*' on the online Parry Collection digitized archive [Milman Parry Collection 2012]). One should also keep in mind the circumstances of the interviews when assessing the data gathered (Briggs 1986; Ranković 2012).



A range of factors determine the inclusion of a *vila* in a song or tale. Some story-patterns that involve dependent motifs demand inclusion of the *vila*, but even these often prove to have multiforms that lack her. We have seen that the *vila* is commonly replaced by other figures in motifs such as the ‘Call with Secret Information or Strategy’ motif (usually by humans), or the ‘Remove Heart’ motif (usually by witches), but she may even be replaced or removed from such intrinsic roles as the ‘Musa Battle’ motif (MH I.52), or the ‘Impede Building’ motif (MH V.91). Data on exact transmission of *vila* songs from one singer to another are almost non-existent, such that definitive statements about the particulars of that process are difficult to make. Examples where *vile* are replaced with generic ‘something’s (MH I.74 l. 171; MH II.2 l. 9), or where a calling *vila* is revealed to be a human character (Vojniković-Pezić 1887-8b.41) may possibly represent singer adaptations aimed at removing the *vila* from certain roles. Evidence seems to point against this reading, however, since those same singers will elsewhere include *vile* in their songs, or even in the same song. It is more likely that singers simply continue to sing a song in the way that it was taught to them; if it originally included a *vila*, then she will likely carry over. This does not mean, however, that the singer will not adapt the *vila* within the song to suit his or her personal repertoire.

Albert Lord mentions an experiment he conducted where his amanuensis and native singer Nikola Vujnović was asked to perform a song, ‘Marko Kraljević and Relja of Pazar,’ in front of the singer Salih Ugljanin. The latter singer was then asked to sing the song as he had just learned it (2000:102). Lord tells us that, quite notably, where Vujnović’s telling included a number of *vile*, Ugljanin’s version reduced their number to

only the one *vila* necessary for attacking and later marrying Relja (102);<sup>3</sup> Lord suggests that Ugljanin has converted the song to align with his (singular) use of *vile* in his own personal style and oeuvre. One might be tempted from this anecdote to posit a predilection in singers for a standardized use of their *vile* across multiforms of the same motif but, yet again, the fluid and innovative practices of singers obviate efforts to systematize their practice. Pavao Raos of Medov Dolac provided the collector Mate Ostojić two exceedingly similar songs—actually two multiform story-patterns with alternate opening sequences—with a host of shared themes and motifs and both including *vile* in a ‘Heal’ motif (Ostojić 1880-3a.217, 243). Despite approaching the motifs in a similar manner, the singer chose to highly differentiate the sequences, having three *vile* heal with mountain herbs in song 243, while having a single *vila* retrieve a healing balm from the city of Zadar in song 217 (‘Heal’ in Narrative Songs)

These alterations at the level of individual singer are augmented anew by those that reflect regional practices. Thus, three helper-*vile* arrive to heal a hero in all regions, but are regularly named with their formulaic epithet ‘*do tri b’jele vile*’ (three white *vile*) in Dalmatia (pg. 95 above). The hero’s *vila* in a ‘Musa Battle’ motif can never aide him in battle. Her aversion to fighting on Sunday, or fighting an unfair battle arise everywhere,

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<sup>3</sup> This experiment in song transmission would be a perfect example to investigate in-depth, but unfortunately Lord seems to have made some error of attribution and one of the songs is not locatable for more intensive study; we are left only with his anecdote. Vujnović’s song is retrievable, it is kept on record #1726 in the Parry Collection under PN 199a. Ugljanin’s version, however, is said to be under PN 656, but no such song exists there. I have searched through all of Ugljanin’s recordings but failed to find ‘The Wedding of Relja of Pazar’ or any similar song. It is possible that Lord misattributed this song to Ugljanin in his text or that some other error has occurred.

but only in Bosnia is she busy fighting his enemy's *vile*, and only in Slavonia and Syrmia is she busy with her infant child ('Musa Battle' in Narrative Songs).

These regional dictates, both wide and localized, set fairly firm boundaries for traditional *vila* behaviour, but, as we have seen, within those confines singers felt at liberty to play with the *vila* in various ways. The same motif or story-pattern might be told dramatically, tragically or humorously (see the 'Water Guard' motif for illustrative examples) depending on the whims of the singer. Motifs that are generally not associated with one another were also acceptably combined in novel and sometimes outlandish arrangements (Banić 1885.85). Completely original story-patterns involving the *vila* seem also to have been accepted, so long as they made recognizable connections to other aspects of her tradition, such as transformation into snakes, or her connection with the hero Banović Sekula (MH I.74, 75). A very fluid matrix of free association of traditional traits, motifs and story-patterns connected to the *vila* appear to have verified her songs. This meant that lesser-skilled singers might even draw her into a song clumsily, or even unintentionally, when certain portions of the song seemed to offer these associations. This is apparently the case with Stanko Janković's ungainly song about the birth of Marko Kraljević (Ilić 1878a.1) where a *vila* searching for water prays to God, but is instead answered by another *vila*. The search for water dictates a pattern found in songs of thirsty heroes in the mountains ('Know Where Water is') that demands that a *vila* answer. When the second *vila* informs the first that she will give birth to Marko Kraljević, another traditional pattern is touched upon and the second *vila*, very oddly tells the mother that Marko will give her shade (as in the 'Shade and Suckle' motif). This might also explain

the ‘Water Guard’ *vila* who sleeps through the entirety of a song that was never intended to involve her (MH I.35)<sup>4</sup> and many other examples of odd behaviour and poorly introduced *vile*.

Some of these associations seem to have been powerful and common enough to enable fabulators to take larger risks with drawing the *vila* away from them. Tradition dictated that *vile* transform predominantly into egg-laying animals (mostly birds and snakes [Barber 1997]), though tale tellers might dare to extend her reptilian snake form to an amphibian toad form (Ivanišević 1905:261-2), or to have *vile* transform into horses, given their very strong connection to those animals (Lang 1914:65). The singer Anica Begin, pushed beyond these traditional strictures and had the *vila* transform into an old woman, but only in a song where she had first transformed into an eagle (MH II.20). Such manipulation was perhaps easier for singers like Begin who, it will be remembered, sat outside of the traditional framework of epic singers—both for being a woman and for learning her art on the island of Šipán where a unique hybrid ballad-epic singing tradition obtained (Perić-Polonijo 1996:13-4). This careful pushing of the boundaries where they are most trodden and known seems to also inform those ironic and humorous uses of the *vila* that rely entirely upon the metonymic connotations and referentiality of material in the traditional idiom (‘Tradition-Reflexive Uses’ in Narrative Songs). Such uses could only function competently because an emic audience would already know what the *vila* *should* be doing in the song (cf. Foley 1991:6-17, 75; 1995:7-28).<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> One might also read this, instead, as an attempt at ironic humour.

<sup>5</sup> This point lends credence to much of Foley’s work on the referential nature of oral tradition, but it also challenges those aspects of his theory that seek to deify them. He has proposed that inversions of traditional structures would necessarily fail in the oral traditional logic by compromising their metonymic

All of these examples and others presented throughout this thesis clearly illustrate the options available for traditional singers and tellers to innovate upon the traditions and draw them into novel territory, or to alter the telling of a song or oral narrative based on their own personal style. And yet, at every turn, the time-honoured nature of the tradition itself sets boundaries and conditions upon how far innovation may draw away from accepted standards. Many scholars have misunderstood Lord's exegeses on oral traditions as suggesting that tradition shackled and restrained artists in their craft (Finnegan 1976; 1977:69-86), but this is simply not true. Lord was well aware that the tradition acted only as a tether on the dynamic movements of the fabulators and spoke regularly about the innovative and creative prowess of the artists working within it (Lord 1991:41-2, 62-71, 72-103; 2000:29, 102-23; Međedović 1974:4-6, 10, 13-34).<sup>6</sup> The use of the *vila* in oral traditions is no different, and an intensive analysis of her tradition, as presented in this thesis, reveals the marvelous ingenuity involved in telling her tales and singing her songs.

These insights have wider implications for the study of other supernatural beings, not only those for whom scholars might choose to extend a similar expansive study, but

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signification. Thus, he suggests, a Greek rhapsode would never use a phrase like "slow-footed Achilles" or "gullible Odysseus" because these would undermine the stereotyped epic thought-world shared between singer and audience (1991:52). The *vila*'s data suggests that he is incorrect in this. If we had more examples of Greek epic singing beyond Homer, we would likely find rhapsodes innovating on tradition (including such inverted parody) as regularly as the human imagination innovates in other arenas of culture and entertainment. It is precisely because the audience knows the tradition so well that their expectations may be subverted and parodied with such humorous, artistic play. See also Zimmerman on the lack of improvisation in the tradition (1986:64, 68-9).

<sup>6</sup> Svetozar Koljević (1980) has also explored this character of the songs at length. See particularly his comments on Lord's work (342). In this regard, too, I am leery of the division that Foley draws between the Muslim and Christian songs (1991:97-8). I do not recognize the variance he suggests, and worry about the implications of suggesting that the songs of Muslim singers are dictated more by tradition while Christian songs are more prone to artistic innovation (104-6). This thesis has furnished a number of examples to contradict this view.

also, importantly for those beings for whom less substantial evidence is available. These methods combat proclivities to see oral traditions (and the monsters within them) in a condescending manner as patterned utterances of simple people dreaming of bigger myth-worlds (in epic songs, for instance) or speaking about their own trivial worlds (in oral narratives). The methods laid out in this thesis actively refuse the remythologization of supernatural beings into static monolithic figures by scholarly appraisal (Rebel 2013:151) and demand of scholars to see all tellings and singings of oral traditions as located in a performative event and grounded in the experience of a particular teller or singer working dynamically with their tradition. For those materials which lack all contextual information of collection as well as biographical information, or extensive repertoires of fabulators, it demands that we at least recognize the situated nature of that material and keenly watch for hints about how the figure is being used, either within the text, or in comparison with other examples. It demands that at times we use an empathetic historical method (Lincoln 1999:149-151; Rebel 2013:17-67) to at least imagine the variant possibilities of the origins of a text.

## A Note on How this Study Could Go Further

Although this thesis is quite expansive in scope, the methodological aims and underpinnings of the research can be extended in multiple directions to facilitate a yet finer level of analysis and more comprehensive understanding of the traditions of the *vila*. The first and most obvious extension would be on a spatial level within the same temporal context. The song data drawn from Montenegro between 1815 and 1915 is quite scant and could use bolstering, but a larger lacuna is represented by material of all genres drawn from Serbia at the time. Careful readers will have noted that *vila* song and tales collected or published by Serbian folklorists such as Vuk Stefanović Karadžić, Veselin Čajkanović, and Tihomir Đorđević are generally drawn from outside the political entity of Serbia.<sup>7</sup> For the epic songs, this is partly explained by the fact that the traditional

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<sup>7</sup> Readers may wonder about the divide between Orthodox and Catholic singers and why this division has not played a larger role in this thesis. The simple answer is that most collectors did not include this information about their informants. The materials themselves offer little insight since the Christian heroes are largely shared by both, unlike the divide between the Muslim and Christian materials. For Vuk's collection we can assume with some certainty that singers from whom he collected material in Serbia (and for which he did not provide detailed biographies) would have been Orthodox and identified as Serbian if they had a notion of their own ethnicity (which was not always the case). This is certainly true of materials he collected pre-1834. The same can be said for most of the singers who fled Ottoman-controlled areas into the newly-autonomous Serbian Principality, as well as most Montenegrin informants from the mainland, who most often identified with the Serbian cause and ethnonym. It cannot, however, be assumed for any of the materials collected by Vuk, or his contributors in Dalmatia, Herzegovina, Slavonia or Croatia since we know that Vuk extended his conception of a 'Greater Serbian' entity to include all štokavian speakers, despite many of them being Catholic or Muslim and often identifying as Croatian or Bosnian/Bosniak/Turkish (Stefanović Karadžić 1849). An anecdote related by Antun Mažuranić makes it clear that Vuk was all but willing to assign Serbian status to those who considered themselves Croats (Popović 1973:101), and we cannot know which materials from these areas would have been collected from non-Serbs. By the time of Matica Hrvatska's collecting, peasants were more likely to know and identify with a specific ethnonym. Though they are few, most MSs that contain material collected from Orthodox informants noted this fact, although few note whether the informants identified as Serbian (see the row that one example of this caused the collector Pero Delić [1897a, 1897b]). It can be assumed with more certainty that the majority of Matica Hrvatska's materials which are undesignated were collected from Catholic singers who identified as Croatian, yet, even here, we cannot rule out the chance that certain materials in some of the collections might have been recorded from Serbian/Orthodox informants without noting this. This, however, little affects the materials which are shared across the Christian communities and reflect

cradle of this singing derived from the areas within and surrounding the range of the Dinaric Alps from Croatia to Montenegro (Bynum 1979:1; Golemović 2008:13), but for oral narratives it seems to be simply coincidence that the vast majority of lore was drawn from Orthodox/Serb fabulators in other regions. Exploration into some lesser-known collections would likely reveal added material to fill in regional distribution of Serbian materials in the synchronic map.

There are also a number of oral traditional genres that are missing from this study or are poorly represented. A fuller study would expand upon the proverbs, riddles and charms/spells that have been presented here in very small number. This thesis also lacks jokes and humorous and ribald songs and tales involving the *vila*. Much ribald and humorous material was reviewed for this work but no examples were found using *vile*. It seems that she was not deemed suitable for these materials by tellers and singers—a similar situation to her use in religious songs. This is not to say that many of the songs in which she is used do not contain humorous or ribald elements, but I have not seen her in those songs or stories specifically told in jest. For vulgar materials, she is not present in Vuk Stefanović Karadžić's *Crven Ban* (1987a) nor *A Dinja Pukla* (1987b), although the collections are admittedly small. It would be profitable to search for her in Friedrich S. Krauss's vast *Anthropophytia* volumes.

Another necessary synchronic expansion of this dataset would involve the most important genre lacking in the study, ritual traditions. The research behind this thesis has

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regional traditions rather than religious or ethnic. For some discussion on the role of Serbian ethnicity by various Serbs living in Croatia and contributing to MH or the *ZbNŽO* see (Ardalić 1900, 1903, 1910; Banović 1922; Ciganović 1885b).



focused most intently upon oral traditions, but even when ritual traditions were sought, few were found. Disregarding the ritual tales in this survey (Chpt. 3), which most likely do not reflect real ritual traditions, the entirety of my sources produced only two descriptions of ritual practices and concomitant ritual recitations related to the *vila*.

Vuk Vrčević provided Vuk Stefanović Karadžić with a description of a ritual performed in Budva, Montenegro on the day of Ascension. Vuk (St. Karadžić) presented the account thus:

Up until some 20 years ago in Budva there was a custom that every year on Ascension [*Spasov dan*], early in the morning a number of young girls and boys would head out to a hill that they called *Spas*.<sup>8</sup> All present would be dressed in long gowns and, aside from that, the lads and lasses all have wreaths on their heads made of various flowers. At the top of that hill there are walls of a church (probably a ruin), about which they tell tales that it was called St. Spas, after which the hill is now named too. In front of these walls, for this day, was specifically made... a large threshing floor, which even today, although it has fallen into disrepair, is called 'The *Vila*'s threshing floor' [*Vilino gumno*]. As soon as the young people of Budva got to the hill, they would break into *kolo* and then the men would sing "Good morning, white *vile*! And give it [?] to us!" When the girls had sung in return, then they would all sing the first song presented here. Then they would chat a bit and rest, then sing the second song. Then they would eat snacks together, the men would jest and play, then they would all go home. As was said in the introduction, it is about 20 years now that this practice has died out..." (Vuk I:82)

The other account comes from Josip Tomec of Virje in northern Croatia who related a very short account of a ritual used to protect against *vile*:

When the hay is drying during harvest, then sometimes it happens that the whole stack of hay whirls about, and the hay flies into the air like a tower: then the folk say that *vile* or *coprnice* [sorceresses/witches] are going to eat. Allegedly, that happens around noon, then the folk cross their arms, legs and fingers, saying that the *vile* or *coprnice* may do them no harm. (1898-1903:595)

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<sup>8</sup> The hill is literally named 'Salvation,' linking it to the Ascension-day ritual (lit. Salvation Day in BCMS).

The dearth of data is most certainly not indicative of extant material, and indubitably not of praxis. There is no question that the *vila* factored into a number of ritual practices in the region and that more concerted research into these traditions would produce positive results.<sup>9</sup> Éva Pócs has focused her studies of fairy-like creatures in the Balkans (1989; 2005; 2018) predominantly on these features. Extracting her *vila*-specific materials and following the sources to map attestation would be an excellent starting point for such a study. One assumes there must exist ethnographic accounts that include more from the 19<sup>th</sup> century as well.

It would be important to scour ethnographic material for common vernacular practices regarding the *vila*, but perhaps the most lucrative ritual material would arise from the connection between local folk healers and their connection to *vile*. The wealth of oral traditions which describe human consorts learning occult knowledge from *vile* are in fact representative of the lore surrounding real ritual practice among folk-healers of the region. Carlo Ginzburg was the first scholar to draw attention to this phenomenon when he found accounts of witch trials in 17<sup>th</sup> century Dalmatia that mirrored those he outlines in the Friuli region of Italy (1983:142-3). He briefly discussed two accounts of *vilenjaci*, tried as witches in Dalmatian inquisitorial trials, who claimed to have learned healing

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<sup>9</sup> In fact, the *vila* was so deeply ingrained in the vernacular imagination that a number of plants were even named after her. Đorđević provides a fairly extensive list: ‘*Vila*’s nail/peg’ (*vilin klinac*, *Marasmius oreades*; known in English as the Fairy-ring mushroom), ‘*Vila*’s onion’ (*vilin luk*, *Muscari racemosum*; grape hyacinth), ‘*Vila*’s wreath’ (*vilin vinac*, *Lycopodium L.*; Ground pine or Creeping cedar), ‘*Vila*’s hair’ (*vilina/vilinje kose*, *Cuscuta epithymum L.*; Lesser dodder, Hellweed, or Strangle-tare), ‘*Vila*’s sieve’ (*vilino sito*, unidentified grass), ‘*Vilenica*’s herb’ (*Circaea lutetiana L.*; Enchanter’s nightshade), ‘*Vilovnjak*’s (mushroom, presumably)’ (unidentified large mushroom, said to grow in a *vila-kolo*). It is likely that these plants hold positions in the inventory of folk medicine. In some regions, too, an insect, the Broad-bodied Chaser/Darter (*Libellula depressa*), was known as the ‘*Vila*’s horse’ (1953:110)

spells from *vile*. This line of research was taken up again, almost 40 years later, by Zoran Čiča (2002a; 2002b) who uncovered a number of accounts from the same time period of male and female folk healers (called *vilenjaci* and *vilenice*, respectively) who claimed to have learned knowledge of herbs and gained healing powers from their personal connections with *vile*. Given that oral traditions from the 19<sup>th</sup> century still regularly mention this clandestine pedagogical relationship, and that such folk healers were still attested in the 20<sup>th</sup> century in Macedonia (Petreska 2008) and in eastern Serbia (Vivod 2018), investigation into ethnographic research from the 19<sup>th</sup> century should reveal more data about this phenomenon.<sup>10</sup>

The second expansion of the data would involve contributing a temporal context and moving into the centuries both preceding and proceeding this study. For the 18<sup>th</sup> century, materials would be scarce, but the starting points are obviously exploration of the *vila*'s role in the *Bugarštice* (Bogišić 1878; Miletich 1990), as well as in the epic decasyllabic songs collected in the Erlangenski Manuscript (Gezeman 1925). The 20<sup>th</sup> century would be much more productive, with the Parry-Lord collection providing a plethora of songs for analysis, and the work of such scholars as Maja Bošković-Stulli, Olinko Delorko, and many others lending a comparable abundance of oral narratives that would illuminate the channels forged by the traditions in the century after this survey. One could even carry the oral narrative survey into the 21<sup>st</sup> century with the work of Luka Šešo (2016) and other contemporaneous collectors, though the research would become

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<sup>10</sup> These phenomena not only have parallels in various in various Balkan societies (Pócs 2005, 2018), but again show marked similarities with Celtic beliefs (Hall 2005, 2007:153) that deserve further inquiry.

mostly salvage work aimed at finding which of the largely moribund traditions have survived to the present day. Such a study could track the movement, life-course of, and changes to various motifs over time, providing insight into the ebb and flow of these shifting traditions, including those based on dramatic social factors. It is well known that many of the singers from whom Vuk collected songs in Serbia had been displaced to those regions from Bosnia, Herzegovina and Montenegro due to shifting borders and armed struggle. Can we better fine-tune our analyses to explore which traditions were influenced by the natural movement of those singers with their songs versus the dissemination of Vuk's published work back into the oral traditional landscape? Are there songs and tales unique to Serbia which were altered with the influx of refugees from other Ottoman controlled areas? A strong diachronic study could open numerous avenues of inquiry.

