

History and fiction in a *bugarštica* ballad from the Eastern Adriatic: *How the Natives of Perast Punished the Spanish Duke Don Karlo Who Disgraced Two Orphan Maidens of Perast in the Year 1537*¹

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Examining lesser known historical events about the Spanish siege and Ottoman resiege of Herceg Novi in 1537–1538 and comparing it to the *bugarštica* ballad from the Eastern Adriatic, the author investigates the process of folksong creation and the relationship between fact and fiction. It has been argued that this particular event inspired the historical background of the song “How the Natives of Perast Punished the Spanish Duke Don Karlo Who Disgraced Two Orphan Maidens of Perast in the Year 1537”. However, historical facts were changed and adapted according to a specific local song tradition. Although celebrated in literature, the heroic Spanish resistance in Herceg Novi failed to carve deep mark in Spanish popular memory, being episodic and on the margin of Spanish mainstream history. On the other hand, in the *bugarštica* ballad the historical elements were reduced or disregarded, the context was changed and the military conflict was presented as a social one. The author shows that the transition from history to fiction (pseudohistory) is parallel to the shift from epic to ballad form, and concludes that the *bugarštica* in question was not contemporary with the historical episode of the Spanish presence in Herceg Novi.

Key words: *Bugarštica* ballads, history, fiction, Herceg Novi, Perast, Francisco Sarmiento

While the overwhelming majority of Serbian ballads feature a short verse (an eight or seven syllable line), there is a fairly small corpus of traditional songs, mostly ballads, featuring a long verse – a fifteen or sixteen syllable line with a

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break after the seventh or eighth syllable. The earliest text of the long verse songs called *bugaršticas* [sing. *bugarštica*] dates from the late 15th century, while the chronologically latest texts have been recorded in 17th and 18th century manuscripts.

According to the prevalent view,² the *bugarštica* originated in Serbia and spread north to the Srem region and subsequently south to the eastern Adriatic coast. Migrations caused by the gradual Ottoman conquest of the Balkan hinterland were instrumental in this process. Most *bugarštica* texts have been preserved and recorded in the Eastern Adriatic area as remnants of an older tradition marginalized by the “new” decasyllable songs that became prevalent in the younger epic and ballad tradition.

The *bugaršticas* deal mainly with events associated with the two Battles of Kosovo (1389 and 1448), but also events dealing with Christian-Turkish relations in the Southern Adriatic, regarding the towns of Perast, Herceg Novi and Dubrovnik during the 16–17th century. Their protagonists are Serbian historical figures (14–16th century) and Hungarian, Serbian and Croatian protagonists of events in the Southern Adriatic, as well as “others” – the Spanish, the Venetians and the Turks. Their relations involve power clashes, ethnic relations, religious, social and gender issues. The context in which these events evolved was complex. It involved not only the clashes of the Balkan Slavs and Hungarians with the Turks, but also clashes of major Western powers with the Ottomans in the Mediterranean, as well as the Catalonians in Greece in the 14th century, commerce and slave trade (especially slaves from Bosnia), the presence of Spaniards and Catalonians in Dubrovnik (consuls, merchants, soldiers, navigators, craftsmen, medical doctors, travelers, Spanish Jews). In the 16th century the Kingdom of Naples in southern Italy and Sicily was under the rule of the Aragon family. Later Dubrovnik enjoyed the protection of Carlos V and Philip II, but at the same time recognized supreme rule of the Ottomans, balancing between the mutually hostile powers it depended on.

The oldest recorded *bugarštica* (1497), discovered and analyzed by Miroslav Pantić (Pantić 1977), is associated with Isabella del Balzo, wife of Federico I of Aragon, King of Naples, and the journey she made in 1497. The account of this journey was provided by the young poet Roggero di Pacienza in a poem that includes a scene that took place in the Italian locality of Gioia del Colle where a local group of Serbs, probably refugees from Serbia, performed for the distinguished lady a *bugarštica* describing the imprisonment of the Hungarian Yanosh Hunyadi by the Serbian nobleman Djuradj Branković in his fortress in the Serbian town of Smederevo, following Hunyadi’s defeat in the second Battle of Kosovo in 1448.

² For a concise presentation of scholarly views on the *bugarštica* see the excellent “Introduction” in: Miletich 1990: xix-xxvi.