Once constructed on both a synchronic and diachronic level, such an intricate and detailed study would serve highly extensive, precise, and elaborate comparative work. The same method could be replicated on a close circle of analogues—the Bulgarian *samovila* and *samodiva*, the Macedonian *juda*, Albanian *zâna*, etc.—to examine the range of motifs in various genres, if motifs diffuse spatially, and if they map clearly to language groups and beings, or else extend across boundaries. Is the *vila* in central Serbia more similar to her Dalmatian namesake, or to the geographically nearer western Bulgarian *samovila*? Are all of these beings exact cognates or are there important differences in their traditions? Once a specifically Balkan comparative study were conducted, one could extend the research to a wider European sphere to the many comparative beings in other

lands—Elves, Huldras, Dís, Ruslaki, etc. A range of survey studies based on this model would prove infinitely useful to comparative research and would eliminate misconceptions incurred by non-specialists attempting to extend their studies to unfamiliar regions, as well as curbing propensities to cherry-pick data in order to support hypotheses.

## Conclusion

This thesis represents an attempt to produce a useful reference work that also addresses a number of inter-related problems in survey studies on supernatural beings. In this way the thesis's aims are two-fold. At the most superficial level, I have attempted to produce a very detailed survey study of the *vila* which simply answers the questions, “What is a *vila* and what does she do?” This work places itself in the service of folklorists and mythologists (particularly comparativists) who, to date, have not had extensive access to the materials here surveyed, either due to lack of physical access or else because of unfamiliarity with the language. This is the most complete and intensive study of the *vila* in the English language and I hope that will make it useful. Concurrent with this goal, I have also striven to intensively document and cite both published sources and unpublished archival materials. I hope that this pedantic citing will aid those who wish to further explore the motifs presented here in greater detail to more readily locate pertinent materials and to more easily navigate both published sources and the archive at The Croatian Academy of Science and Art, should they access it.

On a deeper level, this study has attempted to rethink how scholars approach such studies by contextualizing the data available temporally, spatially and historically, and by linking it back to the singers and story-tellers who carried, altered, and produced the traditions that house the *vila*. Such a study focuses on the traditions that give life to supernatural beings and the people who use, share, and perpetuate those traditions, as well as recognizing that those traditions disseminate and travel over time and space in a manner akin to language diffusion. This, in effect, serves to draw research on supernatural

beings more deeply into the methods used to scrutinize the folklore which is their sole vehicle of transmission. This aspect of the study also stresses oral traditions and supernatural beings as products, even now and more stringently in the past, balanced constantly between the tether of tradition and the innovative imagination of individual tellers. I am not the first to do any of these things, but only hope to argue for the need for all such work to be equally systematic in its analysis as well as to be presented in a historically contextualized manner.

By foregrounding the role of singers, tellers, believers and ritual enactors in perpetuating the traditions of supernatural beings, not only do studies celebrate the traditional artists who bequeathed these materials to the world, they also elucidate the generic divisions, lines of transmission, use and context of the materials. This kind of analysis also provides more data to those studies of the transmission of oral traditions and the various ways that individual singers, tellers and practitioners engage with a tradition and innovate upon it. In doing so, scholars can present the lively and boisterous face of the traditions rather than depicting them as static and immobile. By mapping folklore materials synchronically, we can better delineate their territorial provenience. This practice also provides a speculative window into the *longue durée* transmission patterns of oral and ritual traditions which can be tested against prospective diachronic comparison of synchronic maps produced for pre- and proceeding times. Finally, by injecting historical-anthropological insights into such a study, we can better contextualize the materials and their performance-context under natural circumstances, as well as under the context of their collection and publication.

This thesis proves that such an approach is highly beneficial for understanding supernatural beings and their oral and ritual traditions. When the *vila*'s lore is divided by genre, genre-specific patterns arise. The data produces a picture of highly distinct motival variation between songs and oral narratives and even some defining physical features and behaviour which do not span this divide. It provides context to such phenomena, such as the fact that informant descriptions reflect the *vila* as depicted in memorates and fabulates. Insights like these better aid researchers in contextualizing new data when it is encountered in other sources. Synchronic frequency mapping of motifs means that materials which lack details of provenience can have convincing origins postulated. Tracing motival bleeding and transgressions can facilitate recognition of unique regions such as the island of Šipán where female singers often adapted motifs from lyric songs into long and ornate narrative songs. Comparing wide ranges of motival examples means that core traditions can be differentiated from unique regional patterns (dialects) as well as personal innovation from certain fabulators (idiolects). Thus, the 'Musa Battle' motif presents the critical components of its core, while revealing its dialect variants—a *vila* who cannot help because she is fighting another *vila* in Bosnia or because she is tending her child in Slavonia—and various idiolectal innovations—such as Ivan Pranjić's protagonist who uses false claims of *vile* fighting eagles to gain the advantage in his struggle ('Musa Battle' in Narrative Songs). By drawing upon historical context we can postulate possible inspirations for our hapax legomena—such as Ahmed Čaušević's mocking prison-*vile* ('Insult Turks in Dungeon' in Narrative Songs).



A study built on this model produces highly contextualized data to competently inform subsequent research with a better understanding of the supernatural being in question and the context of its use. It undermines simple designations of the ‘cultural character’ of supernatural beings, dismantles insidious political manipulations of folklore data on supernatural beings (pg. 14 above), and rebuts those scholars who would simplify the relationships between cognate figures and lend primacy to foreign understandings by glossing figures like the *vila* as a ‘South Slavic fairy/elf/nymph.’ This heightens the precision with which comparative models can speak to cognatic relationships and lends a strong foundation upon which better analytical models can be built. With her dynamic blending of various unique and common motifs and her use in a wide range of oral and ritual traditions, the *vila* presents a clear example of what such refined studies might look like, and why they supersede older work built on outdated and simplistic models and lacking critical context and analysis.

## Glossary of Terms

### BCMS Terms Commonly Used in the Thesis

**Ban** – Political title equivalent to viceroy.

**Bugarštica** – An older genre of short songs (attested from the 15<sup>th</sup> to 18<sup>th</sup> centuries) with long metered line (normally 15 or 16 syllables) that are balladic in tone. Also *bugarščica*.

**Coprnik/Coprnica** – Most often sorcerer/sorceress or warlock/witch. Sometimes describes male and female folk healers, but generally carries a pejorative sense. The term is used mostly in traditionally kajkavian speaking dialect-regions. Derived from Ger. *zaubern*.

**Čoban/čobanica** – Shepherd/shepherdess. Turkish *çoban* from Pers. چوپان, shepherd. Used as commonly as the native terms *pastir/pastirica* in oral traditions.

**Čutura** – A carved, wooden canteen. Turkish *çotra*.

**Ćesar** – Emperor. Usually used in songs for the Emperor of the Holy Roman Empire in contrast to the title *car* (czar) which is used for the Emperor of Russia, the Sultan of the Ottoman Empire and other ‘Eastern’ lands. Both terms are derived from Latin Caesar.

**Divit** – A highly embellished ink-stand that holds quills, ink and other writing implements. Also a portable box carried on a person and containing a stick of ink mixed with fat so that it does not run.

**Dizdar** – Fortress Commander

**Djever** – Chaperone and guard for a bride in a wedding party. Usually the groom’s brother. Because of this practice it is often used for any brother-in-law. Also *đever*, *diver*.

**Dobre/Dobrice** – ‘Goodnicks,’ ‘Good ones.’ An epithet of the *vile*.

**Đavao** – The Devil. Also *đaval*, *đavo*.

**Entari** – Ottoman long coat or robe.

**Guslar** – A traditional singer of epic narrative songs. Also *guslač*.

**Gusle** – A traditional single-stringed fiddle made of maple wood and traditionally strung with horse hair. The most common instrument for accompaniment of oral epics and long narrative songs.

**Hajduk** – A bandit/brigand. From Hungarian *hajdúk*.

**Harambaša** – A leader of hajduks. From Turkish *Haramibaşı* = *Harami* (bandit) + *Baş* (head, leader).

**Haždaja/Aždaja** – Dragon/serpent/wyrm. Derived from the serpent Aži Dahāka from the Avesta and brought to the region via the Turks.

**Kaur** – Christian, non-muslim, better infidel (derived from a Persian term for Zoroastrians). Sometimes the word specifically designates Catholics in songs. Also *kaurin*, *đaurin*.

**Knez** – Prince, Duke, or Count. A royal and noble title in various Slavic lands. Derived from Proto-Germanic *\*kunungaz* (king).

**Kolo** – Wheel, but also the name of a number of stylized peasant circle dances. *Vile* dance these dances and the name *kolo* is also applied to the circles that they leave in fields after dancing.

**Kum/Kuma** – Godfather/godmother, also best-man/maid-of-honour. Fictive kinship through church practice. A witness to a child's baptism will take the title of *kum* or *kuma* and be connected to the child for life, as do the witnesses to a marriage. In the baptismal case the *kum* and *kuma* are most often peers to the parents and older than the baby, while *kumovi* (pl.) for weddings belong to a similar age-group as the bride and groom.

**Nedobrice** – 'Nogoodniks.' An epithet of the *vile*.

**Nika/Nijekovi** – 'Denials' those things that humans deny ownership of. In some regions this denial forsakes those items to the *vile*, who sustain themselves on them.

**Opanci** – (sing. *opanak*) Leather shoes worn traditionally in the region. Once western European shoe styles began entering the region, *opanci* became a marker of peasant class.

**Pobratim/Posestrima** – Oath-Brother/sister, or else Blood-brother/sister. Fictive kinship adopted by people as a vow of comradeship and support. Often used in martial circumstances.

**Pripovetka/Pripovijetka/Pripovitka** – Story or tale. Covers a wide range of oral narrative genres.

**Raja** – Non-Muslim subject in the Ottoman Empire. Used for both individual subjects and the *dhimmi* population en masse. Ottoman Turkish رعايا, derived from Arabic رَعِيَّة in the pl. Lit. herd, flock; subjects.

**Rakija** – Hard fruit brandy of the region. Most commonly made from plum or grape must, but many fruits, herbs, and flowers were used or added for flavour. Turkish rakı, from Arabic عَرَق, perspiration, wine.

**Sač** – Large iron or earthen bell placed over certain foods (mostly bread and *burek* pies), then covered in embers as a cooking method. From Ottoman Turkish ساج.

**Sijelo/silo/selo** – Sit (past, neut.). Used as a term for small, informal gatherings.

**Sudenica** – Three supernatural women who decide the fate of a child at birth. Akin to Greek *Moirai* and Norse *Norns*. Also *sudaje*, *usude*, *orisnice*, or *rodenice*.

**Šarac** – Piebald. Used for various animals (horses, cows, dogs, cats, etc.). Also the name of Marko Kraljević's wondrous horse.

**Tambura** – Used for two instruments in the region. One more often encountered in the north (particularly in Slavonia) and similar to a long-necked mandolin. The second, a more recognizably eastern instrument, often also called a *šargija* or *saz*. The latter is used for epic singing where the *gusle* is not employed and most commonly connected to singers from the Gornja Krajina and Bosanska Krajina regions.

**Turčin/Turkinja** – A Turk m./f. but also used in the songs for Muslim Slavs in Bosnia and other regions.

**Vilenica** – A female healer who claims to have learned her arcane knowledge from *vile*. To my knowledge they do not appear in oral traditions.

**Vilenjak** – A human male associate of *vile*. Historically, male village healers who claim to have learned their healing knowledge from *vile*. In oral traditions these can be positive male healers, darker and more dangerous warlocks and sorcerers who associate with *vile*, humans who simply associate, or have sex with *vile*, or even, quite rarely with the sense

of being a male *vila*. Connection with *vile* is often thought to poison these men, regularly driving them mad and tainting their souls. Also *vilovnak*, *vilovnjak*, *vilaš*, *vilenik*.

**Vještica/Vištica/Veštica** – A cognate to English Witch. Like other European witches these appear in real life, village-level politics as a category for older women feared to be casting dark magic on others, and in oral traditions as a similar but more fantastic figure. There is also a male version (*vještac/vištac/veštac*, warlock) which is used much more rarely.

**Vladika** – Traditional religious and political leader of Montenegro.

**Vlah** – Vlach. Ethnonym for eastern Romance speaking groups. Most often Aromanians, but also Romanians (cf. Wallachia) and Istro-Romanians in the Balkans. Most of these groups assimilated into other ethnic groups in BCMS areas, and most often (particularly in Montenegro) adopted Eastern Orthodoxy and aligned themselves with the Serb ethnonym. Croats and Bosniaks will often use this as a derogatory term for Serbs. It is often used in place of ‘Serb’ in traditional songs, and, for some Muslim singers, may, more rarely, be used synonymously for ‘Christian.’ The term also became commonly used as a synonym for ‘shepherd’ in all groups.

**Voivode** – (BCMS *Vojvoda*). Lit. ‘war-leader.’ Originally a title for a principle military commander, it later became a medieval term for a noble territorial ruler or governor.

**Vrač/vračara** – Male/female village healer, also sometimes sorcerer/sorceress, warlock/witch.

**Vrag** – Devil. Can be used in place of *Davao* for the Christian conception of ‘the Devil,’ but most often was used in a general sense for lesser devils/imps.

**Vukodlak** – Lit. Wolf-hair. Originally this term seems to have described a supernatural being, a large wolf that devoured the moon during its waning. The term was later adopted as a variant name for a vampire, predominantly in western and central South Slavic regions (with *vampir*, as the common eastern term and the source of the terms adoption by Western European peoples). These are drunkards, criminals, suicides or odd and evil men who return after death to drink blood or milk, ravage livestock, sleep with their wives, or drain their kin and village-mates of life. In more recent times the term *vampir* has been re-adopted in the wider region from Western media and *vukodlak* has become a gloss for modern conceptions of a werewolf, though this does not appear to have been a native categorization. Also *volkodlak*, *ukodlak*, *kudlak*, *kudljak*, *vukozlak*.

**Zagonetka** – Puzzle. The solution to a puzzle is called an *odgonetka*.

## Uncommon or Lesser-Known English Terms

**Architrave** – Lintel or beam which spans the capitals of columns in a building or structure. From Ital. ‘chief beam.’

**Bosket** – A cluster of small trees or bushes. A thicket or grove depending on context. From Fr. Bosquet. Bosco wood, forest.

**Bosniak** – Ethnonym for Muslim Bosnians (*Bošnjaci*), as opposed to the political term Bosnian (*Bosanci*) for any people who live in Bosnia, or descend from Bosnians.

**Buda** – (BCMS *Budim*) The modern-day city of Budapest (BCMS *Budimpešta*), Hungary is a conglomerate entity of three formerly independent cities (unified in 1873)—Buda, Óbuda and Pest.

**Catherine Window** – Circular windows, particularly on churches. Also rose window, or wheel window when divided by spokes.

**Cordon** – An ornamental cord or braid.

**Czar** – (BCMS *car*) Emperor in Slavic languages.

**Doge** – (BCMS *dužd*) Chief magistrate and leader of the Republic of Venice. From Latin *dux*, military leader.

**Dolman** – (BCMS *dolama*, Turk. *dolaman*) A loose term for a number of Turkish garments worn on the upper body. Originally a long and loose-fitting garment, later, more popular forms were often short-cut, tightly-fitting military coats covered in decorative braiding with short sleeves that emphasized the layering of garments that was common for the time. The fashion spread throughout Europe and influenced hussar coats and other military garb.

**Ducat** – European trade coins used from the Middle Ages up to the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Most often gold, but sometimes silver.

**Ell** – (BCMS *lakat*, *haršin/aršin*) A measurement approximately equivalent to the length of a man’s arm from the elbow to the tip of the middle finger. About 18 inches, 46 cm., or one cubit.

**Eyalet** – Primary administrative division of the Ottoman Empire. From Ottoman Turkish إيالت.

**Fathom** – Unit of length which has varied over time in different places. Originally represented the approximate measure of the span of a man’s outstretched arms.

**Firman** – (BCMS and Turkish *ferman* from Persian فرمان) An official decree, edict, grant or permit issued by the Ottoman sultan. In the songs it is most often used for a letter of permission or an officiating document presented by a Turkish official to avouch the bearer. These are often forged by Christian heroes entering Turkish lands to ensure their safety. In rare occasions it is extended to any letter written by an Ottoman official.

**Groschen** – Silver coin used in various regions of the Holy Roman Empire.

**Holt** – A wooded hill.

**Hostler** – Groom or stableman. Formally the stablehand who takes care of horses at an inn but often applied to anyone who works with horses. May also be used as the name of an innkeeper Also *ostler*. From French *hostiler*.

**Janissary** – An elite corps of Ottoman infantry regiments originally composed of enslaved youths taken from the subject populations (Ottoman Turkish *يڭيچرى*, modern Turkish *yenîçeri*, BCMS *janjičari*. Lit. New [*yeni*] army [*çeri*]).

**Lea** – An open area of grassy or arable land.

**Military Frontier** – (BCMS *Vojna Krajina*) The guarded boundary zone between the Holy Roman (later Austro-Hungarian) and Ottoman Empires. Established in the 16<sup>th</sup> century and demilitarized and abolished by Franz Joseph in 1873. It was guarded by colonist-inhabitants (mostly Croatian, Serbian and German) who received land-grants in exchange for military service and border defense.

**Oak Gall** – (BCMS *galva*) Large round galls commonly found on various oak species caused by chemicals injected by gall wasp larvae. Oak galls were a critical ingredient in the production of writing ink (iron gall ink) from the Middle Ages to the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Also oak apple.

**Oke** – (BCMS *oka*) Common Ottoman measurement of mass. It was equal to 400 drams (*dirhem*) and is equivalent to 1.283 kg.

**Pasha** – High ranking Ottoman political and military position granted to governors, generals and other dignitaries. From Ottoman Turkish *پاشا*.

(Bread) **Peel** – A large, flat wooden paddle or shovel for placing and removing bread and other baked foods from a wood-fire, or other, oven.

**Quire** – (BCMS *arak*) Paper formats made from large sheets of vellum or parchment paper that have been folded into one another to produce a small booklet or manuscript. The term has come to denote many paper formats in various places and times. In the BCMS context at the time of this collecting, they were most often small packages of two or more large-format sheets, folded in the center to create a loose, unbound booklet. The leaves produced from this fold are about the size of a foolscap sheet. From Old French ‘*quayer*,’ or ‘*cayer*.’ Also a ‘gathering.’

**Selvage** – The edge of woven fabric. Often a specific type used to prevent its unravelling.

**Serdar** – (Ottoman Turkish *سردار*) Historically, a Turkish military rank akin to a general. It became a noble rank under *vojvoda* in the principalities of Serbia and Montenegro. In the songs it retains a military sense for both Muslim and Christian heroes, though usually designates a position more akin to commander or chief of a war party.

**Sequin** – (BCMS *cekin*) A Venetian gold piece, equivalent to a ducat

**Shieling** – (BCMS *stan*) Temporary mountain shelter (usually huts or cabins), or cluster of shelters used by pastoralist who follow a transhumance pastoral lifestyle—wintering in lowland valley settlements and grazing animals in hills and mountains during the summer. Also sheiling, shealing, sheeling.

**Span** – (BCMS *pedalj*) Unit of measure as the approximate distance between the tips of the thumb and small finger of a man’s splayed hand. Half of a cubit.

**Tarn** – A mountain lake.

**Thaler** – A silver coin used in various (mostly Germanic) nations throughout Europe from the 15<sup>th</sup> to 19<sup>th</sup> century.

**Vizier** – A high-ranking political advisor, counselor, or minister in the Ottoman Empire and amongst many other Eastern societies. Turk. *vezir*, from Ar. *وزير*.

## Appendices

### Appendix 1 – Weddings in Oral Epics

The weddings of the songs follow a model which blends fantasy, courtly wedding practices of the middle ages and village cultural practices that obtain into the present day. Since this model factors into so many songs, a brief description is apt. Typically a hero's mother will decide that he is of marriageable age and will enquire about for a suitable match; in other instances, the hero will hear tell of the great beauty of a certain daughter of a certain noble, or else in some instances there will be a suggested history where the hero has been visiting the same maiden and courting her for some time, waiting for her to come of age (usually 16 in the songs). Once the hero is made aware of the maiden, he, or a representative (father, mother, friend, etc.) will journey to her home and be received by her father as a guest to feast and drink wine and *rakija*. If the youth has come as suitor (*prosilac*, *mušterija*) to negotiate the wedding, then at such time he will make his intentions known and the father of the maiden will suggest that he shall give his blessings if the daughter (and sometimes her mother) agree. In most of these songs, the daughter has seen the hero approaching from her window and is already impressed with him. She will see him for the first time in a room where the father will ask if she accepts the match and she will agree. The hero will then present his prospective parents-in-law and bride with presents. For the maiden, the most common gifts are rings or a golden apple—a custom drawn from the folk culture where acceptance of an apple signifies the maiden's acceptance of the proposal (cf. Čajkanović 1994 IV:95). After gifts are given, the suitor

and the father of the maiden will retire to discuss a time-frame in which to plan the wedding. The hero will overnight (possibly with a secret visit by or to his prospective bride) and then head home to make preparations.

Back home he will work on gathering a wedding party (*svatovi*) of a large number (often given in the thousands. These numbers are products of the tradition, but even real weddings can take on surprisingly large attendances) drawn from young and able-bodied men in his region (as there is ever the threat of ambush). He will also acquire a *Djever/Dever/Diver* (usually the groom's brother who will act as a guard and chaperone for the bride), a *Kum* (the best man and witness to the marriage), a *Stari Svat/Svatovski Starješina/Svajski Starješina* (Party elder) a position of respect given an elder family member on the groom's side, *Barjaktar* (Standard-bearer), as well as a *Svat* or *Čauš* (chief herald) who leads the wedding party and is tasked with making the procession festive. When the predetermined time has passed, the wedding party will depart (fully armed in case of ambush) for the bride's home where they will attend celebrations for a number of days (usually two or three, with some songs extending the time to stress the wealth of the host, and a small number shortening the time due to a known threat in the plot). At the end of the festivities (*pir*), the groom (*Mladoženja, Duvegija/Dueglja*), and the other key figures of the party will be presented with gifts. At this point they will mount and receive the bride (*Mladenka/Mlada, Nevjesta/Nevesta/Nevista*) on her horse or, more rarely, in a coach. With the *Djever* guarding her and her bridesmaid(s) (*Diveruše/Djeveruše, Svatica, Fena, Jengija/jendija*) in tow, the party will make the perilous journey back to the home of the groom. The danger of bride theft, though



capitalized upon in oral traditions for dramatic effect, was not an imaginary danger. The practice was common up to a time not so distant from the singing of these songs and was still being practiced in some remote areas (See Parry and Lord [1954:290-2] for a first-hand account by Alija Fjuljanin of having just stolen his bride in 1934). With the bride safely home, a wedding ceremony would be held. The young maiden will take up residence in her husband's home. This is, of course, the stock proceedings of a wedding; multiple outcomes are presented in narrative songs depending upon the way the youth comes upon his bride, difficult tasks set to feuding suitors, if the wife is being kidnapped in an un-condoned union, successful ambushes, and the cross-faith unions which always demand that the bride be baptized into Christianity or 'turned-Turk' (*poturčiti se*) when the party returns to safety before the wedding can be held.

## Appendix 2 – Ottoman Turks in the Oral Traditions

The Ottoman Turks began their incursion into the Balkan Peninsula in the middle of the 14<sup>th</sup> century and by 1500 had taken control of almost the entire region. In 1356 they took a large swathe of territory from the Byzantine Empire, including Gallipoli, which served as a European base for westward expansion. By the 1370s, they had cut a swathe through Bulgaria and Serbia and dealt crippling blows to both empires. On September 26, 1371 the Turks defeated a Serbian army near Adrianople, killing King Vukašin Mrnjavčević (the father of the historical Marko Kraljević), and his brother Uglješa (Popović 1988:16), and the power vacuum left in their wake created a catastrophic struggle for supremacy among the Serbian nobility at a most inopportune time. Marko Mrnjavčević (Marko Kraljević) declared himself king at a convention held in Peć in 1374 in contention against Prince Lazar Hrebljanović, but while Hrebljanović sought to fend off the Turkish invasion, Marko became a vassal, pledging allegiance to the Ottoman Sultan (18). A loose alliance of Christian, South Slavic principalities was soon formed, led by Vuk Branković (Serbia), King Tvrtko (Bosnia), Ivan Horvat (Croatia) and Vlatko Vuković (Zeta) and presided over by Lazar Hrebljanović. This conglomerate army met the Ottoman forces and fell at the famous Kosovo Field in 1389. Though the battle was far from the most decisive loss to the Christians, it became enshrined in oral epic songs and the folk imaginary as the turning point at which the Balkans were lost. The knight, and later folk hero, Miloš Obilić managed to assassinate the Ottoman Sultan Murad I during the battle, but this great feat did little to diminish Turkish fervour. The Christian alliance was devastated, most of the leaders lost their lives and Prince Lazar was

beheaded after the battle on the orders of Murad's successor Bajazet I. By the 1390s, Albania, Bulgaria and most of Bosnia had fallen to the Turks, and by the 1450s, Constantinople had been taken. Serbia was under near total control, with Belgrade, and subsequently the greater part of Hungary, falling in 1521. These defeats continued nearly uninterrupted until the Sieges of Vienna in 1529 and 1532 were repelled and successful campaigns, such as the Battle of Sisak in 1593, forced the Ottoman line back out of Habsburg territories. After a third successful defense of Vienna in 1683, the Muslim Turks were pushed back anew and the Military Frontier that divided the Habsburg Empire from the Ottoman (almost exactly the modern day northern border between Croatia and Bosnia and Herzegovina) became largely stable. This set a precedent for the cultural character of the South Slavs in the area. The Serbs that did not escape to the Habsburg or Venetian Empires became a *dhimmi*, vassal population (*raja*) under the Ottoman Turks and carried a strong drive for freedom and nostalgia for their lost empire. The Dalmatians remained largely under Venetian control and so experienced open trade with the Turks, surprisingly porous border travel across the Dinaric Alps into Turkish lands (Wolff 2001), but also heavy Venetian and Italian influence. Serbs and Croats within Bosnia joined their peers in Serbia in vassalage, while a large number (particularly those who had belonged to the heretical Bogomil movement during the medieval period and the noble class) adopted Islam to avoid subject status. The Montenegrins fell under Turkish control, but retained a large degree of autonomy thanks to their fiery defence of their impassable mountainous region. And finally the Croatians, aligned with the Hungarians since 1102 and brought under Habsburg control after the Battle of Mohács in 1526, retained the

privilege of remaining under Catholic Christian rule, but under feudal conditions that were often equal or worse for the peasantry than those suffered under Ottoman rule. These conditions would obtain until the Ottoman Empire began to falter in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. The Serbs regained control of their lands and political autonomy in two subsequent uprisings (1804-13 and 1815-17), and various skirmishes found the Habsburgs slowly chipping away at Ottoman Territory until both Empires were dismantled in the First World War and the first Yugoslavia was built from their ruins.

Although there are older tropes scattered through the art, the singing of oral epics rests solely upon the drastic upheavals of these centuries and the conflicts between Christian Slavs and Muslim Ottomans. Battles such as that on Kosovo Field were enshrined in the songs and the historical rulers of the time became epic heroes of great renown. The songs committed historical battles into cultural memory, but also veered widely from historical accounts, bringing the material into the peasant art of legendary story-telling. The contradictory position of the historical Marko Mrnjavčević, a Christian lord under Turkish rule, translated into a complex, dramatic role for the epic Marko, a defender of the Christians against the Turks, and an intimidator of his ruler, the Turkish Czar. And yet, this unlikely character became a magnet for older mythic tropes of ancient songs, and the most popular hero of the songs. Most of the heroes of the Christian songs—Miloš Obilić, Smiljanić Ilija, Janković Stojan—are based on historical figures who fought against the Turks. This holds as well for the heroes of Bosnian Muslim singers—Halil and Mujo Hrnjetica, Mustajbeg of the Lika—who were derived from historical noblemen of the time. Thus, the Turk (either real Turks, or Muslim Slavs) are

the eternal enemy of the Christian songs, the Christians the only foe in the Muslim songs, and the borders between the empires become the loci for the raiding, bride-stealing, ambushes, and battles that give the songs their plots and drama.

## Appendix 3 – Double Citations and Published Materials

A number of texts discussed in this thesis have multiple citations. For the most part this applies to those songs that are cited both in their archival MS and their published form in the Matica Hrvatska Folk Songs Collections, but also applies to songs which appear in multiple MSs from the same collector. In order to de-clutter the thesis I have chosen to assign these songs a single citation in the text, and so here present their more expanded citations. This extensive citation serves two purposes. Firstly, it is hoped that this will aid future scholars in more quickly locating materials in the archive should they pursue their research there. This is particularly pertinent since the system used to organize the MSs in the Matica Hrvatska publications is no longer the organization system used in the archives and I hope to alleviate some time-consuming searching for future scholars. Secondly, this pedantry of citation is used to stress that when editorial discrepancies arose in my research, the MSs were always consulted to better clarify the document and return the research as closely as possible to the original collection event. Though the MS versions were always used rather than the published version, I have chosen to shorten citations in the thesis to the published versions, since these are more readily available to scholars. I hope they will excuse and understand the few times where the editors removed or added lines to the songs, thus causing a discrepancy in line citations. The first column in this list is the citation in the thesis.

MH I 32 – (MH I 32/Murat 1886a 35)  
MH I 36 – (MH I 36/Palunko 1886 80)  
MH I 45 – (MH I 45/Glavić 1887d 135)  
MH I 46 – (MH I 46/Pajić n.d. 4)  
MH I 51 – (MH I 51/MH II 1)

- MH I 53 – (MH I 53/MH II 69/Ljubidrag 1892 30)<sup>1</sup>  
MH I 55 – (MH I 55/Glavić 1887f 188)  
MH I 65 – (MH I 65/Glavić 1887c 110)  
MH I 68 – (MH I 68/Murat 1886a 43)  
MH I 74 – (MH I 74/Glavić 1887d 149)  
MH I 75 – (MH I 75/Obradović 1887a 14)  
MH I 78 – (MH I 78/Vodopić 1893 3)  
MH II 3 – (MH II 3/Vijolić 1887a 43)  
MH II 20 – (MH II 20/Glavić MH 1887e 160)  
MH II 26 – (MH II 26/Delić 1877 21)  
MH II 41 – (MH II 41/Ljubidrag 1892 22)  
MH II 42 – (MH II 42/ Glavić 1887f 186)  
MH II 43 – (MH II 43/ Ilić 1878b 8)  
MH II 72 – (MH II 72/Ivančić 1886 50)  
MH V 4 – (MH V 4/Banović 1908 27)  
MH V 22 – (MH V 22/Ciganović 1884 75)  
MH V 25 – (MH V 25/Ostojić 1880-3b 487)  
MH V 26 – (MH V 26/Trnski 1890 16)  
MH V 27 – (MH V 27/Rakovac 1877 54)  
MH V 28 – (MH V 28/Odić 1890 25)  
MH V 29 – (MH V 29/Bogdešić 1884 135)  
MH V 31 – (MH V 31/Pavlinović 1876b 563)  
MH V 32 – (MH V 32/Bervaldi-Lucić 1887 6)  
MH V 35 – (MH V 35/Bogdešić 1884 57)  
MH V 36 – (MH V 36/Ilić 1878b 277)  
MH V 37 – (MH V 37/Nametak 1897 4)  
MH V 38 – (MH V 38/Ostojić 1880-3b 481)  
MH V 41 – (MH V 41/Banović 1908 11)  
MH V 90 – (MH V 90/Hangi 1898 54)  
MH V 91 – (MH V 91/Hangi 1898 29)  
MH V 92 – (MH V 92/Šestić 1889 193)  
MH V 93 – (MH V 93/Pavlinović 1876a 17)  
MH V 124 – (MH V 124/Palunko 1886 1)  
MH V 159 – (MH V 159/Ostojić 1880-3b 336)  
MH V 198 – (MH V 198/Ostojić 1880-3b 150)  
MH VI 6 – (MH VI 6/Grgić 1881 11)  
MH VI 90 – (MH VI 90/Palunko 1886 187)  
MH VII 331 – (MH VII 331/Pavlinović 1876b 566)  
MH VII 339 – (MH VII 339/Tordinac 1885 28)  
MH VIII 13 – (MH VIII 13/Ilić 1878a 81/1878b 61)  
MH VIII 17 – (MH VIII 17/Ostojić 1880-3a 229)

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<sup>1</sup> It is unclear why the editors at Matica Hrvatska chose to publish this song in two subsequent volumes under different names.

MH VIII 28 – (MH VIII 28/Ostojić 1880-3b 28)  
MH IX 2 – (MH IX 2/Ilić 1878a 74/1878b 53)  
MH IX 5 – (MH IX 5/Rajić n.d. 11)  
MH X 8 – (MH X 8/Prčić n.d. 51)  
MH X 42 – (MH X 42/Grgić 1881 122)  
Ilić 1878a 1 – (Ilić 1878a 1/1878b 1)

For those unable to gain access to the archives at the Croatian Academy of Science and Art, there are some decent published resources to be acquired. One may seek out the original run of publications for a number of these documents. For the songs collected by Matica Hrvatska, a number of university libraries in North America and Europe still house the ten published Folk Song collections, a few have been digitized and are available through various online sources, and original copies are still occasionally found in used book stores in Zagreb. These collections offer a variety of materials from a range of MSs that were deemed by the editors as the finest songs. As for the *Zbornik za narodni život i običaje Južnih Slavena*, its entire original run has been digitized and made available for free on the Academy's website (HAZU 2018). Though most of these issues only offer sections of the original MSs, some collections (such as Milan Lang's and Frano Ivanišević's) are published there in full.

The Academy has, however, in recent years begun a publishing regimen aimed at pressing a number of its MSs in full. The following is a list of their offerings to date and the archival collection to which they correspond. Most of these collections can be purchased from Matica Hrvatska or from HAZU.



Matica Hrvatska Collections

Banić 2016 – Banić MH 2.  
Kamenar 2013 – Kamenar MH 171.  
Mikuličić 2007 – Mikuličić MH 10.  
Murat 1996 – Murat MH 40.

Zbornik Collections

Lukić 2016a and 2016b – composed of sections taken from a number of Lukić's MSs.  
Nedić and Draganović 2014 – Nedić SZ 52 and Draganović SZ 126, 159, 167.  
Novljan 2014 – Lovljanov SZ 87a, b, c, d, e, f, and g.

## Appendix 4 – ATU Types and Motifs

This is a short list of the most important ATU Index Types and Motifs which appear in some form in this thesis. The third column represents the motifs of this thesis to which they correlate, or in which some aspect or mention of them is found.

### ATU Tale Types

- 300 – The Dragon-Slayer – Give Power or Ability (Chpt. 3)
- 313 – The Magic Flight – Swan Maiden (Chpt. 2); Dance and Flute Competition (Chpt. 3); Golden Rasudenac (Chpt. 3); (Intro pg. 18)
- 321 – Eyes Recovered from Witch – Dance/(Song) and Flute Competition (Chpts. 2, 3)
- 400 – The Man on a Quest for His Lost Wife – Swan Maiden (Chpt. 2); Golden Rasudenac (Chpt. 3); Host Lost Spouse (Chpt. 3)
- 413 – The Stolen Clothing – Swan Maiden (Chpts. 2, 3)
- 425 – The Search for the Lost Husband – Host Lost Spouse (Chpt. 3)
- 425A – The Animal as Bridegroom – Discuss How Character Can Be Fertile (Chpt. 2); Host Lost Spouse (Chpt. 3)
- 451 – The Maiden Who Seeks Her Brothers – Swan Maiden (Chpt. 2)
- 465 – The Man Persecuted Because of His Beautiful Wife – Swan Maiden (Chpt. 2)
- 476 – Coal Turns to Gold/In the Frog's House – Secret Gold (Chpt. 3)
- 500 – The Monster Reveals the Riddle – Reveal 77 Springs (Chpt. 3)
- 571 – “All Stick Together” – Magical Coach (Chpt. 3)
- 590 – The Faithless Mother – Heal Blindness (Chpt. 2)
- 613 – The Two Travelers – Know Where Healing Waters are (Chpt. 3)
- 670 – The Man Who Understands Animal Languages – Give Power or Ability (Chpt. 3)
- 703 – The Artificial Child – Make a Maiden Out of Snow (Chpt. 3)
- 758 – The Various Children of Eve – Children of Adam and Eve (Chpt. 3)

### ATU Motifs

- A571 – Culture hero asleep in mountain – Guard Culture Hero (Chpt. 3)
- A972.2 – Indentation on rocks from footprints of fairies – Topogonic Descriptions (Chpt. 1)
- A1650.1 – The various children of Eve – Children of Adam and Eve (Chpt. 3)
- B11.11 – Fight with dragon – Give Power or Ability (Chpt. 3)
- B184.1.1 – Horse with magic speed – *Vila* as Metaphor (Chpt. 2)
- B652.1 – Marriage to swan-maiden – Swan Maiden (Chpts. 2, 3)
- C31 – Tabu: offending supernatural wife – Swan Maiden (Chpts. 2, 3); Not to Tell (Chpt. 3); Golden Rasudenac (Chpt. 3)
- C31.2 – Tabu: mentioning origin of supernatural wife – Swan Maiden (Chpts. 2, 3)
- C31.5 – Tabu: boasting of supernatural wife – Swan Maiden (Chpts. 2, 3); Not to Tell (Chpt. 3); Golden Rasudenac (Chpt. 3)
- C31.10 – Tabu: giving garment back to supernatural (divine) wife – Swan Maiden (Chpt. 2, 3)
- C46 – Tabu: offending fairy – Not to Tell; Golden Rasudenac; Beat/Kill in Retribution; Left Us (Chpt. 3)
- C311.1.2 – Tabu: looking at fairies – Rituals to See *Vile* (Chpt. 3)
- C932 – Loss of wife (husband) for breaking taboo – Swan Maiden (Chpts. 2, 3); Not to Tell (Chpt. 3); Golden Rasudenac (Chpt. 3)
- D361.1 – Swan Maiden – Swan Maiden (Chpts. 2, 3)
- D361.1.1 – Swan Maiden finds her hidden wings and resumes her form – Swan Maiden (Chpts. 2, 3)
- D475.1.3 – Transformation: dead leaves to gold – Secret Gold (Chpt. 3)

- D671 – Transformation flight – Golden Rasudenac (Chpt. 3)
- D671.1 – Fugitive transformed by helper to escape detection – Golden Rasudenac (Chpt. 3)
- D672 – Obstacle flight – Dance and Flute Competition; Give Equipment or Magic Items; Golden Rasudenac (Chpt. 3); (Intro pg. 18)
- D721.2 – Disenchantment by hiding skin (covering) – Swan Maiden (Chpts. 2, 3)
- D1056 – Magic shirt – Give Equipment or Clothing (Chpt. 2)
- D1081.1 – Sword of magic origin – Give Equipment or Clothing (Chpt. 2)
- D1096 – Magic firearms – Give Equipment or Clothing; Turn Man into Snake (Chpt. 2)
- D1111 – Magic carriage – Magic Coach (Chpt. 3)
- D1113 – Magic wagon – Magic Coach (Chpt. 3)
- D1244 – Magic salve (ointment) – Heal (Chpts. 2, 3)
- D1254.1 – Magic wand – Give Equipment or Magic Items; Heal; Teaching Secret Knowledge (Chpt. 3)
- D1288 – Magic coin – Have Magic Bag that Produces Coins (Chpt. 2); Give Equipment or Magic Items (Chpt. 3)
- D1364.22 – Sleep-charm – Cast Sleeping Spell (Chpt. 3)
- D1500.1.22 – Magic healing book – Give Equipment or Magic Items; Teach Secret Knowledge (Chpt. 3)
- D1503.4 – Magic balm heals wounds – Heal (Chpts. 2, 3)
- D1505 – Magic object cures blindness – Heal Blindness; Turn Man into Snake; Attack Wedding Party in Mountains (Chpt. 2); Dance and Flute Competition; Heal; Know Where Healing Waters are (Chpt. 3)
- D1505.6 – Magic ointment restores sights – Heal Blindness; Turn Man into Snake; Attack Wedding Party in Mountains (Chpt. 2); Dance and Flute Competition; Heal; Know Where Healing Waters are (Chpt. 3)
- D1523.1 – Self-propelling wagon – Magic Coach (Chpt. 3)
- D1062.11 – Self-returning magic coin – Have Magic Bag that Produces Coins (Chpt. 2); Give Equipment or Magic Items (Chpt. 3)
- D1723 – Magic power from fairy – Give Power or Ability (Chpt. 3); Shade and Suckle (Chpts. 2, 3)
- D1810.0.4 – Magic knowledge of fairies – Call with Secret Information or Strategy; Know Where Water is (Chpt. 2); Know Where Healing Waters are; Teach Secret Knowledge (Chpt. 3)
- D1825.3 – Magic power to see invisible creatures – Rituals to See *Vile* (Chpt. 3)
- D2066 – Elfshot – Kill Groom with Arrows; Cause Headache (Chpt. 2)
- D2072.0.2.1 – Horse enchanted so that he stands still – River *Vila* Wrapped around Horse (Chpt. 2)
- D2089.3 – Animals magically stricken dead – Kill Animals with Eyes (Chpt. 3)
- D2192 – Work of day magically overthrown at night – Impede Building (Chpt. 2)
- D2192 S261 – Foundation sacrifice – Impede Building (Chpt. 2)
- F211.3 – Fairies live under earth – (Chpt. 3 pg. 257)
- F212 Fairyland under water – Fancy Home (Chpt. 3)
- F217 – Congregating places of fairies – Too numerous
- F219.3 – Fairies dwell in land to the east – Kills Groom with Arrows (Chpt. 2); (Chpt. 1 pg. 84; Chpt. 2 pg. 92)
- F222.1 – Fairies' underground palace – Fancy Home (Chpt. 3)
- F231.2 – Fairy's feet – (Chpt. 3 n. 1)
- F232.1 – Fairies have hollow backs – (Chpt. 3 n. 2)
- F232.4 – Fairies have long hair – (Chpt. 1 pg. 69)
- F232.4.1 – Fairy as a small pretty girl with blond hair – (Chpt. 1 pg. 68-9)
- F233.6 – Fairies fair (fine, white) – (Chpt. 1 pg. 68)
- F233.7 – Fairies are multicolored – (Chpt. 1 pg. 84)
- F234.0.1 – Fairy transforms self – (Chpt. 2 pg. 96; Chpt. 3 pg. 256)
- F234.1.8 – Fairy in form of horse – (Chpt. 3 pg. 256)
- F234.1.15.1 – Fairy as swan – Swan Maiden (Chpts. 2, 3)
- F234.1.15.2 – Fairy in form of dove (Chpt. 2 pg. 96)
- F234.2.1 – Fairy in form of hag – (Chpt. 2 n. 15)
- F234.2.5 – Fairy in form of beautiful young woman – (Chpt. 2 n. 15)
- F235.1 – Fairies invisible – Horse Race (Chpt. 2); Children of Adam and Eve; Throw Stones and Sand; Rituals to See *Vile* (Chpt. 3)