In geographic terms the Eastern Adriatic area includes several historically important centers: Dubrovnik and several towns – Herceg Novi (Castelnuovo), Risan, Perast, and Kotor – nested in the Bay of Kotor, located just south of Dubrovnik. This was a multi-ethnic (Serbs and Croats) and multi-religious (Orthodox Christians, Catholics, Muslims) area ruled for centuries by various and alternating foreign powers, namely Venice and the Ottomans. In the localities under long-term rule of the Ottomans, the local Serbian population remained Christian Orthodox. However, in localities under long-term Venetian rule, many locals converted to Catholicism, retaining often their old religious mores (such as the celebration of the exclusively Serbian Orthodox slava – Patron saint's day).

Our interest is focused on the period marked by the direct presence of the Ottomans (1482–1687), Spain (1538–1539) and Venice (1687–1797) in this area, as well as events associated with the latter and their impact on the local environment and some *bugaršticas*. Our main focus is on the relationship between history and pseudohistory in *bugarštica* texts referring to a specific historic episode: the presence of the Spanish in the town of Herceg Novi during 1538–1539.

The area of the Adriatic Coast from Dubrovnik in the north to the Bay of Kotor – including the towns of Herceg Novi, Perast and Kotor – in the south is historically very interesting because it was a crossroad of the East and West. The Slavic Serbian and Croatian population was affected by the division of Christendom into the Eastern Byzantine and Western Roman realm, and later on by the clash between European powers, especially Venice, with the Ottomans, regarding military, political and economic control of the Mediterranean. Another power vying for control was Spain, especially after 1500 when the Spanish assumed control of the Kingdom of Naples.

The protection of the Spanish king Carlos V was especially important for Dubrovnik after the rise to power of Sultan Suleiman II. Following the Battle of Kosovo in 1389 the Ottomans controlled most of Serbia; Constantinople fell in 1453, Bosnia in 1463, Belgrade in 1521, Rhodes in 1522, Buda in 1541. Surrounded by lands ruled by the Ottomans, Dubrovnik had no choice but to recognize supreme Ottoman rule. Nonetheless, at the same time Dubrovnik managed to acquire and retain protection from Spain. After 1518, another threat to the Christians in this area emerged: the pirates lead by Hairedin Barbarossa who at the same time strengthened Ottoman naval power in the Mediterranean.

In 1538, at Preveze (near Corfu), two powerful fleets clashed: the Spanish-Venetian fleet commanded by the famous admiral Andrea Doria and the Ottoman fleet under the command of Barbarossa. Realizing he would be defeated, Doria decided to withdraw. He turned away, sailing towards the Bay of Kotor. Located at the very entrance of the Bay, some 40 km south of Dubrovnik, was

Herceg Novi, a bastion of Ottoman rule since 1482 due to its good land communication with the hinterland (Herzegovina and Bosnia, already under the control of the Ottomans). As Barbarossa was far away, Doria attacked Herceg Novi, took it and placed it under the command of the Spanish officer Francisco Sarmiento.

The episode in question was described by the modern Serbian historian Jorjo Tadić. "The Ottomans first withdrew to two fortresses, one on the coast, the other on a hill, but they surrendered..." (Tadić 1932: 52). Thus Herceg Novi came under the rule of Spain and under the command of Francisco Sarmiento, who was ordered to maintain friendly relations with the Venetian subjects in southern Dalmatia, the Christians in Ottoman-ruled lands and Dubrovnik. Sarmiento was also instructed to encourage rebellions of "the Morlachs, Slavs and Albanians" and to rely on them for information on the movement of Ottoman troops (Tadić 1932: 53). Returning to the Bay of Kotor in July of 1539, Barbarossa had the opportunity to retake Herceg Novi. He first attacked the upper fortress. Unable to withstand the attack, the Spaniards escaped to the lower fortress, but the gate was stuck and could not be opened. "There, in front of the gate, the janissaries took him prisoner since he had refused to be hauled up by a rope, so they took him to Barbarosa who sent him to Istanbul" (Tadić 1932: 54). The next day this fortress also surrendered, so Herceg Novi once again came under Ottoman rule. This particular event is described in a report written by Doria based on information provided by various informants from Dubrovnik (Tadić 1932: 55).

The same episode was described by León Arsenal and Fernando Prado in their book: *Rincones de Historia Española. Episodios históricos, fabulosos y desconocidos a través de los siglos* (2008). Their account of this forgotten episode of Spanish history is based on two sources: *Historia de la vida y hechos del emperador Carlos V* by Spanish historian and bishop Prudencio de Sandoval (1553–1620) and *Carlos V, el César y el hombre* by modern Spanish historian Manuel Fernández Álvarez (1921–2010). These authors offer more details. The Spanish infantry regiment in question was first stationed in Lombardia, where they rebelled and were disbanded: one half was transferred to Hungary, while the other half eventually ended up in Herceg Novi. Following new conquests in the Mediterranean by the Ottomans, the Holy League was set up by the Pope. It was comprised of forces controlled by the Pope, Venice, Spain and the Maltese Knights. The Spanish regiment, consisting of a total 4,000 men (around 150 horsemen) was stationed in Herceg Novi, which was to serve as a base for further incursions against the Ottomans in the Balkan hinterland. However, the League itself soon dissolved and there was no support from the Western fleet, so the Spaniards were stranded and left there to defend their positions in the subsequent attack by Barbarossa's overwhelming military force (10,000 infantry, 4,000 *janissaries*, artillery and support from the Ottoman forces coming from the hinterland). The siege began in July of 1539, when some 1,000 Turks disembarked in order to get

water supplies, but were ambushed and attacked by Spanish infantry and horsemen. During the siege, the commander of the Spanish regiment Francisco Sarmiento urged his men to repair and reinforce defenses at the northern fortress. A week later, Barbarossa made the Spanish a “generous” offer allowing them to leave honorably, with arms, except for their artillery and gunpowder. The Spaniards refused and according to Arsenal and Prado they did so for psychological reasons – to redeem the dishonor and humiliation experienced in Lombardia by confronting the much stronger Turkish force. Interestingly enough, in the account offered by Sandoval, there was a Jew from Naples, probably a fictional character, who betrayed the Spaniards by reporting on their desperate status to Barbarossa. More information was passed on to the Turks by three deserters (two Spaniards and one Portuguese). As the main attack by the Ottomans pushed forth, Sarmiento, who was already seriously wounded, ordered his men to retreat to the lower fortress, where the local civilian population had found refuge. However, when they got there, it turned out that the gates were sealed and could not be opened. Sarmiento was offered to be hauled up by a rope, which he refused saying: “God would not will me to be saved by leaving my men to perish” (Arsenal & Prado 2008: 32). Only 200 Spaniards survived, one of them Machín de Monguía whom Barbarossa wanted to join his army. Monguía refused and was immediately killed, just as many other Spanish soldiers. In 1545, write Arsenal and Prado, a galley arrived in Mesina with a group of captives that had managed to flee from a Turkish prison. Among them were twenty-five Spaniards who survived the massacre in Herceg Novi.

Arsenal and Prado indicate that at the time these events took place, these Spanish heroes were eulogized in a number of poems that compared them to immortal mythological heroes. However, the heroic Spanish resistance in Herceg Novi was soon “erased from popular memory”, probably because of the “irrelevance” of their feat in the overall context of the battle for control of the Mediterranean. In their conclusion on this forgotten episode of Spanish history, Arsenal and Prado quote a sonnet written by the Spanish writer Gutierre de Cetina (1520–1557) titled: “To the remains of the Spaniards who died at Castelnuovo”. The poem closes with lines to the effect that these exemplary heroes died “to prove that the memory” of their “fortunate death” was to be “envied by victory” (2008: 34).

One of the reasons why this episode was forgotten in Spain and Europe was the wane of major clashes in the Mediterranean: Venice negotiated a peace treaty with the Ottomans in 1540, while Charles V signed a truce with Suleiman the Magnificent in 1543. Herceg Novi remained under Ottoman rule until 1687, when the Venetian military commander Gerolamo Corner took it, placing Herceg Novi under Venetian rule which ended only in 1797.