- F235.5.2 – Fairies made visible when person steps into fairy ring – Rituals to See *Vile* (Chpt. 3)
- F235.6 – Fairies visible through magic ring – Rituals to See *Vile* (Chpt. 3)
- F235.8 – Fairies lose power of invisibility – Rituals to See *Vile* (Chpt. 3)
- F236.1.3 – Fairies in white clothes – (Chpt. 1 pg. 68)
- F236.1.5 – Fairies in gleaming clothes – (Chpt. 1 pg. 69)
- F236.4 – Fairies with gold crowns on head – Swan Maiden (Chpts. 2, 3)
- F238 – Fairies are naked – (Chpt. 1 pg. 69)
- F239.1 – Fairies tied together by hair – Dance and Flute Competition (Chpt. 3)
- F239.4.1 – Fairies are the same size as mortals – (Chpt. 2 n. 3)
- F239.4.3 – Fairy is tiny – (Chpt. 2 n. 3)
- F241.4 – Goats follow fairies – Cause Bounty (Chpt. 3)
- F242.2 – Fairy boat – In a Boat (Chpt. 2)
- F243 – Fairies' food – Take Person Away; Fancy Home; Secret Gold (Chpt. 3)
- F243.1 – Fairies' bread – Perform Domestic Tasks (Chpt. 3)
- F244 – Fairies' treasure – Give Wealth; Secret Gold; Throw Stones and Sand (Chpt. 3)
- F245 – Fairies' musical instruments – Left Us (Chpt. 3)
- F251 – Origin of fairies – Myths (Chpt. 3)
- F251.4 – Underworld people from children which Eve hid from God – Children of Adam and Eve (Chpt. 3)
- F251.6 – Fairies as fallen angels – Fallen Angels (Chpt. 3)
- F251.8 – Fairy professes faith in Christianity – (Chpt. 2 n. 20)
- F254.1 – Fairies have physical disabilities – (Chpt. 3 pgs. 228-9)
- F254.5 – Fairies commit adultery – Sexual Competition to Female (Chpt. 2); Take Person Away (Chpt. 3)
- F258 – Fairies gregarious – Too numerous
- F259.1 – Mortality of fairies – Impede Building (Chpt. 2)
- F261 – Fairies dance – Dance *Kolo* (Chpt. 2, 3)
- F261.1 – Fairy rings on grass – Dance *Kolo*; Leave *Kolo* Ring (Chpt. 3)
- F261.1.1 – Fairies dance by themselves in fairy ring – Swan Maiden; Dance *Kolo* (Chpts. 2, 3)
- F261.3.1 – Fairies dance under tree – Drive/Ride Man (Chpt. 3)
- F262 – Fairies make music – Dance *Kolo* (Chpts. 2, 3)
- F262.1 – Fairies sing – Dance/Song and Flute Competition (Chpt. 2); Sing (Chpt. 3)
- F263 – Fairies feast – Take Person Away; Fancy Home; Secret Gold (Chpt. 3)
- F265 – Fairy bathes – Swan Maiden (Chpts. 2, 3); Bathe (Chpt. 3)
- F266 – Fairies warm themselves – Who Stokes the Fire? (Chpt. 2); Change Letter (Chpt. 3)
- F271.2 – Fairies as builders – Build a City (Chpt. 2); Built a Structure (Chpt. 3)
- F271.2.0.1 – Fairies build great structures in one night – Built a Structure (Chpt. 3)
- F271.4.1 – Fairies bleach linen – Swan Maiden; Knows Where Water is (Chpt. 2); Perform Domestic Tasks (Chpt. 3)
- F271.4.3 – Fairies spin – Perform Domestic Tasks (Chpt. 3)
- F271.6 – Fairy as herdsman – Steal Cattle; Help with Tasks/Chores (Chpt. 3)
- F271.9 – Fairies wash their clothes – Swan Maiden; Knows Where Water is (Chpt. 2); Perform Domestic Tasks (Chpt. 3)
- F271.10 – Fairies bake bread – Perform Domestic Tasks (Chpt. 3)
- F282 – Fairies travel through air – (Chpt. 2 pg. 92; Chpt. 3 pg. 256)
- F300 – Marriage or liaison with fairy – Sexual Competition to Female (Chpt. 2); Take Person Away; Golden Rasudenac (Chpt. 3); Swan Maiden (Chpts. 2, 3)
- F301 – Fairy lover – Sexual Competition to Female (Chpt. 2); Take Person Away; Golden Rasudenac (Chpt. 3); Swan Maiden (Chpts. 2, 3)
- F302 – Fairy mistress – Sexual Competition to Female (Chpt. 2); Take Person Away (Chpt. 3)
- F302.1.1 – Mortals supplied with fairy mistresses during visit to fairyland – Take Person Away (Chpt. 3)
- F302.2 – Man marries fairy and takes her to his home – Sexual Competition to Female (Chpt. 2)
- F302.3 – Fairy woos mortal man – Sexual Competition to Female (Chpt. 2); Take Person Away; Fall in Love with Character; Golden Rasudenac (Chpt. 3); Swan Maiden (Chpts. 2, 3)

- F302.3.1.4 – Fairy abducts whomever she falls in love with – Take Person Away (Chpt. 3)
- F302.3.3.1 – Fairy avenges herself on inconstant lover – Beat/Kill in Retribution (Chpt. 3)
- F302.3.4 – Fairies entice men and then harm them – Take Person Away; Beat/Kill in Retribution (Chpt. 3)
- F302.4.2 – Fairy comes into man's power when he steals her wings (clothes) – Swan Maiden (Chpt. 2, 3)
- F302.4.2.1 – Fairy comes into man's power when he steals her clothes. She leaves when she finds them – Swan Maiden (Chpt. 2, 3)
- F302.5 – Fairy mistress and mortal wife – Sexual Competition to Female (Chpt. 2); Take Person Away (Chpt. 3)
- F302.5.0.1 – Man deserts wife for fairy – Sexual Competition to Female (Chpt. 2)
- F302.5.5 – Fairy mistress tries to destroy mortal's wife (mother) by sending her a magic belt – Kill with Magic Belt (Chpt. 3)
- F302.6 – Fairy mistress leaves man when he breaks tabu – Sexual Competition to Female (Chpt. 2); Beat/Kill in Retribution (Chpt. 3)
- F302.6.2 – Recovery of fairy mistress – Golden Rasudenac (Chpt. 3); Swan Maiden (Chpt. 2, 3)
- F303 – Wedding of mortal and fairy – Golden Rasudenac (Chpt. 3); Swan Maiden (Chpt. 2, 3)
- F304 – Sexual relations with fairy – Sexual Competition to Female (Chpt. 2); Take Person Away; Fall in Love with Character; Golden Rasudenac (Chpt. 3); Swan Maiden (Chpts. 2, 3)
- F304.4 – Mortal violates fairy woman – Swan Maiden (Chpt. 2)
- F304.6 – Fée carried off by mortal – Swan Maiden (Chpts. 2, 3)
- F305 – Offspring of fairy and mortal – Golden Rasudenac (Chpt. 3); Swan Maiden (Chpts. 2, 3)
- F305.1.1 – Fairy mother bestows magic powers upon half-mortal son – Swan Maiden (Chpts. 2, 3)
- F311 – Fairies adopt human child – Take Away Child (Chpt. 2); Take Person Away; Teach Secret Knowledge (Chpt. 3)
- F321 – Fairy steals child from cradle – Rituals to Deal with Changelings (Chpt. 3)
- F321.1 – Changeling– Rituals to Deal with Changelings (Chpt. 3)
- F321.1.1 – Changeling deceived into betraying his age– Rituals to Deal with Changelings (Chpt. 3)
- F321.1.1.1 – Changeling betrays his age when his wonder is excited – Rituals to Deal with Changelings (Chpt. 3)
- F321.1.4 – Changeling shows supernatural power to work and thus betrays maturity – Rituals to Deal with Changelings (Chpt. 3)
- F321.1.1.6 – Threat to throw on fire causes changeling to cry out and betray his nature – Rituals to Deal with Changelings (Chpt. 3)
- F321.1.2.3 – Changeling is sickly – Rituals to Deal with Changelings (Chpt. 3)
- F321.1.4 – Disposing of a changeling – Rituals to Deal with Changelings (Chpt. 3)
- F321.1.4.3 – Changeling thrown on fire and thus banished – Rituals to Deal with Changelings (Chpt. 3)
- F321.1.4.5 – When changeling is threatened with burning, child is returned – Rituals to Deal with Changelings (Chpt. 3)
- F321.2 – Charms against theft of children by fairies – Rituals to Deal with Changelings (Chpt. 3)
- F322.2 – Man rescues his wife from fairyland – Golden Rasudenac; Host Lost Spouse (Chpt. 3)
- F328 – Fairies entice people into their domain – Take Person Away (Chpt. 3)
- F329.4.1 – Fairies who stay with mortals – Sexual Competition to Female (Chpt. 2)
- F329.4.3 – Fairy captured by mortal escapes – Swan Maiden (Chpts. 2, 3)
- F330 – Grateful fairies – Cause Bounty (Chpt. 3)
- F331.1 – Mortal wins fairies' gratitude by joining in their dance – Dance/(Song) and Flute Competition (Chpts. 2, 3)
- F331.4 – Mortal wins fairies' gratitude by playing for their dance – Dance/(Song) and Flute Competition (Chpts. 2, 3)
- F337 – Fairy grateful to mortal for saving children's life – Shade and Suckle (Chpts. 2, 3)
- F340 – Gifts from fairies – Give Equipment or Clothing (Chpt. 2); Give Equipment or Magic Items (Chpt. 3)
- F341 – Fairies give fulfillment of wishes – Magic Coach (Chpt. 3); Shade and Suckle (Chpts. 2, 3)
- F341.1 – Fairies give three gifts – Offer Magic Gifts to Spare Life (Chpt. 2); Magic Coach (Chpt. 3)
- F341.2 – Fairy ransoms self with wish – Offer Magic Gifts to Spare Life (Chpt. 2)

- F342 – Fairies give mortal money – Give Wealth; Secret Gold (Chpt. 3)
- F342.1 – Fairy gold– Give Wealth; Secret Gold; Throw Stones and Sand (Chpt. 3)
- F343.5 – Fairies give beautiful clothes – Give Equipment or Clothing; Give Maiden Gifts for Wedding Party (Chpt. 2)
- F343.10.1 – Fairy gives person magic sword – Give Equipment or Clothing (Chpt. 2); Give Equipment or Magic Item (Chpt. 3)
- F343.10.2 – Fairy gives person magic spear – Give Equipment or Clothing (Chpt. 2)
- F343.11 – Fairy offers man change of form and feature for aid in battle – Give Equipment or Clothing; Take Away Child (Chpt. 2)
- F343.20 – Sack of coals as fairy gift – Secret Gold (Chpt. 3)
- F344 – Fairies heal mortals – Heal (Chpts. 2, 3)
- F345 – Fairies instruct mortals – Call with Secret Information or Strategy (Chpt. 2); Teach Secret Knowledge (Chpt. 3)
- F346.0.1 – Fairy serves mortal – Serve Wine and Snacks (Chpt. 2)
- F348.0.1 – Fairy gift disappears or is turned to something worthless when tabu is broken – Secret Gold (Chpt. 3)
- F348.5.1 – Mortal not to betray secret of fairies' gift – Secret Gold (Chpt. 3)
- F348.7 – Tabu: telling of fairy gifts; the gifts cease – Not to Tell; Golden Rasudenac; Swan Maiden (Chpt. 3)
- F349.1 – Fairy aids mortal in flight – Golden Rasudenac (Chpt. 3)
- F349.1 – Fairy aids mortal in battle – Musa Battle; Direct Aid in Combat; Call with Secret Information or Strategy (Chpt. 2)
- F349.4 – Fairy promises abundant crops, etc., to mortal – Cause Bounty (Chpt. 3)
- F350 – Theft from fairies – Beat/Kill in Retribution (Chpt. 3)
- F360 – Malevolent or destructive fairies – Too numerous
- F361 – Fairy's revenge – Beat/Kill in Retribution (Chpt. 3)
- F361.1 – Fairy takes revenge for being slighted – Beat/Kill in Retribution (Chpt. 3)
- F361.2 – Fairy takes revenge for theft – Beat/Kill in Retribution (Chpt. 3)
- F361.3 – Fairies take revenge on person who spies on them – Beat/Kill in Retribution; Know Where Healing Waters are (Chpt. 3)
- F361.3.2 – Fairies chase person who watches them dance – Cause Illness (Chpt. 3)
- F361.4 – Fairies take revenge on trespassers on ground they claim as theirs – Beat/Kill in Retribution; Cause Illness (Chpt. 3)
- F361.10 – Fairies take revenge for being teased – Beat/Kill in Retribution (Chpt. 3)
- F362 – Fairies cause disease – Cause Illness (Chpt. 3)
- F362.1 – Fairies cause blindness – Punish Singing; Attack Wedding Party in Mountains; Heal Blindness; Know Where Water is (Chpt. 2); Cause Illness; Blind and Mute (Chpt. 3); Heal (Chpts. 2, 3)
- F362.2 – Fairies cause insanity – Cause Illness (Chpt. 3)
- F362.3 – Fairies cause weakness – Cause Illness (Chpt. 3)
- F362.4 – Fairies cause mutilation (injury) – Cause Illness (Chpt. 3)
- F363 – Fairies cause death – Beat/Kill in Retribution; Cause Illness (Chpt. 3)
- F363.3 – Sight of fairies fatal – Cause Illness (Chpt. 3)
- F365 – Fairies steal – Cause Bounty (Chpt. 3)
- F365.6 – Fairies steal cattle (pig) – Steal Cattle (Chpt. 3)
- F366 – Fairies abuse livestock – Steal Cattle; Take Horses; Kill Animals with Eyes (Chpt. 3)
- F366.2 – Fairies ride mortal's horses at night – Take Horses (Chpt. 3)
- F366.2.1 – Fairies plait manes and tails of horses – Take Horses (Chpt. 3)
- F366.4 – Fairies control prosperity – Cause Bounty (Chpt. 3)
- F369.2 – Fairies defile waters – Poison or Guard Well (Chpt. 2)
- F369.4 – Fairy tricks mortal – Trick *Pobratim* (Chpt. 2)
- F369.5 – Fairies destroy crops – Cause Bounty (Chpt. 3)
- F369.7 – Fairies lead travelers astray – Dance *Kolo* (Chpt. 3)
- F379 – Fairy visits – Too numerous

- F382 – Exorcising fairies – Fall in Love with Character (Chpt. 3)
- F383.4 – Fairy must leave at cockcrow – Flee the Dawn (Chpt. 3)
- F384 – Magic objects powerful against fairies – Threaten to Cause a Rift between Maiden and Lover (Chpt. 2); Harmed by Iron (Chpt. 3)
- F384.3 – Iron powerful against fairies – Harmed by Iron (Chpt. 3)
- F386 – Fairy punished – Too numerous
- F387 – Fairy captured – Impeding Building; Offer Magic Gifts to Spare Life; Captured by Turks (Chpt. 2)
- F388 – Fairies depart – Left Us (Chpt. 3)
- F389.4 – Fairy killed by mortal – Impeding Building; Offer Magic Gifts to Spare Life (Chpt. 2)
- F391.1 – Animals borrowed by fairies – Take Horses (Chpt. 3)
- F391.2 – Fairies borrow food from mortals – Swap Flour (Chpt. 3); (Chpt. 1 pg. 73); (Chpt. 3 pg. 311)
- F394 – Mortals help fairies – Too numerous
- F441.2.1.1 – Wood-nymph comes to the fire to warm – Who Stokes the Fire?; Cast Sleeping Spell (Chpt. 3)
- F491 – Will-o'-the-Wisp (Jack o' Lantern) – Dance *Kolo* (Chpt. 3)
- F611.2 – Strong hero's suckling – Shade and Suckle (Chpts. 2, 3)
- F611.3.1 – Strong hero practices uprooting trees – Shade and Suckle (Chpt. 2)
- G241.2 – Witch rides on person – Drive/Ride Man (Chpt. 3)
- G241.2.1 – Witch transforms man to horse and rides him – (Chpt. 3 n. 23)
- G262.0.1 – Lamia. Witch who eats children – (Intro n. 22)
- G262.0.1.1 – Lamia devours her lover – (Intro n. 22)
- H1385.3 – Quest for vanished wife (mistress) – Swan Maiden; Golden Rasudenac; Host Lost Spouse (Chpt. 3)
- K1335 – Seduction (or wooing) by stealing clothes of bathing girl – Swan Maiden (Chpts. 2, 3)
- K1851 – Substituted letter – Change letter (Chpt. 3)
- M301.6 – Fairies as prophets – Foretell Death (Chpt. 2)
- N815 – Fairy as helper – Too numerous
- R112.3 – Rescue of prisoners from fairy stronghold – Attack Wedding Party in Mountains; Kills Groom with Arrows (Chpt. 2)
- R131.12 – Fairy rescues abandoned child – Take Away Child (Chpt. 2)
- R151 – Husband rescues wife – Host Lost Spouse (Chpt. 3)
- T611.3 – Witch (fairy) suckles child – Shade and Suckle (Chpts. 2, 3)

## Appendix 5 - Maps

Fig. 1 – Map of Europe circa 1864 (Mitchell 2016). This map represents the political boundaries of European states around the time that much of the material in this thesis was collected. Clearly displayed is the border between the Habsburg and Ottoman Empires.

Fig. 2 – Current Political Borders of the Region

Fig. 3 – Traditional Localities and Regions Mentioned in the thesis. This map can only be taken as a rough indication of traditional regions. The exact borders of these entities are often vague, the information is difficult to obtain, and for some the boundaries shifted with historical changes of politics and war. I have done my best to obtain the most accurate representations possible and to present the regions as they are generally understood by people in the region or as they would have been considered at the time of the collection of these songs. Any errors are those of the author.

Fig. 4 – The Military Frontier circa 1745 (Proklesis 2018, with emendations by the author). This map illustrates the divisions of administration over the Military Frontier (*Vojna Krajina* or *Vojna Granica*) which separated The Holy Roman Empire from the Ottoman Caliphate.









Figure 2

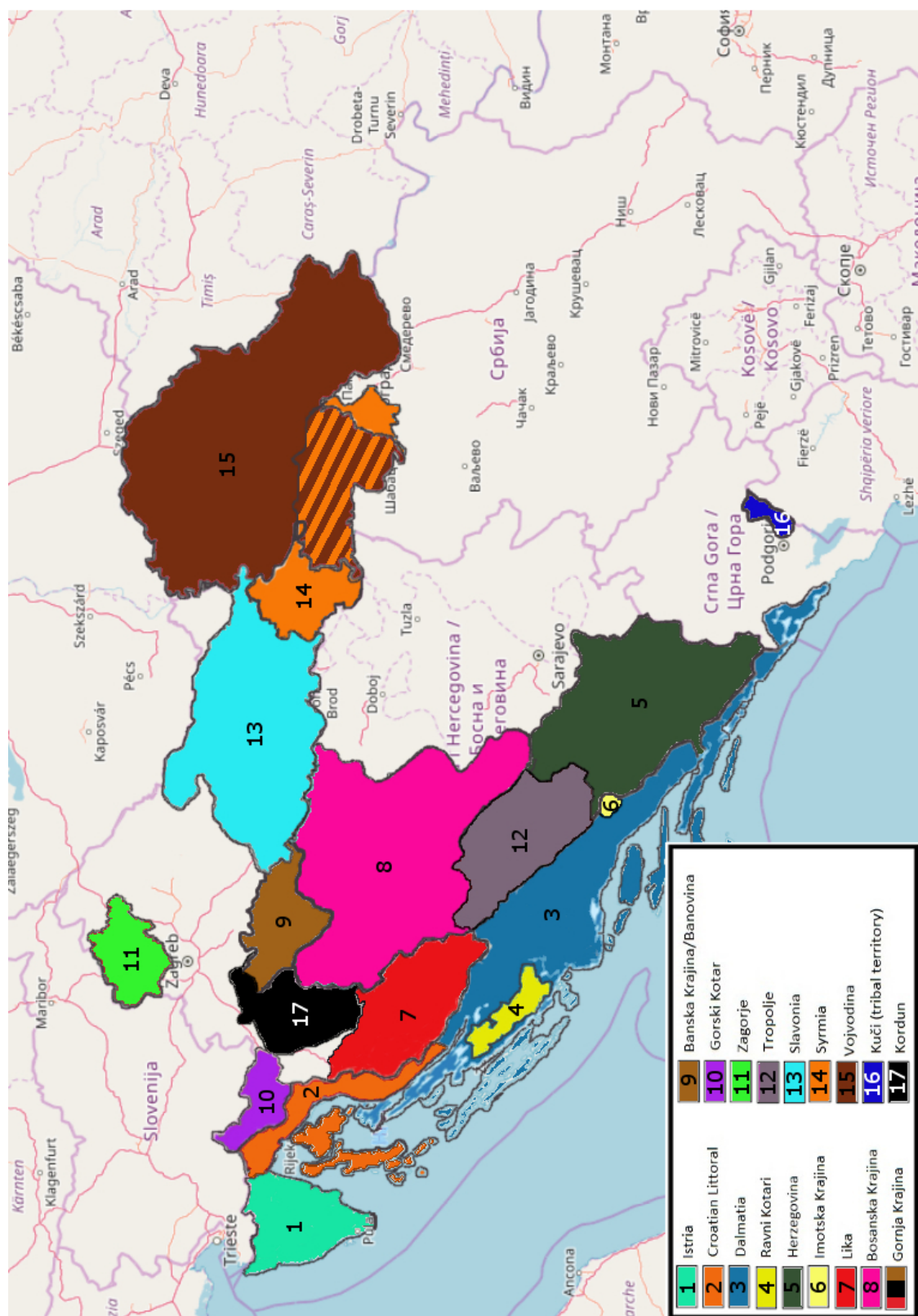


Figure 3



Figure 4

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## Archival Materials

### Legend for Materials:

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HAZU: MH – Manuscript in the archive in the Department of Ethnology of the Croatian Academy of Sciences and Arts, Zagreb. *Matica hrvatska* Collection.