Although the heroic confrontation of the Spaniards with the Turks in Herceg Novi was sung by contemporary renaissance poets, it seems that this episodic show of courage never took root in the Western popular imagination – not only because it was episodic, but also because it took place in an unknown locality on the margin of Spanish mainstream history. In the popular imagination of the locality of Herceg Novi, this event is “remembered” in a different way. Namely, it is viewed in the context of local history, but also as an episode with no long-term consequences. History in Herceg Novi is remembered through its public spaces such as plazas and streets, and its architecture, especially military constructs designed to withstand time and hostile attacks. Presently, Herceg Novi is a beautiful tourist resort featuring three fortresses or “towers” as they are locally called. The biggest and best preserved is known by its Turkish name *Kanlı kula* (Bloody Tower). Today it is the venue of summer film and music festivals. The southern fortress, much less preserved and closest to the sea, is known by its Italian name *Forza Mare*. The northern fortress is known as *Španjola* (the Spanish Tower). Although the Ottomans built it, the fortress was identified with the Spaniards, whose military base it was for a brief moment in history, rather than with the Turks. After the Spanish episode this fortress was in ruins, and it still is, so it is the toponym rather than the structure itself that has kept the memory.

The Spanish episode also appears in a *bugarštica* titled: “How the Natives of Perast Punished the Spanish Duke Don Karlo Who Disgraced Two Orphan Maidens of Perast in the Year 1537” (Miletich 1990: 268–275). The town of Perast from the title is located just south of Herceg Novi in the Bay of Kotor. In the period 1186–1371 Perast was part of Serbia. After the conquest of the latter by the Ottomans, Perast was briefly independent but came under Venetian rule in 1420. The population of Perast is Slavic, mostly Serb-Montenegrin, but due to the long Venetian rule, which lasted until 1797, the majority of the population was Catholic. Several *bugaršticas* deal with local incidents and skirmishes between the men of Perast and the local Turks in the littoral (Herceg Novi and Risan) or the hinterland (Herzegovina).

The *bugarštica* in question is a ballad rather than an epic poem. It deals with a typical ballad theme from the domain of family life – the transgression of the code of honor involving the rape of women. The conflicting individuals and groups – the people of Perast and the Spanish military stationed in Herceg Novi – are confronted not by a difference in religion – they are both Christian Catholic – but by ethnic and cultural identity, and even more importantly by the line distinguishing the local population from the intruding ‘other’ represented by the Spaniards. In the case of Herceg Novi, where the population was Serbian and mostly Christian Orthodox, as well as in the case of Perast, the ‘other’ is represented by three groups: two of them Christian (Venetians and Spanish) and one Moslem (the Turks). Local folksongs portray the Venetians in a positive and the

Turks in a negative light. However, although one would expect a positive view of the Spanish, this *bugarštica* presents them in a clearly negative manner. From the very beginning they appear as “those Spaniards used to shameful deeds” and once this image is set, it comes as no surprise that they “shamefully disgraced” two local girls from Perast whom their master had sent to Herceg Novi on some errands.

The protagonists of this narrative are divided into two groups: the first one is identified as “we”, the second as the “other”. In the first are two servant girls from Perast and “the beloved Perast men”, also described as “borderland knights”, all anonymous (except one, Vukmir, who served to spy on the Spaniards). In the second are two characters with names – the Spanish duke Don Karlo and wife Izabel – and others anonymous (cavalry and soldiers) from its retinue. The Spanish names are generic rather than specific, and Karlo could be a reminiscence of the Spanish king Carlos V. The presence of the Spaniards in Herceg Novi is a historic fact, but the two main characters are a fictional distortion of history. The commander of the regiment was a seasoned soldier, but certainly not a “duke”, and his real name, Francisco Sarmiento, has obviously been forgotten and replaced by a generic name. Although civilians – “some forty clerics and merchants” (Arsenal & Prado 2008: 24) – came to Herceg Novi together with the regiment, there were certainly no women among them, let alone the wife of the commander Sarmiento. Izabel is a fictional character filling in a role required by the logic of the ballad narrative in which the conflict is derived from the motif of rape. This motif plays two roles: it is the instrument first of transgression and later of revenge. Rape by definition implies a male-female relationship, so the ballad had to introduce female characters, moving farther away from history and closer to fiction. Women played no part in the Spanish episode, which was a clear-cut military affair. However, once the historical narrative began to fade, turning vague and indistinct, it was easy to make a transition from history to fiction, and also from an epic historical narrative celebrating military honor to a fictional narrative ballad describing a violent breach of the social code and its no less violent restoration.

The raped women play a necessary, but secondary role as passive objects rather than subjects of action. However, rape is a transgression eliciting a social response from men as guardians of the male dominated social order. The men from “honored” Perast and the Spaniards “used to shameful deeds” assume the primary roles, but not as combatants fighting an epic battle, but as protagonists of a power clash in a limited local arena displaying specific social, ethnic and cultural features. Furthermore, the conflict takes place in a social environment very different from the historical one. The Spanish regiment consisted of veteran soldiers who had rebelled because they had not received pay, so they were not individuals coming from a high and refined social environment. Promoting Francisco Sarmiento into the Duke Don Karlo points to another literary device, that

of introducing a social aspect into the narrative centered on rape: it is the powerful Spanish duke accompanied by horsemen and soldiers who takes advantage of two orphaned girls, defenseless servants, thereby showing utter contempt for the socially weak (orphans, women, servants) as well as for the local population in general. Therefore, the clash evolves not only in the domain of the relationship between “we” and the “other”, but also in two additional domains bearing gender (male-female) and social (high-low) markers.

The narrative begins by setting the scene: the introduction of Don Karlo and his cavalry, who have been in Herceg Novi for a “brief” time, who set out to visit the land. They encounter by chance two maidens/servants and the Spanish duke “disgraces” them. The girls return to Perast and tell their master what happened. The men of Perast then “took council” and vowed to take revenge:

All men of Perast first would die
Beloved Perast men,
Before we let the Spaniards off! (Miletich 1990: 269)

This they decided to send one of their own (Vukmir) to Herceg Novi in order to spy on the Spaniards and devise a plan for revenge. Seven days later Vukmir returned and reported that the Duke and his cavalry planned to leave town the next day to “gather squads throughout the land”. That same night the men of Perast sailed to Herceg Novi and at midnight set an ambush near a well where they expected the Spaniards to come in the morning. At dawn the Duke, his wife and his cavalry came to the well and rested there. The men of Perast attacked them, killing forty-three “Spanish heroes”, and capturing Don Karlo and his wife Izabel. They “ravished her before his eyes”, explaining to the woman that this was revenge for what her husband had done to the poor girls from Perast. Then they “cut his hand off” and his “shameful mouth” with which he had “kissed those waifs so young”, and sent him back to Herceg Novi. Izabel finally committed suicide by hanging herself at the well that used to be “called the Spanish Grave” and “now it’s called the graveyard well”. Thus the “knights of Perast” achieved their revenge, wishing “no ill repute” in death.

Here again we have a place and toponym linking the narrative to history. According to Arsenal and Prado, on July 12 of 1539 some one thousand Turks disembarked in order to replenish their water supplies and capture a Spanish soldier or local civilian so to get information on the status of Spanish defenses. However, a group of Spanish soldiers led by Machín de Monguía staged a surprise attack on them while they were off guard at the well. They fled towards the port, but Sarmiento and his soldiers were there waiting for them: “They killed three hundred Turks, captured thirty and forced the rest to return to the ships” (2008: 26).

The ballad has preserved the memory of the place where a massacre took place. It is a place associated with water and tranquility: a *well*. It has also preserved the memory of the event that took place there: an ambush of those who had stopped at the *well* for water. However, the well has been confused with another place where the mutilated Sarmiento met his death. Regarding the *well*, the attackers and the attacked have switched roles. The ballad has moved away from history in three ways: by forgetting the Turks altogether, by reversing the role of the Spaniards, and by introducing local protagonists i.e. the men of Perast.

Why did the Spaniards have a negative image in the local imagination and memory? There might be three circumstantial reasons. The first might be the bad reputation of Catalanian pirates – due to their intrusions in Greece (including Mt. Athos, a holy place for Orthodox Christians), attacks on commercial ships, and involvement in slave trade – that was transferred to the Spaniards. The second might be connected with local incidents with Spanish individuals in Dubrovnik. Tadić reports one such incident, a litigation initiated in 1530 by the former Spanish consul in Dubrovnik. In the years following this unresolved issue “there was a series of conflicts between Dubrovnik and certain Spaniards” (Tadić 1932: 39), regardless of the fact that Spain continued protecting Dubrovnik in the West. The third reason might be the power struggle among the members of the Holy League: the Pope and the Venetians were not particularly happy to have Doria commanding a joint fleet in which they had invested much more assets than Spain: “Nominally, the fleet was under the command of Andrea Doria, but this was a motive for tension considering the fact that the Papal and Venetian fleets were twice as big as the one Doria had commanded” (Arsenal & Prado 2008: 23). Finally, although we have no data documenting this, the Spaniards, veteran soldiers stranded and under pressure in Herceg Novi, a place completely foreign to them, might have misunderstood the local population and approached them in a wrong way. The Spanish soldiers accompanied by clerics and merchants could have easily disregarded the culture, religion and interests of the mainly Serbian and Christian Orthodox population of Herceg Novi, with which the people of Perast strongly identified. Perhaps a detail from the historical account might confirm the poor rapport of the Spanish with the locals. The gate of the lower fortress, where the locals had found refuge, could not be opened because it had had been “walled”. Or, perhaps, the locals would not risk their own lives in order to save the Spaniards, whom they perceived as foreigners who imposed themselves by force and would be ejected from Herceg Novi the same way. The locals knew the Venetians and the Turks who took part in the long-term control of the Bay of Kotor, while the Spaniards were probably perceived as a brief intruder who had no business being there.