HAZU: NZ – Manuscript in the archive in the Department of Ethnology of the Croatian Academy of Sciences and Arts, Zagreb. New Collection.

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## Supplement: Song Translations

### Lyric Songs

1. Oganj gori u zelenoj gori<sup>1</sup>

Oganj gori u zelenoj gori  
Kol' ga loži kol' se na njem grije?  
Vile lože a Ivo se krije,<sup>3</sup>  
Na Ivi je devet grdnh rana.  
Ivu lieče<sup>4</sup> zagorkinje vile,  
Mnogo Ivi vakupa iskale:  
Milom babi ruku iz ramena  
Milom majci obe oči crne,  
Milom bratu konja najboljega  
Miloj seki rusu pletenicu,  
Viernoj ljubi gerdan ispod vrata.  
Babo daje ruku iz ramena,  
Majka daje obe oči crne  
Bratac daje konja najboljega  
Seko daje rusu pletenicu  
Neda ljuba gerdan ispod vrata:  
Nije mi ga Ivo nakitio,  
Već sam mlada od roda donila.  
Nije mi ga ni rod nakitio  
Već sam mlada na vezu izvezla.  
Na to su se vile razsrdile,  
Lipom Ivi rane povridile;  
Umr[o]<sup>5</sup> Ivo žalostna mu majka  
Lipo su ga vile sahranile.  
Lipog Ivu nose nosioci  
Virnu ljubom prose prosioci,  
Lip se Ivo stavlja u grobnicu  
Viernu ljubom vode u ložnicu.

A Bonfire Burns Up in the Green Mountain

Somewhere in Bosnia<sup>2</sup>

A bonfire burns up in the green mountain.  
Who stokes the fire and who warms beside it?  
*Vile* stoke it, Ivo warms beside it.  
Ivo suffers from nine terrible wounds.  
5 Mountain *vile* tend to all of those wounds,  
But their service demands precious payment.  
From his father, his arm from the shoulder,  
From his mother, both her precious dark eyes,  
From his brother, his unrivaled stallion,  
10 From his sister, her glossy chestnut plaite,  
From his true love, the necklace from her breast.  
His father gave his arm from the shoulder,  
His mother gave, both her precious dark eyes,  
His brother gave his unrivaled stallion,  
15 His sister gave her glossy chestnut plaite,  
But his true love will not give her necklace.  
“‘Twas not Ivo who adorned me with it;  
As a young bride ‘twas I brought it with me.  
‘Twas not my kin who adorned me with it;  
20 As a young bride ‘twas I embroidered it.”  
When they heard this, the *vile* grew ireful;  
Handsome Ivo’s wounds they tore asunder.  
Ivo perished, woe be to his mother.  
Beautifully, the *vile* buried him.  
25 Handsome Ivo, the pall-bearers carried.  
His faithful love, many suitors courted.  
Handsome Ivo, was set down in his grave.  
His faithful love was led to bed chamber.

<sup>1</sup> Pajić n.d.2.

<sup>2</sup> Collected in either Banja Luka, Sarajevo, Travnik or Jajce.

<sup>3</sup> This is surely a *lapsus linguae* which should read “*Ivo se grije*” (Ivo warms himself) and not “*Ivo se krije*” (Ivo hides [or possibly covers] himself). Multiforms of this song reflect this more logical repetition. It is a reassuring sign that the collector Matija Pajić did not seek to correct the error, deferring instead to accurate notation. I have taken the more common reading in my translations, admittedly running the risk of presumption and the possibility of imposing my own opinion on a singer’s unique take on the song.

<sup>4</sup> Read with elision as *lječe* and not *liječē* as written.

<sup>5</sup> *Lapsus calami* and not *acephalous catalexis*. The word has no sense without this added ‘o’.

2. Kladila se vila i divojka<sup>6</sup>

A *Vila* and a Maiden Make a Wager

Podgora in Dalmatia

Kladila se vila i divojka,  
 Koja će ih rano uraniti,  
 Vode donit i pomesti dvore,;  
 Vila meće svoja zlatna krila,  
 A divojka svoje oči crne,  
 Još su one svidoke metale;  
 Vila meće sivoga sokola,  
 A divojka maloga slavića.  
 Loša srića vili priskočila:  
 S večera njoj soko prikliktao,<sup>7</sup>  
 A zoricu bilu prispavao;  
 A divojci dobra srića biše  
 S' večera joj ptica prispavala,  
 A zoricu bilu pripivala.  
 Rano rani mladjena divojka,  
 Pa donese rano hladne vode,  
 Pa pomete bile dvore svoje,  
 I izčešlja ruse kose svoje;  
 Pa dozivlje planinkinju vilu:  
 „Tko je jutros bolje uranio?“  
 A kad vidi planinkinja vila,  
 Ona idje prid divojku mladu:  
 „Na divojko, osici mi krilo.“  
 Govori joj mladjena divojka:  
 „Bora tebi, planinkinja vilo,  
 Što će meni tvoje desno krilo,  
 Kad su meni oba oka crna?“  
 A vila njoj tiho odgovara:  
 „Hod' divojko, Bog ti dao zdravlje!“

A *vila* made a wager with a girl,  
 To see who will wake up the earliest,  
 Go fetch water and sweep out the manor.  
 Well, the *vila* wagered her golden wings,  
 5 While the maiden wagered both her dark eyes.  
 Further, they both elected a witness:  
 The *vila* chose for hers a grey falcon,  
 While the maiden chose a small nightingale.  
 Bad luck was to fall upon the *vila*.  
 10 In the evening her falcon's atwitter,  
 But by the dawn it was sleeping soundly.  
 Meanwhile, good luck visited the maiden.  
 In the evening her bird's sleeping soundly,  
 And by the dawn it was singing loudly.  
 15 The young maiden woke early with the dawn  
 And she set out to fetch the cold water;  
 Then she swept out all of her white manor  
 And finally brushed out her chestnut hair.  
 Then she called out to the mountain *vila*,  
 20 “Which one of us better seized the morrow?”  
 When she saw this, that white mountain *vila*,  
 She moved closer to face that young maiden,  
 “‘Tis, fair maiden, time to sever my wing.”  
 But in response, the young maiden sayeth,  
 25 “God be with thee, o white mountain *vila*,  
 What would I do with thy right feathered wing,  
 When I possess both my handsome dark eyes?”  
 Then the *vila* qui'tly replied to her,  
 “Off then maiden, may God give thee good health!”

3. N/T<sup>8</sup>

N/T

Dragovci in Slavonia

Jao momci djavoli  
 Tko će da vas zavoli?  
 Kad varate cure mile,  
 Odnele vas vile.

Oh, ye devilish youths and lads,  
 Who might ever want your hand?  
 Deceiving maidens who are true;  
 Let the *vile* take you!

<sup>6</sup> Pavlinović 1876b.552.

<sup>7</sup> The singer uses proparalepsis in this final vowel cluster to draw the sound out and fulfill the meter of the song. It occurs again in ‘prispavao’ in line 11 and in ‘dao’ in line 29. This ‘ao’ cluster (pronounced similarly to ‘ow’ in cow) was regularly expanded in this manner (effectively ca-ow) in traditional song when epenthesis was required.

<sup>8</sup> Bogdešić 1884.228.

4. Prođoh goru...<sup>9</sup>

When I Crossed...

Prčanj in the Bay of Kotor

Prođoh goru jasenovu;  
zađede mi svilen klobuk  
za zeleno jasenovo.  
Obrnuh se za sobome,  
što mi klobuk zadijeva?  
Kad li vila na jasenu,  
zapeh strijelu za titivu  
te ustrijelih bijelu vilu.  
Al se moli bijela vila:  
Ne strijelaj me bogom brate,  
do tri ću ti dobra dati:  
Prvo dobro, dobro moje  
da ti 'e ľubi ľepša od mene  
ľepša od mene viša od tebe.  
Drugo dobro, dobro moje  
da si miran u družini.  
Treće dobro, dobro moje,  
da imaš blaga zadovolje.  
-Mala hvala, bijela vilo:  
Meni je ľubi ľepša od tebe  
ľepša od tebe, viša od mene,  
ja sam miran u družini,  
imam blaga za dovoľe.

When I crossed that ash-tree mountain,  
On the long bough of one green ash  
Was, from me, plucked my silken hat.  
I turned myself back whence I'd come  
5 To see what had snagged my silk hat.  
Found a *vila* in that ash tree;  
Nocked an arrow on my bow string  
And prepared to shoot that *vila*.  
But she begged me, that white *vila*,  
10 "Please don't shoot me, brother in God,  
For I'll bless thee with three good turns.  
The first good that I shall grant thee,  
That thy love is fairer than me,  
Fairer than me, taller than thee.  
15 Second good that I shall grant thee,  
That thou wilt be calm 'mongst others.  
The third good that I shall grant thee,  
That thou hast wealth as desired."  
"Little blessing, o white *vila*,  
20 My dear love is fairer than thee,  
Fairer than thee, taller than me.  
I am also calm 'mongst others,  
And have treasure as desired."

5. Djevojačka briga i vilina<sup>10</sup>

The Maiden's Concern and the *Vila*'s

Varcar (present day Mrkonjić Grad), Bosnia

Kiša pade, medna rosa u polju,  
Zabrinu se dilber-Mare u dvoru.  
„Pokisnut će moje dragče u lovu!“  
„I pod njime vranac konjic ne jahan,  
„I na glavi fino-fesić ne haran!“  
Al' je više biela vila s' planine,:  
„Nebrini se dilber-Maró, u dvoru,  
„Ne kisne ti tvoje dragče u lovu,  
„Ni pod njime vranac konjic ne jahan,  
„Ni na glavi fino-fesić ne haran,  
„Bil' sam čador ja na polje razpela“?<sup>11</sup>

Rain was falling, honeyed dew fell in the field,  
Pretty Mare worried herself in her home.  
He'll be soaked through, my dear love out on the hunt,  
And below him, his raven horse yet ridden,  
5 And on his head, his fine fez-hat unworthy!"<sup>12</sup>  
But she called out from mountains, a white *vila*,  
"Do not worry Pretty-Mare in thy home.  
He won't be soaked, thy dear love out on the hunt,  
Nor below him, his raven horse yet ridden,  
10 Nor on his head, his fine fez-hat unworthy,  
For a white tent, I've raised for him in the field."

<sup>9</sup> Lazzari 1889.28.

<sup>10</sup> Pavlinović 1876b.547.

<sup>11</sup> It is unclear why the collector Pavlinović has placed a question mark here.

<sup>12</sup> The use of the word '*haran*,' which covers a wide but related semantic range (worthy, demure, well-mannered, virtuous, upstanding, upright, honest reputable, thankful), in the negative here is odd. Perhaps the sense is that his fez is not a hat made for such weather.



6. Dijete Lazar<sup>13</sup>

Childe Lazar

Vinkovci or Jankovci in Syrmia

Kićeno nebo zvizdama  
I ravno polje ovčama  
Med njima nema čobana  
Do jedno dite Lazare,  
I to je malo zaspalo.  
Došla ga seka buditi:  
Ustani brate Lazare!  
Ne mogu mila sestrice  
Tri su me vile umorile  
Strina je srce vadila  
Majka je pekla pa jila  
Seka je stala, gledala.

The sky, with stars, is embellished;  
The flat field, with sheep, is adorned.  
Amongst them there is no shepherd,  
Just the shepherd, that Childe Lazar,  
5 And Lazar has just nodded off.  
His sister then came to wake him,  
“O brother, Lazar, time to rise!”  
“I cannot, o my dear sister.  
Three *vile* this night have weakened me.”<sup>14</sup>  
10 ‘Twas my aunt who removed my heart,  
My mother cooked it then ate it,  
My sister stood by just watching.”

7. N/T<sup>15</sup>

N/T

Region around Travnik, Bosnia

Bila vila polje priletila  
Na gjogatu na Osman begovu,  
A pred sobom goni Osman-bega,  
Gologlava po žarkom sunašcu, -  
Bosonoga po oštrom pijesku,  
Govorio beže Osman beže:  
„Stani vila, da se odmorimo,  
I rumena vina napijemo!“  
Al' govori prebijela vila:  
Hajd ne luduj, beže Osman beže,  
Daleko je pod Biograd doći,  
I Biograd nanovo graditi  
Bez aršina i bez tebešira.“

A white *vila* soared across a broad field  
On a white mount, on Osman-beg's white steed.  
Before herself she was driving Osman,  
He bare-headed underneath blazing sun,  
5 Walking barefoot on the burning sharp sand.  
Thus spaketh he, that poor beg, Osman-beg,  
“Let's stop, *vila*, just to rest a little,  
And so we might drink a little red wine!”  
Thus responded the lily-white *vila*,  
10 “Don't be foolish, o my beg, Osman-beg,  
There's still much ground 'tween us and Biograd,  
'Fore we 'rrive there to rebuild the city,  
Without ruler, and also without chalk.”

8. Darovi Vili<sup>16</sup>

Gifts to the *Vila*

Podgora in Dalmatia

Mi hajdemo sinju moru,  
Nać hoćemo zlatnu goru,  
A u gori dva bisera,  
U biseru bilu vilu;

Let us travel to th' azure sea  
Where we'll find a golden mountain.  
In the mountain, there are two pearls,  
In one pearl is a white *vila*;

<sup>13</sup> Dungjerović 1891-2.197.

<sup>14</sup> The hypercatalexis here is intentional to mirror the original. It is possible that the song was sung acatalectically and the error rests with the collector's quill, but it is not readily apparent where the elision would lie. Minor breaks in metrical precision, however, are common to oral traditions in the region and elsewhere. I retain this practice throughout.

<sup>15</sup> Odić 1890.25 published in MH V.28 under the title *Osman beg i vila*

<sup>16</sup> Pavlinović 1876b.535.

Vila piva rodne pisme,  
Da omili svome rodu.  
Kad njoj idje u pohode.  
I nosi joj svake dare  
Zelen vinac od lovora,  
Tanku kitu od bisera;  
A družba njoj konja vode,  
A na konju rukavicu,  
Punu krvce natočenu.

5 The *vila* sings her people's songs,  
To the pleasure of her people.  
So they come to her in visit  
And bring her all sorts of fine gifts:  
They brought her a wreath of laurel,  
10 A thin tassel made from white pearls;  
The troupe led a horse there to her  
And on that horse there was a glove,  
Filled to the top full of red blood.

### 9. Rumena Ružica<sup>17</sup>

### Little Red Rose

Teza Crnković  
Subotica in the Vojvodina

Svilu prede rumena ružica,  
Svilu prede, a brišim pripređa.  
Kad je Ruži žeđa dodijala,  
Svilu baca na studenu stinu,  
Gojtan baca na zelenu travu.  
Ona traži lađane vodice,  
Ona nađe oklop vode ladne,  
Oklopljena sve plećim junačkim,  
Skakavica ruka divojačka.  
Sagni s' Ruža da s vode napije,  
Al podviknu čoban od ovaca:  
-Ne pi'vode, rumena ružice!  
Tu su vodu vile otrovale,  
U njojzi su čedo okupale,  
Ni kršteno ni od zla miveno,  
Nit se smije nit ručice daje. –  
Podvikuje vila zagorkinja:  
- Mol' se Bogu, čoban od ovaca,  
Što je tebe sačuvala majka,  
Od ujamka i od urižnjaka,  
Ja bi tebi odšalila šalu. -

Little Red Rose was happ'ly spinning silk,  
Spinning silk and thread for embroidery.  
When Little Rose became weary of thirst,  
She threw her silk on a nearby cold stone  
5 And threw her skein down onto the green grass.  
Then she searched for a cold drink of water,  
Well, she found there armour<sup>18</sup> of cold water,  
All 'bout armoured with heroic shoulders;  
The water's stream is a maiden's fair hand.<sup>19</sup>  
10 Red Rose kneeled down, that she might drink water,  
When a shepherd called out from 'midst his sheep,  
"Drink no water, o Little Red Rosy,  
For the *vile* have poisoned that water!  
In the water, they did bathe a baby,  
15 'Twas not baptized, 'twas not washed of evil,  
It could neither smile nor offer its hands."<sup>20</sup>  
Then a *vila* called out from the mountain,  
"Best that thou giv'st praise to God young shepherd,  
That thy mother took care to protect thee,  
20 To protect thee from selvage and trimmings,<sup>21</sup>  
Or else 't would be I who had the last laugh."

<sup>17</sup> Prčić n.d.51 published in MH X.8 under the title *Vila bi mu odšalila šalu*.

<sup>18</sup> This line is nonsensical, but sets up the next line for the repetition of the word armour. The sense seems to be that the water source has been fenced-in or guarded with men's shoulders. In the published version, the editor Nikola Andrić replaced the word '*oklop*' (armour) with '*okno*' (fissure or crevice), so that the protagonist finds a fissure surrounded by shoulders with a fount springing forth.

<sup>19</sup> This line, too, is unclear. It is quite possible that the singer is trying to continue the grotesque imagery of the spring (men's shoulder's, women's hands), but is simply doing a poor job of combining the imagery together. Andrić added a footnote to this line explaining that it means "a stream as wide as a maiden's hand" (Andrić 1942:153 n. 1) which is certainly a possibility, but does not feel right to me.

<sup>20</sup> Also unclear, possibly a testament to how young the baby was, perhaps a comment on its unclean soul.

<sup>21</sup> It was thought unlucky to use the ends of fabric to sew anything that was worn by a person (Andrić 1942:153 n.2).

10. N/T<sup>22</sup>

N/T

Janje Dosegović  
Dragovci in Slavonia

Grad gradio mlad Ivica  
Što je za dan sagrađio,  
Za noć vile soborile.  
Tužio se mlad Ivica,  
Tužio se majki svojoj:  
„Majko moja, diko moja,  
Što sam za dan sagrađio,  
Za noć vile soborile.“  
Al govori stara majka,  
„Boraj tebi mlad Ivica  
Meći straže na sve strane:  
Sokolove na putove,  
Mrke vuke na sokake,  
A junake na čardake.“  
To Ivica poslušao  
I straže je pometao.  
Kad se noćca uhvatila,  
Sokolovi zakliktaše,  
Mrki vuci zavijaše,  
A junaci poskočiše.  
Uhvatiše bijelu vilu  
Pa ju vode mlad Ivici.  
Moli mu se bijela vila,  
„Boraj tebi mlad Ivica,  
Ne moj mene sagubiti,  
Troje ću ti bilje kazat.  
Jedno bilje mlad Ivica,  
Bit ćeš mudar i pametan,  
Drugo bilje mlad Ivica,  
Vihar će ti konja nosit.  
Treće bilje mlad Ivica,  
Bit ćeš mio djevojkama.“  
Al govori mlad Ivica:  
„Ne moli se bijela vilo,  
Dok je meni glave moje,  
Bit ću mudar i pametan.  
Dok je meni konja moga,  
Vihar će mi konja nosit.  
Dok je meni lica moga,  
Bit ću mio djevojkama.“  
On doziva slugu svoje  
Pa im daje bijelu vilu.  
„Peljajte ju na nu vodu  
Svežite joj crne oči,

Young Ivica<sup>23</sup> built a city.  
That which he built during the day,  
During the night *vile* destroyed.  
Young Ivica complained of this,  
5 Complained of this to his mother,  
“O my mother, o my dear pride,  
That which I built during the day,  
During the night *vile* destroyed.”  
Thusly replied his old mother,  
10 “God be with thee, Young Ivica!  
Place, then, guards on every side:  
Sentry falcons on all pathways,  
Dun sentry wolves in all alleys,  
And hero guards in blockhouses.”  
15 Ivica, this advice, followed  
And placed sentries about the town.  
So when dark night had descended,  
The guard falcons set to chatt’ring,  
The dun guard wolves set to howling,  
20 And the heroes leapt to their feet.  
Thus they captured the white *vila*.  
And then brought her before Ivan.  
The white *vila* begged his mercy,  
“God be with thee young Ivica!”  
25 Do not, tonight, execute me.  
Three wond’rous herbs I’ll reveal thee:  
One of these herbs, Young Ivica,  
Will make thee wise and intell’gent;  
The second herb, Young Ivica,  
30 A whirlwind will carry thy steed;  
And the third herb, Young Ivica,  
It will make thee dear to maidens.”  
Thusly replied Young Ivica,  
“Do not grovel, o white *vila*.  
35 While I have my own wits ‘bout me  
I’ll be wise and intelligent;  
While I have my own dear stallion,  
A whirlwind will carry my steed;  
While I have my own fair visage,  
40 I will remain dear to maidens.”  
Then Ivan called his true servants  
And gave, to them, the white *vila*.  
“Drag her off to yonder water.  
Place a blindfold on her dark eyes,

<sup>22</sup> Petar Bogdešić 1884.135, published in MH V.29 under the title *Junak utapa vilu*.

<sup>23</sup> Dim. of Ivan.

Bacite ju u nu vodu!“  
Kako reče mlad Ivica,  
Tako slugе učiniše,  
Bielu vilu utopiše.

45 And toss her in yonder water!”  
As young Ivan had commanded,  
So his servants did their duty.  
Thusly they drowned the white *vila*.

# 11. Босиљак и роса<sup>24</sup>

## Basil and Dew

Risan in the Bay of Kotor

Поцмилио ситан босиоче:  
„Тиха росо, што не падаш на ме?“ –  
„Падала сам за два јутра на те,  
„Ово сам се била забавила  
„Гледајући чуда великога,  
„Ђе се вила с орлом завадила  
„Око оне зелене планине:  
„Вели вила: „„Планина је моја““;  
„Орле вели: „„Није, него моја.““  
„Вила орлу крила саломила,  
„Љуто цмиле тићи орловићи,  
„Цмиле љуто, јест им за невољу;  
„Ђешила их тица ластовица:  
„„Не цмилите, тићи орловићи!  
„„Повешћу вас у земљу Индију,  
„„Ђе штир коњу расте до кољена,  
„„Ђетелина трава до рамена:  
„„Откле никад не залази сунце.““  
„По томе се тићи уђешише.“

A small basil was whim’ring and crying,  
“Gentle dew, why dost thou not fall ‘pon me?”  
“Two good mornings I’ve fallen upon thee.  
For my absence, fault what entertained me;  
5 That great wonder, t’which I’ve been a witness:  
A *vila* who quarreled with an eagle.  
And all about yonder verdant mountain.  
The *vila* cried, ‘this mount belongs to me!’  
Eagle replied, ‘does not, rather, it’s mine!’  
10 Then the *vila* broke the eagle’s two wings.  
Terribly, the eagle’s eaglets cried out;  
Cried out awf’lly for their dire condition.  
But a swallow was there to comfort them,  
‘Do not whimper, o little eaglet chicks,  
15 I will take you to distant India  
Where amaranth<sup>25</sup> grows high as horse’s knees  
And the clover to a horse’s shoulder;  
It is a land where the sun never sets.’  
Thus the swallow comforted the eaglets.”

# 12. N/T<sup>26</sup>

## N/T

Mare Raos  
Medov Dolac in Dalmatia

Kad sam bila ispod sivna Livna  
Mene bile dozivale vile  
Da j' u tebe kesa od aršina  
Da ti nije nigda brez cekina  
Trgni cekin ponapij se vina  
I u moje i u svoje zdravlje  
Pod kućom ti duboki dolovi  
Orali ih zekasti volovi  
Za njima se šena zelenila  
Ja se tvoja ljuba veselila

Once when I was below grey Livno town,  
Oh, white *vile*, they did call out to me,  
“May’st thou have a satchel one ell in length;  
Let it never be without a sequin.  
5 Draw the sequin, have thy fill of red wine,  
Both to mine own and to thine own good health.  
Below thy house are many profound dales.  
Ploughing them were hare-grey coloured oxen.  
Behind them the wheat grew viridescent.  
10 Thy own true love, there did I entertain.”

<sup>24</sup> Vuk I.665

<sup>25</sup> *Amaranthus blitum* Linn. Purple amaranth or Guernsey pigweed. A native plant to the Mediterranean that is eaten by animals and used in cuisine.

<sup>26</sup> Ostojić 1880-3b.340.

## Narrative songs

### 1. Gospodin Vîde i Vile<sup>27</sup>

#### Mister Vide and the *Vile*

Nikola Vlahović-Glava  
The old city Hvar on the island of Hvar

Pobolî se gospodine Vîde  
U gorici, gdi su bile Vile;  
Bile Vile Vidu govorile:  
„Ustan'te se, gospodine Vîde.  
Pomozte nām uzigrāti kolô.“  
Govori njim gospodine Vîde:  
„Evo imā sedam godin dana,  
Da bolujem u gorî zelenoj;  
Bitće moji dvori razdrūšeni,  
Moja žena kako udovica,  
Moji sini kako sirotice;  
Ne mogu vām uzigrāti kolo.“  
Bile Vile Vîdu govorile:  
„Mi smo Vile, mi smo tamo bile:  
Tvoji dvori lišji neg su bili,  
Tvoja ljubi mladja neg je bila,  
Tvoji sini paše i veziri;  
Pomozte nām uzigrāti kolo.“  
Kad razumi gospodine Vîde,  
Bile Vile što mu govorile  
Skočio se na noge slabašne  
Da pomōže uzigrāti kolo.

Mister Vide was suffering great pain  
In a mountain where there were some *vile*.  
Then the *vile* said to mister Vide,  
“We beg of thee to rise, Mister Vide.  
5 We could use thy help to dance our *kolo*.”  
Mister Vide replied to the *vile*,  
“It has been a long seven years of days<sup>28</sup>  
That I’ve suffered in this high, green mountain.  
Surely, now my manor ’s fall’n to ruin;  
10 Surely, now my wife is as a widow;  
And, surely, my sons are as two orphans.  
I’m in no state to dance *kolo* with you.  
The white *vile* replied back to Vide,  
“We are *vile*, we have been to thy home!  
15 Thy manor is more handsome than ever;  
Thy true love is younger now than ever;  
And thy sons are both Pashas and Vezirs.  
We could use thy help to dance our *kolo*.”  
Mister Vide, when he had understood  
20 What it was the white *vile* had told him,  
Leaped up nimbly to his weak and frail legs  
So that he might help them dance their *kolo*.

### 2. N/T<sup>29</sup>

#### N/T

Unknown Singer  
Mostar

Sinoć paša pade kraj Morave,  
Kraj Morave, krajem vode hladne.  
Zaran pade, zaran večeraše,  
Zaran konjma zopcu ustakoše,  
Za ranije jaciju klanjaše,  
Za ranije spavati legoše.  
Kad je bilo noći o ponoći,

Yest’reve did the Pasha reach the river;  
The Morava,<sup>30</sup> beside its cold water.  
Early arrived, and early did he sup,  
Early did he put his horses to grain,  
5 That he might kneel early for his *Isha*,<sup>31</sup>  
That he might lay early for his slumber.  
When it was night, near the witching hour,

<sup>27</sup> Bervaldi-Lucić 1887.6, published as *Bolani Vid pomaže vilama igrati kolo* in MH V.32

<sup>28</sup> Time in BCMS is often described in this type of poetic phrase of divisible unit “a year of days,” “a month of days,” “one hour of time,” etc. It is a unique, poetic aspect of the language that I like to retain in translation.

<sup>29</sup> Nametak 1897.4, published in MH V.37 under the title of *Paša nadmudrio vilu*.

<sup>30</sup> The Great Morava river that runs through Serbia from south to north.

<sup>31</sup> The fifth and last Muslim prayer in the day, Arabic صلاة العشاء (lit. night prayer). The BCMS title is taken from Turkish *Yatsı namazı* which carries the same meaning.

Sve pspalo kani i poklano,  
 Al ne spava paša Sejidiija.  
 Nešto mu se daje poslušati,  
 Gdje podviknu iz vodice vila:  
 „Posestrime, iz gorice vile!  
 Evo paša pade kraj Morave,  
 Kraj Morave, krajem vode hladne.  
 Zaran pade, zaran večeraše,  
 Zaran konjma zopcu ustakoše,  
 Za ranije jaciju klanjaše,  
 Za ranije spavati legoše.  
 Sjutra će nam paša prehoditi,  
 I svoju će vojsku prevoditi.  
 U vojsci je Zaim-pašić Ahmo!  
 Hajde, vile, da ga utopimo,  
 Da se mrtva Ahme naljubimo,  
 Kad se nismo naljubile živog!“  
 Mnidu vile, niko ih ne čuje,  
 Al ih čuje paša Sejidiija.  
 Kad u jutro bio dan svanuo,  
 Uranio paša Sejidiija.  
 Pa on zove Husejin-ćehaju:  
 „Husejine, vjerna slugo moja!  
 Hajde pušći četiri telala,  
 Neka viknu na četiri strane:  
 'Ko j' u vojsci Zaim-pašić Ahmo,  
 Neka paši ide pod čadore!“  
 U mladjega pogovora nema;  
 Pušća Huso četiri telala;  
 „Ko j' u vojsci Zaim-pašić Ahmo,  
 Neka paši ide pod čadore!“  
 Iznadje se Zaim-pašić Ahmo,  
 Odmah paši ode pod čadore.  
 Svome paši etek poljubio;  
 Izmače se, stade podvis ruke.  
 Njega gleda paša Sejidiija,  
 A u njemu srce potrnjiva;  
 On ovako Ahmi progovara:  
 „E, Ahmede, moje d'jete drago!  
 Potkuj gjogi čavle naopako,  
 Naopako osedlaj gjogata,  
 Naopako zauzdaj gjogata,  
 Naopako pojaši gjogata,  
 Da idemo brođiti Moravu!“  
 Druge biti Ahmi ne mogaše,  
 Ne mogaše, jer ne smjedijaše.  
 Naopako potkova gjogina,

All was asleep, all sleeping like the dead;  
 But sleepeth not Pasha Sejidiija.  
 10 Something urged him to listen intently  
 To a *vila* calling from the water,  
 “O, my sisters, *vile* from the mountains!  
 Behold how the Pasha's reached the river;  
 The Morava, beside its cold water.  
 15 Early arrived, and early did he sup,  
 Early did he put his horses to grain,  
 That he might kneel early for his *Isha*,  
 That he might lay early for his slumber.  
 Tomorrow will the Pasha pass by us  
 20 And he will be leading his large army.  
 In the army's Zaim-pašić Ahmo!<sup>32</sup>  
 Well then, *vile*, let us aim to drown him,  
 So that we can love-up handsome Ahmo,  
 Since we have no grounds to love him alive!”  
 25 The *vile* thought that no one had heard them,  
 But he heard them, Pasha Sejidiija.  
 In the morning, when the dawn had broken,  
 He woke early, Pasha Sejidiija.  
 Then he called on Husejin-ćehaja,<sup>33</sup>  
 30 “O Husejin, good and faithful servant!  
 Quickly send out four swift and fleet heralds;  
 Let them call out in all four directions,  
 ‘Who in our host's Zaim-pašić Ahmo?’  
 Let him hasten here to the Pasha's tent!”  
 35 Huso show'd no sign of intransigence;  
 Immed'ately he issued four heralds,  
 “Who in our host's Zaim-pašić Ahmo?  
 Let him hasten there to the Pasha's tent!”  
 Thus, he was found, Zaim-pašić Ahmo,  
 40 And he hastened off to the Pasha's tent  
 Where he kissed the hem of his lord's garments.  
 Then he stepped back and stood with his arms crossed.  
 He looked at him, Pasha Sejidiija,  
 And inside him his heart was extinguished.  
 45 Thusly spake he to the soldier Ahmo,  
 “O my Ahmed, hearken, o, my dear child:  
 Shoe thy white horse with the nails turned backwards,  
 Saddle thy steed with the saddle backwards,  
 Bridle thy horse with the reins turned backwards,  
 50 Ride thy white horse but be seated backwards,  
 When we set out to ford the Morava!”  
 It could not be otherwise for Ahmed,  
 It could not be, lest he defy orders.  
 Shoed his white horse with the nails turned backwards,

<sup>32</sup> That is Ahmed, the son of Pasha Zaim.

<sup>33</sup> A *ćehaja* (Tur. *kâhya*) is a steward, either to a Vezir or of a noble's estate.

Naopako osedla gjogina,  
 Naopako zauzda gjogina.  
 Podje paša gaziti Moravu,  
 Podje paša, a za njime vojska.  
 Svi su zdravo vodu pregazili,  
 Sam ostade Zaim-pašić Ahmo,  
 Njemu veli paša Sejdića:  
 „Moje d'jete, Zaim-pašić Ahmo!  
 Ti zapali dvije puške male  
 Svom gjogati izmedju ušiju,  
 Pa ćeš vidjet, što ti gjogo radi!“  
 On izvadi dvije puške male,  
 Pa zapali obidve zajedno  
 Svom gjogatu izmedju ušiju.  
 Gjogo ciknu, kô da se pomami;  
 Tri je čuda gjogo iznosio:  
 Jedno čudo: od zlata falake,  
 Drugo čudo: od zlata konope,  
 Treće čudo: o čavlima vilu.  
 Tuda oni zdravo prohodiše  
 I Moravu vodu prebrodiše.

55 Saddled his steed with the saddle backwards,  
 Bridled his horse with the reins turned backwards.  
 Pasha set off to ford the Morava,  
 Pasha set off, his army behind him.  
 All the army safely crossed the water,  
 60 All except for Ahmo who was transfixed.  
 Called out to him, Pasha Sejdića,  
 “O my dear child, Zaim-pašić Ahmo!  
 Quickly discharge both of thy small pistols;  
 Fire them between both thy white horse’s ears.  
 65 Then thou shalt see what thy horse is doing!”  
 Well, Ahmo drew both of his small pistols  
 And discharged them both quickly together,  
 Fired them between both his white horse’s ears.  
 His white horse squealed as if it were fur’ous.  
 70 ‘Twas three wonders his white horse then withdrew:  
 The first wonder: golden stocks round its legs,  
 Second wonder: golden ropes round its legs,  
 The third wonder: on the nails a *vila*.  
 After this they safely went on their way  
 75 And thus forded the Morava’s waters.

3. N/T<sup>34</sup>

N/T

Kata and Cecilija Ikićević  
 From Zrin in the Banovina

Vienac vila Ivanova ljuba  
 U čardaku u debelu ladu,  
 Vienac vila, viencu govorila:  
 „Vijem tebe, moj zeleni vienče!  
 Vijem tebe, kano i djevojka,  
 Nosit' ću te kano i nevesta.  
 Ev' imade devet godinica,  
 Kako jesam za Ivana došla, –  
 Još ja ne znam, što je mužka glava.  
 Ivo ljubi u gorici vilu  
 I š njom ima dva nejaka sina.“  
 To j' mislila Ivanova ljuba,  
 To j' mislila, da nitko ne čuti.  
 Čutila je Ivanova majka,  
 Pa kazuje lijepom Ivanu:  
 „Oj Ivane draga dušo moja!  
 Jel' istina što ljuba govori?  
 Vienac vije tvoja virna ljuba  
 U čardaku, u debelu ladu  
 Vienac vije, aj viencu govori:

Ivan’s true love was winding a garland  
 In her chamber, in the heavy, damp cold.  
 She wound her wreath, to her wreath she spake thus,  
 “Here I wind thee, o my poor, green garland.  
 5 Here I wind thee as would a young maiden;  
 And I’ll bear thee as would a blushing bride.  
 Thus it has been not but nine little years  
 Since I was wed and given to Ivan.  
 Yet I know not what ‘tis to know a man.  
 10 Ivo loves his *vila* in the mountain  
 And already has two young sons by her.”  
 Ivan’s true love thusly said this thinking,  
 Said this thinking that no one could hear her.  
 But she was heard by Ivan’s old mother,  
 15 Who then forthwith spoke to handsome Ivan,  
 “O my Ivan, o my dear precious love!  
 Is it the truth, what thy fair love has said,  
 When thy true love was winding a garland  
 In her chamber, in the heavy, damp cold?  
 20 She wound her wreath, to her wreath she spake thus,

<sup>34</sup> Ciganović 1884.75, published in MH V.22 under the title *Ivanova vila*.

Vijem tebe moj zeleni vienče,  
 Vijem tebe kano i djevojka,  
 Nosit ću te kano i nevesta.  
 Ev' imade devet godinica,  
 Kako jesam za Ivana došla –  
 Još ja ne znam što je mužka glava.  
 Ivo ljubi u gorici vilu  
 I š njom ima dva nejaka sina.“  
 Jal' govori lijepi Ivane  
 „Jest istina, moja mila majko!  
 Jest istina, što ljuba govori,  
 Da ja ljubim u gorici vilu,  
 S vilom imam dva nejaka sina.“  
 Jal' govori stara mila majka:  
 „Doved' mi ju, draga dušo moja!  
 Doved' mi ju bilom dvoru mome,  
 Da ju vidi tvoja mila majka.“  
 Jal' govori lijepi Ivane:  
 „„Oj starice moja mila majko!  
 Ja ću dovest prebijelu vilu,  
 Dovedst' ću ju bilom dvoru tvome;  
 Jal' kad vila u dvorove dodje,  
 Ne zazivaj Boga ni Marije.  
 Odletit' će prebijela vila,  
 Odletit' će nebu pod oblake.““  
 To izreče lijepi Ivane  
 I ode ga u goru zelenu,  
 Pa uzima prebijelu vilu,  
 I š njome ka dva nejaka sina  
 Pa ji' meće na dobra konjica  
 I vodi ji' bilom dvoru svome.  
 Kad su došli pred bijele dvore,  
 Konj posrnu pod bijelom vilom.  
 Kad to vidje Ivanova majka  
 Prestraši se i u strahu reče:  
 „Bog bi' s tobom prebijela vilo!“  
 To je majci u riječi bilo,  
 Slepeta se prebijela vila,  
 Pa odleti nebu pod oblake.  
 Kad to vidje lijepi Ivane,  
 Progovara vili u oblaku:  
 „Vrat' se natrag prebijela vilo!  
 Što će tvoja dva nejaka sina?“  
 Jal' govori vila iz oblaka:  
 „„Ne budali lijepi Ivane!  
 Moji sinci dobro će bez majke.  
 Ako l' sinci moje krvi budu,  
 Oni ć' naći svoju milu majku,  
 Naći će ju nebu u oblaci;  
 Ako l' sinci tvoje krvi budu,

‘Here I wind thee, o my poor, green garland.  
 Here I wind thee as would a young maiden;  
 And I’ll bear thee as would a blushing bride.  
 Thus it has been not but nine little years  
 25 Since I was wed and given to Ivan.  
 Yet I know not what ‘tis to know a man.  
 Ivo loves his *vila* in the mountain  
 And already has two young sons by her.”  
 Thusly replied fair and handsome Ivan,  
 30 ““Tis honest truth, my dear aged mother!  
 ‘Tis honest truth what my true love has said,  
 That I love my *vila* in the mountain,  
 And that I now have two young sons by her.”  
 Thusly spake then Ivan’s aged mother,  
 35 “Bring her to me, o my dear precious love!  
 Bring her to me, to my grand, white manor,  
 That she be seen by thy dear old mother.”  
 Thusly replied fair and handsome Ivan,  
 “O old woman, o my aged mother!  
 40 I’ll bring to thee, my lily-white *vila*,  
 I will bring her to thy grand, white manor.  
 When my *vila* arrives in our manors,  
 I beg thee not invoke God nor Mary.  
 She will fly off, my lily-white *vila*,  
 45 She will fly off to the sky ‘neath the clouds.”  
 All this spaketh fair and handsome Ivan,  
 Then he set off into the green mountain  
 For to retrieve his lily-white *vila*,  
 And ‘longside her, their two young infant sons.  
 50 Then he placed them on his noble stallion  
 And led them back to his grand, white manor.  
 When they arrived before his white manor,  
 His steed faltered below the white *vila*.  
 When she saw this, Ivan’s aged mother,  
 55 She took affright, and in fright she uttered,  
 “God be with thee, o lily-white *vila*!”  
 Ivan’s mother barely uttered these words  
 When the *vila* began to flap her wings  
 And then flew off to the sky ‘neath the clouds.  
 60 When he saw that, fair and handsome Ivan,  
 He called out to the *vila* in the clouds,  
 “Come back to me, o lily-white *vila*!  
 What will become of our young infant sons?”  
 Thusly replied the *vila* from the clouds,  
 65 “Don’t be foolish, fair and handsome Ivan!  
 My sons shall do well without their mother.  
 If our sons be both of my good bloodline,  
 They will surely find their own dear mother,  
 Find their mother in the sky ‘neath the clouds;  
 70 If our sons be of thy good bloodline,



Ti je 'rani sebi uz koljena!""  
 Kad to vidje lijepi Ivane,  
 Ljuto kune svoju milu majku:  
 „Bog t' ubijo, moja mila majko!  
 Nisam li ti prije govorijo:  
 Kada vila u dvorove dodje,  
 Ne zazivaj Boga ni Marije,  
 Odletit' će prebijela vila,  
 Odletit' će nebu pod oblake.“

Then thou wilt raise them thyself at thy knee!"  
 When he saw that, fair and handsome Ivan,  
 Angrily he cursed his aged mother,  
 "God strike thee down, my dear, aged mother!"  
 75 Is it not that I told thee well before,  
 'When my *vila* arrives in our manors,  
 I beg thee not invoke God nor Mary.  
 She will fly off, my lily-white *vila*,  
 She will fly off to the sky 'neath the clouds'?"

4. Sretna poduzeća sestre Sekulove;  
 inače Jankova vojna na Kosovu<sup>35</sup>

The Lucky Endeavours of Sekula's Sister; or Janko's  
 Army at Kosovo

Anica Begin  
 Luka on the island of Šipan

Kupi vojsku od Sibirja Janko  
 Po Budimu i njega okolo,  
 Barjak nosi dijete Sekule  
 Desno krilo Sibirjanin Janka.  
 L'jep je Sekul kak' gjevojka mlada,  
 Nema Sekul brka ni solufa,  
 Lišće mu je kako i jabuka,  
 Svileni ga barjak preklopio,  
 Vijaju se kite od barjaka  
 U Sekula b'jela okó vrata,  
 L'jepo ti ga pogledati bilo!  
 Kad su bili zelenom goricom  
 Vigjela ga vila Nadanojla,  
 (Ta je vila vilama gospogja)  
 Sekul bio njojzi omilio,  
 Pa Sekulu na barjak padnula,  
 I njemu je vila govorila:  
 „Lijep ti si, dijete Sekule!  
 „Uzmi mene Nadanojlu vilu,  
 „Evo tebi tvrde vjere moje,  
 „Dotri ću te dobra dobaviti!  
 „Prvo dobro, Sekule sokole,  
 „S tvoj'jem dundom da megdan dobiješ  
 „U Kosovu polju širokome,  
 „Da pos'ječeš careve delije.  
 „Drugo dobro, sokole Sekule,  
 „Silna ću te dobaviti blaga.  
 „Treće dobro, sokole Sekule,  
 „Radiću ti za godinu sina,

A large army raised Janko of Sibirj<sup>36</sup>  
 Throughout Buda and from all around it.  
 Who was chosen to be Janko's ensign?  
 Childe Sekula, truly Janko's right wing.<sup>37</sup>  
 5 Sekula is pretty as a maiden;  
 He has neither moustaches nor sidelocks,  
 His bare face is smooth as a fresh apple.  
 Silken standard waved across his body,  
 The tassels of his standard wound and spun.  
 10 White tassels dance about Sekula's neck;  
 That bold youth was a fair sight to behold!  
 When the troupe passed over a green mountain,  
 He was seen by th' *vila* Nadanojla  
 (That *vila* was mistress of the *vile*).  
 15 Sekula was a pleasing sight to her.  
 Well, she landed on Sekula's standard  
 And to him, the *vila* sweetly spake thus,  
 "Thou art handsome and fair, Childe Sekula!  
 Take this *vila*, Nadanojla, as thine.  
 20 Here, I give thee, my word, and in good faith,  
 I'll supply thee the gift of three good turns:  
 The first good turn, Sekula my falcon,  
 With thy uncle, that thou wilt see combat  
 On Kosovo, on that expansive plain;  
 25 That thou shalt cut down the Sultan's heroes.  
 Second good turn, Sekula my falcon,  
 I'll supply thee countless amounts of wealth.  
 The third good turn, Sekula my falcon,  
 In a year's time I will birth thee a son;

<sup>35</sup> Glavic 1887d.141.

<sup>36</sup> On Sibirjanin Janko see Chpt. 2 n. 59

<sup>37</sup> This is a stock phrase to the tradition. To be someone's right wing is to be their close comrade. It might be translated as 'right-hand man,' but carries a level of intimacy which that phrase does not convey.

- „Za drugu ga na noge staviti.  
 „Treću s tobom na megdan spraviti.“  
 Kad je Sekul vilu razumio  
 Na b'jelu se vilu rasrdio,  
 Pa je vili Sekul govorio:  
 „Hod' otole, vihru od planine!  
 „Ne vjerujem u tvoje magjije,  
 „Neg u Boga velikoga moga.  
 „Moja me je svjetovala majka  
 „Da s' ne ženim vilom od planine,  
 „E su vile vihri od planine,  
 „Ni gjevojkom jedihnom u majke,  
 „Jedinice da su razbludnice,  
 „Ne boje se ni baba, ni majke.“  
 Kad to čuje vila planinkinja  
 Razljuti se, ka' i vatra živa,  
 Ter obleti visoke planine  
 Za tri puta tamo i ovamo,  
 Na Sekula magjije bacila,  
 Tad Sekula glava zaboljela,  
 Svilen barjak nositi ne može,  
 Nego zove Janko svoga dunde:  
 „Dundo Janko milo dobra moje!  
 „Ne mogu ti nositi barjaka  
 „Od bolesti ruse glave moje,  
 „Umr'jeću ti, milosan moj dundo,  
 „Prije nego u Kosovo dogjem.“  
 Govori mu od Sibirja Janka:  
 „Moj Sekule sve moje uzdanje,  
 „Podaj barjak drugome kod tebe,  
 „A ti sveži u marame glave,  
 „Nasloni je konju na jabuku,  
 „I da Bog dá da ti bolje bude!“  
 Kada ga je Sekul razumio  
 Barjak dava drugome uza se,  
 A saveže u mahrame glave,  
 Nasloni je konju na jabuku,  
 To ga triput gore boli glava,  
 Ni konja se držati ne može,  
 Jedva bojno u Kosovo dogje.  
 Svaki svoga osjednuo konja.  
 A ne može dijete Sekule,  
 Ni se dići, ni osjednut konja,  
 Nego Janka svoga dundo zove:  
 „Gje si, dundo, Boga za miloga!  
 „Diži mene z dobra konja moga,  
 „Diži mene trave na zelene,  
 „Da se mojom odijelim dušom!“  
 Kada ga je razumio Janko  
 Niz obraz je suzom udario,
- 30 By the next year he will be on his feet;  
 By the third year he'll join thee in battle.”  
 When Sekula'd understood the *vila*,  
 He grew wrathful to that fair, white *vila*.  
 To the *vila*, Sekula spake thusly,  
 35 “Be gone from me, whirlwind from the mountains!  
 “I have no faith in thee or thy magics;  
 Rather only, in my one and great God.  
 ‘Twas my mother who once did instruct me  
 Ne'er to marry *vile* from the mountains,  
 40 For *vile* are whirlwinds from the mountains;  
 Nor to wed a mother's only daughter,  
 Only daughters are all simply harlots,  
 Who fear neither their father nor mother.”  
 When she heard that, the white mountain *vila*,  
 45 She grew wrathful as a blazing wildfire,  
 And she set off, flew about high mountains;  
 Three times she flew here and there all over.  
 On Sekula, she cast grievous magics.  
 Then Sekula's head began to pain him.  
 50 No longer could he carry his ensign.  
 Instead he called to his uncle Janko,  
 “Uncle Janko, my dear, goodly uncle,  
 No longer can I carry thy ensign  
 From the harsh pain afflicting my poor head;  
 55 I will surely die, o gracious uncle,  
 Long before we arrive at Kosovo.”  
 Well, he called back, Janko of Sibirj town,  
 “My Sekula, source of all of my hopes,  
 Give the standard to another near thee  
 60 And bind thy head tightly with a kerchief;  
 Lay thy head down on thy saddle's pommel,  
 And, if God grant, let thy state improve some!”  
 When Sekula had heard his uncle's words,  
 He gave the flag to another near him,  
 65 And bound his head tightly with a kerchief;  
 Laid his head down on his saddle's pommel,  
 All of this made his headache three-times worse;  
 And to his mount he could no longer hold;  
 Barely did he arrive at Kosovo.  
 70 Each soldier there dismounts from his stallion,  
 But Sekula had no strength left in him,  
 Neither to rise, nor to dismount his horse.  
 Rather, he called to his uncle Janko,  
 “Oh, for God's sake, Where art thou dear uncle?!”  
 75 Lift me, uncle, from off of my good steed;  
 Lift me, uncle; lay me down on green grass  
 As my soul parts from my weary body!”  
 When Janko had heard his nephew's stark words,  
 Along his cheek heavy tears did gather.

- Sa konja ga u naruče prima;  
 Nosi njega pod šatore dundo,  
 Više njega grozne suze l'jevo,  
 Po licu ga suzam pokapao.  
 Al' mu Sekul d'jete progovara:  
 „Nemoj cvilit, milosni moj dundo!  
 „Dobavi me divit i artije  
 „Da ja Sekul b'jelu knjigu pišem  
 „Jadnoj majci da mi se ne nada,  
 „Jêli seli da me vigjet ne će!“  
 Ali mu je dundo govorio:  
 „Ne, Sekule ljuta rãno moja!  
 „Ti ne možeš zadizati glave,  
 „Ja ću kitit listak knjige male,  
 „Poslaću je miloj majci tvojoj!“  
 Opet mu je Sekul govorio:  
 „Ne ćeš, dundo, neg dobavi mene,  
 „Nek je prvu i najzadnju pišem!“  
 Kada ga je Janko razumio,  
 Nije tio s manje mogó nije,  
 Sve donese što mu Sekul pita.  
 Kad se Sekul knjige dobavio,  
 Na l'jevu se ruka naslonio,  
 Desnom rukom b'jelu knjigu piše,  
 Ne piše je kako dundu reče,  
 Nit je šalje miloj majci svojoj,  
 Neg Jelici rogičnoj sestrici:  
 „Ne znaš, Jele draga moja sele?  
 „Magijja me vila Nadanojla,  
 „Jedva sam ti u Kosovo došó;  
 „Dogji, sestro, u Kosovo bojno,  
 „Ak' te sutra do podne ne bude,  
 „A najdalje do zapada sunca,  
 „Ne dohodi, nije ti na vr'jeme!“  
 Tu dovedu brzoga junaka  
 Iz družine od Sibirja Anka,  
 Njemu Sekul b'jelu knjigu dava,  
 Pa je Sekul njemu govorio:  
 „Ajde, brate, Budimu b'jelome,  
 „A tako ti oba oka tvoja,  
 „Nemoj komu b'jelu knjigu dati,  
 „Neg Jelici mojoj sestri dragoj,  
 „Ona će te l'jepo darovati,
- 80 Janko drew him down into his embrace  
 And carried his nephew under his tent.  
 Even more, now, heavy tears were flowing,  
 So that his face was soaked about with tears.  
 But Sekula said to his dear uncle,  
 85 “Please do not wail, o my gracious uncle!  
 Procure for me an ink-stand<sup>38</sup> and paper  
 So that I might now write a white letter  
 To my mother, so she won't hold-out hope;  
 To my sister, that she'll see me no more!”  
 90 But Sekula's uncle then said to him,  
 “No, Sekula, no, my dear, grievous wound!  
 Thou canst not lift even thy weary head.  
 I, in thy stead, will pen that small letter  
 And send it off to thy dear, old mother!”  
 95 Again Sekul spoke to his dear uncle,<sup>39</sup>  
 “Thou shant, uncle. Rather, bring it to me.  
 Let it be the first and last which I pen!”  
 When Janko had understood his nephew,  
 Though he wish'd not, he could not refuse him.  
 100 To Sekula he brought all requested.  
 When Sekula received that white letter,  
 He leaned over onto his weak left arm;  
 With his right arm he wrote that white letter.  
 He wrote it not as he'd told his uncle,  
 105 Nor addressed it to his dear, old mother,  
 But to Jela his own sister by birth,  
 “Dost thou not know, my dear sister Jela?  
 She magicked me, *vila* Nadanojla;  
 Barely did I arrive at Kosovo.  
 110 Come to, sister, embattled Kosovo,  
 If thou canst not by noonday tomorrow,  
 Or, at latest, before the sun hath set,  
 Come thou not then, for it shall be too late!”  
 Then they brought forth a fleet-footed hero,  
 115 From the war troupe of Anko<sup>40</sup> of Sibirj.  
 To him Sekul bequeathed that white letter,  
 Then to him did Sekula speak thusly,  
 “Go now, brother, to white Buda city,  
 And swear, even if it mean thy dark eyes,  
 120 This letter, thou shalt give to no other,  
 Except Jela, just to my dear sister.  
 She will pay thee fairly for thy efforts.

<sup>38</sup> *Divit* is most often a highly embellished ink-stand that hold quills, ink and other writing implements. It can also be used for a portable box carried on a person which contains a stick of ink mixed with fat so that the ink will not run.

<sup>39</sup> I follow the tradition and Begin here by alternating the characters' names at times to fit meter. I have only followed the variant shifts and do not use various case inflections. Sekula will at times be simply Sekul, his sister Jela will often appear in the diminutive 'Jelica.'

<sup>40</sup> *Lapsus mentis* Janko's name here has lost its initial 'j.' This is a common variant form but singers usually know only one form and are generally consistent in their deployment.

„A kadara u Kosovo dogješ, „Da bi Bog dó da bih prebolio, „L'jepo će te Sekul darovati.“ T'jem otide momak knjigonoša, Veselo mi put Budima pogje Na bijele dvore Sekulove. Mlado momče i od sebe srećno, To pred dvorom Jelica gjevojka! L'jepo se je njojzi poklanio Rusom glavom do zemljice crne, Poljubi je u bijelu ruku, Pak joj dava knjige šarovite. Gje je primi, tu je rastvorila, On' čas gleda što je napisana. Kad vigjela što joj Sekul piše, Hitro leti kuli us skaline, I uzima od zlata dukatâ, I odnese pred bijele dvore, I dariva mladog knjigonošu: „Ajde z Bogom, momak knjigonoša! „Ak' Sekula u životu nagješ, „Pozdravi ga, da se meni nada „Prije podne u Kosovo bojno!“ Momak pogje ispod kule tanke, Mlada Jele u bôčje zelene, Pak nabere cvijeca svakojega, Pune mlada napuni mahrama, Pak izide iz bôčje zelene, Evo ti je konjim u podrume, Iz podrumâ izvadila konja, Opremi ga sve što bolje može. Kad je dobra opremila konja, Nametne mi dizdin na jabuku, Sam se dorat ispod kule vòda, A gjevojka kulu u tanahnu, Pa ušeta u b'jele kamare, I otvori šarena sanduka, Gje je tanko ruho Sekulovo. Po sanduku ruho prebirala, Dok od'jelo najbolje iznagje, A Sekula brata rođenoga; Na s' oblače ruho Sekolovo, A na glavu b'jeloga klobuka, Okó njega zlatnoga galuna, Kako da je medik od Budima, Za pas baca nože od Stanbola, A niz bedru okovanu ćordu,	125 130 135 140 145 150 155 160 165	And then when to Kosovo thou return'st, If God grant me that I should recover, Sekula, too, will greatly reward thee.” With that withdrew the young-lad courier, And merrily on the road to Buda, To the grand, white manor of Sekula. And that young lad arrived with great fortune, At the manor stood the maiden Jela! Beautifully he genuflected to her; His chestnut head bowed down to the black earth. Then he kissed her on her lily-white hand, Then gave her the decorated letter. 'Pon reception, she opened the letter; Immed'ately she read what was written. When she saw there what Sekul had written, She bolted off up her tower's high stairs, And there drew out many golden ducats, And carried them before her white manor; She gave those coins to the young courier, “Go with God now, o young-lad courier! If thou shouldst find Sekula still living, Greet him for me, tell him to expect me Before noon at embattled Kosovo!” The lad set off from below her tower. Well, young Jela went to her green garden; There she gathered var'ous types of flowers, A full kerchief filled the youthful maiden. Then she set off back from the green garden. Now she's with the horses in the stable, From the stable she led out a stallion; Capar'soned it as best as she's able. When she'd nicely caparisoned the horse, She placed its reins on the saddle's pommel; Led her bay horse out from b'low her tower. <sup>41</sup> Then the maiden entered her thin tower; She walked into a white bedroom chamber And opened up a decorated chest, To remove the thin robes of Sekula. In his chest she inspected his garments, Until she had found his finest clothing; Of Sekula, her own brother by birth. She dressed herself in Sekula's clothing And on her head she adorned a white hat; Around the hat, a thick, golden banding In the style of a medic from Buda; On her belt she placed an Istanbul knife, Along her hip, a well-forged, sharp sabre;
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<sup>41</sup> In traditional buildings of the region, stables were built in the lowest levels of houses or beside them to capitalize on the warmth produced by the animals.

- Pak izide kuli nis skaline,  
Prilitila za dizgin gjogata,  
Pa se njemu na ramena baca,  
Pak dozivlje milu majku svoju:  
„Ostan' z Bogom, mila majko moja!  
„Kad me vidiš, onda mi se nadaj!“  
Svoja joj je govorila majka:  
„Kud ćeš, Jele milo moje d'jete?  
„Komu li ćeš ostaviti majke?“  
Ali joj je Jele govorila:  
„Majko moja, Bogu velikomu.  
„Moli Boga, mila majko moja,  
„Da se vratim zdravo od ovama!“  
Tijem pogje ispred b'jela dvora.  
Kad se hvati zelene planine,  
Konja plaši sve što prije može,  
I da prije u Kosovo dogje,  
Da li nagje svoga brata živa;  
Prije podne u Kosovo dogje.  
Kad je bila nis Kosovo bojno,  
Pod sobom je konja pomamila,  
Na carevu stražu dohodila,  
Na straži je dvadeset Turaka,  
Mimo Turke konja proplašila.  
Gledaju je careve delije,  
Megju sobom oni govorahu:  
„Mili Bože, Budinskog medika,  
„Teško ti je konja uzmamio!  
„Ko umire u Kosovu bojnu  
„Od te vojske Sibirjanin Janka?  
„Valjda Sekul Jankovo uzdanje,  
„Zaludu je medik dolazio,  
„Kad umire i dušu puštava.“  
Tijem Jele naprijeda pogje,  
Do druge je dohodila straže,  
Mimo njih je konja proplašila.  
Megju sobom Turci govorili:  
„Mili Bože, l'jepoga junaka!  
„Ovi junak na Sekule dava,  
„Njegova je slika i prilika.  
„Sekul brata rođenoga nema;  
„Ovo nije od Budima medik,  
„Biće ovo sestra Sekulova?  
„Da junaka mlada uhitimo,  
„Da mu b'jele ruke savežamo,  
„Odvedemo caru pod čadore,  
„Darujemo cara čestitoga  
„Za lijepu jabuku od zlata,  
„Care bi nas l'jepo milovao!“  
Misle Turci žalosna im majka
- 170 Then exited along her tower's stairs,  
Where she leapt to grasp her bay horse's reins.  
She threw herself on the horse's shoulders.  
Then she called out to her dear, old mother,  
“God be with thee, o my dear old mother!  
175 When thou seest me, only then expect me!”  
Her dear mother called out to her daughter,  
“Whither goest thou, Jela, o my dear child?  
With whom wilt thou leavest thy poor mother?”  
Replied Jela to her aged mother,  
180 “O my mother, may great God be with thee.  
Just pray to God, o my dear old mother,  
That I return safely from my journey!”  
With that Jela set off from her manor.  
When she had made her way to green mountains,  
185 She spurred her horse fast as she could muster  
So that she reach Kosovo more quickly,  
That she might find her brother still living  
Before noon to arrive at Kosovo.  
When she was near embattled Kosovo,  
190 Underneath her she drove her horse harder  
And came upon the Sultan's own patrol.  
In the patrol twenty Turkish sentries.  
Beside the Turks, she spurred her horse onward.  
They all watched her, the Sultan's great heroes.  
195 Amongst themselves, they began to converse,  
“Oh, my dear God, a medic from Buda!  
Look how fiercely he is spurring his horse!  
Who's dying on embattled Kosovo,  
In the army of Janko of Sibirj?  
200 Surely Sekul, source of all Janko's hopes.  
That medic has indeed arrived in vain,  
If he's dying, and giving up the ghost.”  
With that Jela continued on her way,  
And came upon yet another patrol.  
205 And beside them she spurred her horse onward.  
Amongst themselves, the Turks were conversing,  
“Oh, my dear God, what a handsome hero!  
My, that hero resembles Sekula;  
He's his double, his spit and his image.  
210 But Sekula has no brother by birth;  
That is not a young medic from Buda.  
Might that not be Sekula's fair sister?  
If we capture that young and bold hero,  
If we get him and bind his fair, white hands;  
215 Bring him to the Sultan inside his tent  
And give him to the hon'able Sultan,  
Surely, we'd fetch an apple of pure gold  
Which the Sultan would mercifully give us!”  
Those Turks believed, woe be to their mothers,

- Da Jelica turski ne umije,  
Tursk' umije, bolje razumije,  
Pak povadi magjarkinje čorde,  
A na Turke konja naplašila.  
Gje udara magjarkinjom čordom  
I po pola Turke prekida,  
I počera konja naprijeda,  
Krajem vojske cara silenoga  
Do čadora Janka dunda svoga.  
Nagje svoga pred šatorom dunda,  
Gje niz obraz grozne suze l'jeva,  
Otire se svilenom mahramom,  
Pa govori Sibirjanin Janko:  
„Gospodine Budinski mediche,  
„Što si došó u Kosovo bojno,  
„Je l' te moja sestra opremila,  
„Ol' Jelica sestra Sekulova?  
„Kad si došo, nije ti na vrijeme,  
„Sekul mi se dušom odjelivo,  
„Sad umire i dušu puštava.“  
Kad to čula Jelica gjevojka,  
Hitro skače sa konja na travu,  
Pod svileni šator ušetala,  
Svome bratu glavu podizala,  
Vadila mu teške magjiluke,  
Što mu ih vila nametnula;  
Jedni su mu pod desn'jem pozuhom,  
Drugi su mu u kosom junačk'jem.  
Sve isteže Jelica gjevojka,  
Bacila ih u džep od dolame,  
Pa uzimlje bilja od izvida  
I oblaga glavu Sekulovu.  
Sekul tako u mrtvilu spava,  
Jele pogje nis Kosovo bojno,  
Ide Jele na vodu studenu.  
Kad je došla na vodu studenu,  
Povadila iz žepa magjije,  
Pa ih meće u vodu studenu,  
To koliko ognjevito bilo,  
Kad je hladna voda uzavrela  
Na valove modre i krvave;  
A Jele se na se povratila  
Svomu milu bratu pod šatore;  
Jedno diže z glave Sekulove,  
Ono diže, a drugo oblaga,  
Sekul spava kako da je zaklen.  
Kad izidu četiri sahata,  
Da ko vidi Jelice gjevojke,  
Ono diže glave Sekulove,  
Ono diže, a treće oblaga.
- 220 That Jela did not know to speak Turkish;  
She spoke it, and better understood it.  
Quickly she drew her Hungarian sword  
And, at the Turks, she spurred her horse to charge.  
When she struck with her Hungarian sword,  
225 Half of the Turks she cut-down before her,  
And continued to drive her horse forward,  
Past the army of the mighty Sultan,  
On to the tent of Janko her uncle.  
She found Janko in front of his silk tent,  
230 Along his cheeks heavy tears were flowing,  
That he wiped off with a silken kerchief.  
And thusly spake Janko of Sibirj town,  
“O goodly sir, medic from Buda town,  
Why com'st thou to embattled Kosovo?  
235 Hath my sister sent thee here to aid us,  
Or else Jela, Sekula's dear sister?  
Though thou hast come, I fear that it's too late.  
Poor Sekula has parted from his soul,  
Now he's dying, and giving up the ghost.”  
240 When she heard that, the maiden Jelica,  
Quickly she leapt from her horse to the grass  
And then entered into the silken tent.  
Immed'ately lifted her brother's head,  
And removed the grievous magics from him,  
245 That the *vila* had afore placed 'pon him:  
One of them was under his right arm-pit;  
The second one in his heroic hair.  
She removed them, the maiden Jelica  
And she threw them in her dolman's pocket.  
250 Then she withdrew all her herbs for healing,  
Placed a compress onto Sekula's head.  
Thus Sekula slept the sleep of the dead.  
Jela wandered embattled Kosovo,  
And walked toward the field's algid waters.  
255 When she came to the field's algid waters,  
She withdrew the magics from her pocket  
And pitched them in the field's algid waters.  
Well, those magics were so igneous and hot  
That cold water began to froth and boil  
260 In churning waves of blue and bloody red.  
Well, then Jela turned and made her way back  
To Sekula, to her dear brother's tent.  
She lifted one from off Sekula's head,  
Lifted one compress and placed a second.  
265 Sekula slept as though he'd been slaughtered.  
When time had passed, four long, taxing hours,  
If you could see, the maiden Jelica,  
She lifted that one from Sekula's head,  
Lifted that one and placed a third compress.

- Mili Bože, na svemu ti hvala  
 Gje preboli banović Sekule!  
 Sjede Sekul pod svileni šator,  
 U kraj njega Jelica sestrice,  
 A po kraj nje Sibirjanin Janko,  
 Pa govori Jelici gjevojci:  
 „E! mediče mili gospodine,  
 „Blažen bio ko te je rodio,  
 „U Kosovo meni opremio,  
 „Ali moja rođena sestrice,  
 „Al' Jelica lijepa gjevojka!“  
 A kad začu Jele plemenita  
 Na dunda se grohotom nasm'jeje,  
 Pa je svome dundu govorila:  
 „Da li misliš, dundo dobro moje,  
 „Da je ovo medik od Budima?  
 „Al' ne pozneš Jelicu gjevojku  
 „Sekulovu rođenu sestricu?“  
 Kad to čuo Sibirjanin Janko  
 Zagrlji je desnom i lijevom:  
 „Ti si, Jele moje d'jete drago,  
 „Ni doma te ne poznala majka,  
 „Kako mi tvoj u Kosovo dundo!“  
 Glas otide pa vojsci carevoj  
 Da je medik došó u Kosovo,  
 Ma da nije medik od Budima,  
 Nego Jele sestra Sekulova.  
 Kad to čuje turski car Memede,  
 Nije Memed vjeren, ni oženjen,  
 Pomami se, nosili ga gjavli!  
 Pa fermana b'jelu knjigu piše  
 Na šatore Anka i Sekule:  
 „Priatelji Anka i Sekule!  
 „Ja sam čuo pod mojim šatorom,  
 „Meni moje kazaju delije,  
 „Da imate hitra medikara  
 „Iz Budima bijeloga grada,  
 „Koji vida boles na junake;  
 „Mene moja zaboljela glava,  
 „Biće mene vile zatrovile;  
 „Molim tebe, Sibirjanin Janko,
- 270 O dearest God, praise to thee for all things!  
 Then recovered Sekula the Ban's son!  
 Sekula sat underneath his silk tent;  
 At the tent's edge was Jela his sister,  
 And beside her Janko of Sibirj town.  
 275 Janko spoke to the maiden Jelica,  
 “Oh my dear sir, medic from Buda town,  
 Exalted be she who gave birth to thee,  
 And who sent thee to me at Kosovo,  
 Whether it be my good sister by birth,  
 280 Or Jelica the beautiful maiden!”  
 When she heard this, noble maiden Jela,  
 At her uncle she uproar'ously laughed.  
 Then she spake thus to her own dear uncle,  
 “Dost thou think then, o my goodly uncle,  
 285 That I'm truly a medic from Buda?  
 Dost thou not know the maiden Jelica,  
 I, Sekula's own dear sister by birth?”  
 When he heard that, Janko of Sibirj town  
 He embraced her with both his right and left,  
 290 “But it is thou, Jela, o my dear child!  
 Even at home, thy mother 'd not know thee,  
 Let alone thy uncle at Kosovo!”  
 Word of this reached to the Sultan's army,  
 That a medic had come to Kosovo;  
 295 That he was not a medic from Buda,  
 Rather Jela, Sekula's dear sister.  
 When he heard that, Turkish Sultan Mehmed—<sup>42</sup>  
 Mehmed's neither betrothed nor 's he married—  
 He grew lustful; devils carried him off!  
 300 Then he wrote a firman,<sup>43</sup> a white letter,  
 To the tent of Anko and Sekula,  
 “My dearest friends, Anko and Sekula!  
 I have just heard underneath my tent's roof—  
 My own heroes are those who have told me—  
 305 That you have an alacritous medic  
 Straight from Buda, from that grand, white city,  
 Who is healing illnesses in heroes.  
 My noble head is vexing me greatly,  
 It must be that *vile* have poisoned me.  
 310 I beg of thee, Janko of Sibirj town,

<sup>42</sup> This is Sultan Mehmed II, also known as Mehmed the Conqueror (Turk. *Fatih Sultan Mehmed*), who conquered Constantinople, as well as taking Serbia, Bosnia, Wallachia and Albania in the 15<sup>th</sup> century. Though historical figures are often randomly and anachronistically paired in song, Begin has used the correct Sultan. It was, indeed Mehmed II who faced János Hunyadi's crusade in Belgrade in 1456 after the Hungarian King Vladislaus abjured the conditions of the Treaties of Edirne and Szeged of 1444. Moving the battle to Kosovo field is a historical inaccuracy which capitalizes on the epic resonance of that location.

<sup>43</sup> In the songs, Ottoman officials and those pretending to be them often write firmans. The word is used less often in the formal sense of an official decree than as a letter of permission or an officiating document to avouch the bearer. In rare occasions, such as this, the term is extended to any letter written by an Ottoman official.

„A i tebe, banović Sekule,  
 „Pošljite mi mlada medikara,  
 „A pod moje svilene šatore,  
 „Da pogleda ruse glave moje,  
 „L'jepo ću vam darovat medika,  
 „Da na mene zažaliti ne će!“  
 Knjiga dogje Anku i Sekulu,  
 Sekul prima a Janku je dava,  
 Knjigu štije Sibirjanin Anko,  
 Svu aziju suzam potopio.  
 Sve ga gleda Jelica gjevojka,  
 Pa je svome dundu govorila:  
 „Otkle knjiga ognjem izgorjela!  
 „Desna ruka da bi usahnula,  
 „Koja ti je knjigu nakitila,  
 „Da je štiješ, a suze proliješ!“  
 Kad to čuje Sibirjanin Anko  
 Bacio joj knjigu na koljena.  
 Knjigu gleda Jelica gjevojka.  
 Knjigu gleda, a na nju se smije,  
 Svojijem se podruguje dundom:  
 „Ludo tebe, dundo dobro moje,  
 „Da ti cviliš, i suze prol'jevaš,  
 „Što me care zove pod šatore,  
 „Ali misliš da ću poginuti?“  
 Govori joj od Sibinja Janka:  
 „Progij' se, Jele, turskog car-Memeda,  
 „Nije Turčin vjeren, ni oženjen,  
 „Ako pozna da si ženska glava,  
 „On će Turčin obljubiti tebe!“  
 Govori mu Jelica gjevojka:  
 „Ne boj mi se, dundo dobro moje!  
 „Piši knjigu svijetlome caru  
 „Da će doći medik pod šatore,  
 „Da će sv'jetla pohoditi cara,  
 „I gledaše boles koja mu je.“  
 Kad je čuo od Sibinja Janko  
 Stade Janko b'jelu knjigu piše:  
 „Sv'jetal care dragi gospodare!  
 „Pozdravi te medik od Budima,  
 „Da će doći tebi pod šatore  
 „Kadar bude na zapadu sunce  
 „Pogledati tvoje glave ruse  
 „Da vigjeti boles koja ti je.“  
 Kada knjiga pod šatore dogje,  
 Knjigu lege turski car Memede,  
 Kad vidio što mu Janko piše  
 Od milosti knjigu poljubio,  
 Od veselja u njedra bacio,  
 Sve na žarko sunce pogleduje

And of thee too, Sekula the Ban's son,  
 Send him to me, the young Buda medic,  
 Send him to me, send him to my silk tent,  
 To examine my poor and aching head.  
 315 Gen'rously will I reward the medic,  
 Such that he shan't have reason to fault me!"  
 The letter reached Anko and Sekula.  
 'Twas Sekul who passed it on to Janko.  
 When he read it, Anko of Sibirj town,  
 320 All of Asia he flooded with his tears.  
 She watched him well, the maiden Jelica,  
 Then she spake thus to her goodly uncle,  
 "Whence this letter, may the 'nferno burn it!"  
 May his right arm atrophy and wither,  
 325 He who, to thee, wrote and sent this letter,  
 Which, when perused, causes thy tears to flow!"  
 When he heard that, Anko of Sibirj town,  
 Onto her knees, he let fall the letter.  
 Read that letter, the maiden Jelica,  
 330 Read that letter, and she laughed upon it.  
 She began to gently mock her uncle,  
 "Oh, how foolish, o my goodly uncle,  
 That thou wailest and thy tears are flowing,  
 Since the Sultan called for me to his tent.  
 335 Surely, thou dost not believe my fate sealed?"  
 He spoke to her, Janko of Sibirj town,  
 "Leave be, Jela, Turkish Sultan Mehmed,  
 That Turk 's neither betrothed nor 's he married.  
 Should he detect that thou art a woman,  
 340 Then that Turk will 'ssuredly despoil thee!"  
 She replied thus, the maiden Jelica,  
 "Fear not for me, o my goodly uncle!  
 Write a letter to the radiant Sultan  
 That the medic will visit to his tent,  
 345 That he'll visit to the radiant Sultan,  
 And ascertain which ailment now plagues him."  
 When he heard her, Janko of Sibirj town  
 Janko set to writing a white letter,  
 "Radiant Sultan, dearest, noble master!  
 350 He sends greetings, our medic from Buda,  
 That he'll visit to thee inside thine tent  
 When the sun sets in the red, western sky  
 And inspect thy poor and afflicted head,  
 To ascertain which ailment now plagues thee."  
 355 When the letter arrived at the Turk's tent,  
 Read that letter, Turkish Sultan Mehmed.  
 When he had seen what Janko had written,  
 From gratitude he kissed the white letter;  
 From elation he pressed it to his breast.  
 360 All day long he looked toward the hot sun



Kad će prije zapadnuti sunce, Kad će doći medik od Budima. U to doba na zapada sunce, Sunce ode u duboko more, A Jelica na noge skočila Ispod svoga svileni šatora, Sekulu je bratu govorila: „O Sekule moj rođeni brate, „Nemoj cvilit, ni suze prol'jevat, „Nemoj mislit, brate dobro moje, „Da ću ljubiti turskog car-Memeda, „Da bi o tom Ture pomislio, „Imam ljute za pojasom nože, „Koji jesu kova mletačkoga, „Š njima bih mu srce pronijela.“ To izreče Jelica gjevojka, I govori Anku i Sekulu: „Ostan' z Bogom, dundo dobro moje! „I Sekule moj rođeni brate!“ Ali joj je Sekul govorio: „Ajde z Bogom, Jele sestro moja! „Ti se pazi cara čestitoga!“ Ode Jele caru do šatora. A kada je care sagledao, Jedva toga bio dočekao, Pričeka je svoj'jem pred šatorom, I govori od Stanbola care: „Da si zdravo, budinski mediče! „Koji vidaš bolesne junake, „I magije vilâ sa planinâ; „A mene je glava razboljela, „Da me n'jesu vile magijale?“ Govori mu Jelica gjevojka: „Da ugjemo svileni pod šator, „Da ja gledam boles koja ti je.“ Pod svileni šator pošetaše, Jele cara za ruku hvatila: „Neka vidim, care gospodare, „Je li ti nemoć od Boga poslana?“ Drži cara za bijelu ruku, Pa ovako govori Jelice: „Memed care turski gospodare, „N'je ti nemoć od Boga poslana, „Neg je nemoć od ašikovanja, „Tebe mori ljubav gjevojaka.“	365 370 375 380 385 390 395 400 405	Barely able to wait for the sunset, For the visit of the Buda medic. At the time when the sun was in the West, When the sun had set below the deep sea, Then Jelica leapt to her nimble legs Underneath the roof of her silken tent. To her brother Sekula she spake thus, “O Sekula, my own brother by birth, Do not lament, do not let thy tears flow; Neither assume, o my goodly brother, That I shall kiss Turkish Sultan Mehmed, Or consider anything from that Turk. In my belt I conceal two angry knives, Which are both of Venetian forging; <sup>44</sup> With them I would pierce him through his dark heart.” Having said this, the maiden Jelica, She then said to Anko and Sekula, “God be with you, o my goodly uncle, And Sekula, my own brother by birth!” Then Sekula said to his dear sister, “Go with God now, o my sister, Jela! Guard thyself from the hon'rabl Sultan!” Jela set off to the Sultan's silk tent. When the Sultan had caught a look of her, Barely could he contain his impatience, And received her in front of his own tent. To her he said, the Sultan of 'Stanbul, “Let thee be well, medic from Buda town! Who skillfully heals afflicted heroes, And heals magics from the mountain vile. My head also terribly afflicts me; Surely vile have also magicked me.” Replied to him, the maiden Jelica, “Let us enter into your silken tent, To ascertain which ailment now plagues thee.” Together they ambled into his tent, Jela then took the Sultan by his hand, “Now, let me see, o my liege, my Sultan, If thy illness has been sent thee from God.” Jela held him by his lily-white hand, And thusly spake the maiden Jelica, “Mehmed Sultan, o Turkish lord sovereign, Thy illness has not been sent thee from God, Rather it's been caused by all thy courting; What thou needst most is a maiden's amour.”
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<sup>44</sup> Perhaps *lapsus mentis*. Lines 168 and 420 refer to Jela's knife as an 'Istanbul knife,' while here Begin refers to two Venetian-forged knives. It may be that all of these verses agree and that Jela has adorned herself with a sword and some type of Istanbul-style knife, both of which have blades forged in Venice, but it is also quite likely that Begin has simply used a common formula in her repertoire 'kova mletačkoga' (of Venetian forging) and missed the contradiction in the midst of the performance.

A care se sv'jetal posmjehiva: „Ne budali, budinski mediche! „Nego sjedi da se napijemo, „Noćas ćemo noćevat zajedno „Pod mojijem svilen'jem šatorom!“ Pa je grli desnom i lijevom, I govori od Stanbola care: „Ne kaži se, sestro Sekulova, „Ne kaži se budinsk'jem medikom! „Znađem dobro od Stanbola care „Da s' Jelica sestra Sekulova, „Ti se možeš nazvati carica.“ Hoće Ture da ljubi gjevojku, A Jelica srca junačkoga, Pa isteže noža stanbolskoga, Bode cara u srce junačko, Pade care svoje pod šatore, A Jelica pobježe gjevojka Svome dundu svileni pod šator, I k Sekulu bratu rojenomu. A kad sutra b'jeli danak svane, A evo ti jadu započetka, Nagju mrtva cara pod šatorom, Pobuni se sva vojska careva, Da je medik cara pogubio, Smutiše se jagnjičari Turci, Kako mrkli pomame se vuci, Na ugarsku vojsku udariše, Dv'je ognjene vojske se udrile. A u Janka vojska plemenita, Ugričići po izbor vojnici, I Slovinci na glasu delije, Pa se b'ili od jutra do podne, Prigonjali tamo i ovamo Da se ne zna ko će predobiti. Kad po podne dva sahata bilo Na Janku je megdan ostanuo, Razbi Janko careve delije, Sve posjekli, malo ko ostane, Pokupiše turske odorine, Konje dobre, oružje svijetlo, I pokupe svoje ranjenike, I pokopa mrtve telesine, I otide sa Kosova bojna, I odvede zdravo i ranjeno. Kada dogje Budimu b'jelome, Ranjenike baca na medike, Zdrave šalje dvoru bijelome, I dariva spenzom nebrojenom. Koga nije do kruha ne ije!	410 415 420 425 430 435 440 445 450 455	This caused him mirth, the radiant Sultan, “Don't be foolish, medic from Buda town! Just take a seat and let us drink our fill. This night we shall spend the night together Beneath the roof of my own silken tent!” Then he hugged her with both his right and left, And he spake thus, the Sultan from ‘Stanbul, “Do not pretend, o Sekula's sister, Do not pretend thou 'rt a Buda medic! For, I know well, I, Sultan from ‘Stanbul, Thou art Jela, sister of Sekula. But thou couldst be Istanbul's Sultana.” The Turk wanted to kiss the young maiden, But Jelica had a heroic heart And she withdrew her knife from Istanbul And plunged it deep into the Sultan's heart. The Sultan fell dead inside his own tent And Jelica the maiden swiftly fled To her uncle, back to his silken tent, And to Sekul, to her brother by birth. In the morrow, when the white day had dawned, Throughout the host, there great grief had begun. The dead Sultan, was found in his own tent; All were inflamed, all the Sultan's army, That the medic had slain their dear Sultan. Disor'ented Turkish janissaries Had grown fervent as a pack of dun wolves And they besieged the Hungarian army. And thus engaged two large, fiery armies. Well, Janko's was a most noble army: All the choicest Hungarian soldiers, And all the Slavs, all notable heroes. Well, both sides clashed from morning until noon; Drove each other both hither and thither Such that none could know which side would prevail. When the sun had signalled two hours past noon, With Janko the combat had remained strong. Janko battered the Sultan's own heroes, Cut them all down; 'twas few of them remained. They collected all the Turk's uniforms, Their good horses and their shining weapons, And collected all of their own wounded, And buried all of their fallen soldiers; Made their way from embattled Kosovo; Carried away their healthy and wounded. When they returned to Buda's white city, The wounded were entrusted to medics, The healthy were sent to their white manors, And gave away uncountable treasure. He who hath not, nothing more than bread eats!
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A mi braćo zdravo i veselo!  
Bog nam dao zdravlje i veselje,  
I na dušu duhovno spasenje!

And we, brothers, healthy and jubilant!  
God grant to us both health and happiness,  
And for our souls, spiritual salvation!