There is one more detail connecting the ballad narrative with the historical account of the Spaniards in Herceg Novi. The historical Sarmiento, the prototype

of the fictional Don Karlo, fought bravely in all the battles and was seriously wounded – “with three arrow wounds in the face and head he could hardly move” – and in the final battle, he is said to have plunged on horseback among the furious janissaries; “later he was not found dead or alive, no one knows what happened to him” (Arsenal & Prado 2008: 31–32). Don Karlo was also mutilated – his hand cut off and his “shameful” mouth “cut away”. This may well be a reminiscence of Sarmiento’s wounds in the “face and head”. The ballad remembered the tragic mutilation and death of the leader of the Spaniards (Sarmiento), but completely forgot the context, replacing it with a new and different one. The image of the mutilated, dying Sarmiento was remembered, but at the same time disconnected from the siege of Herceg Novi by Barbarossa which provides the logic leading to such an epilogue.

The most interesting aspect of this *bugarštica* is that although it is based on elements of recorded history, it bypasses history as such in order to focus on a non-epic event viewed as a tragic incident in the framework of a local chronicle. The transition from history to fiction (pseudohistory) is parallel to the shift from epic to ballad form. The historical memory is preserved in the architectural monument known as the Spanish Fortress, and it is also preserved in some elements of the ballad: (1) the place of ambush identified as a “well” (called the “Spanish graveyard” or “graveyard well”); (2) the image of the Spaniard wounded in the “face and head”; (3) the Spaniards leaving the town in order to recruit squads. Non-historic elements have been introduced as required by the new narrative context and conventions of the ballad genre: (1) the motif of rape providing a new motive of conflict (transgression of social code – punishment and restoration of the social code); (2) three fictional female characters; (3) the change of social environment (Duke and duchess as markers of the later); (4) the introduction of local male protagonists (collective character: the men of Perast); (5) stressing fictionalization by suppressing the historical role of the Turks.

The shift from history to pseudohistory suggests that this *bugarštica* was not contemporary with the historical episode of the Spanish presence in Herceg Novi. The mediated link with the historical narrative suggests it appeared a long time after the event, long enough to “forget” the essential historical context and meaning and to transform it into a typical ballad plot elaborated according to the conventions of the genre. Thus the original military conflict between the Spaniards and the Turks was replaced by a social conflict – transgression of the code of honor (rape) – between the local “we” (men of Perast) and the foreign “other” (the Spaniards), which was compatible with some elements from the historical narrative.

The *bugarštica* dealing with the Spanish episode is connected with three other *bugaršticas* whose protagonists are also the “men of Perast”. The first is titled: “The Battle of the Perast and Kotor Men with the Turks of Novi and the

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Историја и фикција у бугарштици с источног Јадрана:
*Како Перашћани казнише испанскога војводу Дон Карла који осрамоти
 двије перашке сироте дјевојке (одишћа) 1573*

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Резиме

Испитујући мање познате историјске догађаје о шпанском заузимању и османском преузимању Херцег Новог 1537–1538. године и упоређујући их с бугарштицом с источног Јадрана, ауторка разматра процес стварања народне песме и однос између чињеница и фикције. Доказује се да је управо овај догађај инспирисао историјску подлогу песме *Како Перашћани казнише испанскога војводу Дон Карла који осрамоти двије перашке сироте дјевојке (одишћа) 1573* (Богишић 59). Али, историјске чињенице су промењене и прилагођене специфичној локалној песничкој традицији. Мада прослављен у књижевности, јуначки отпор Шпанаца у Херцег Новом није оставио дубљег трага у шпанском народном памћењу, будући да је имао епизодичан карактер и да је био скрајнут с главног тока шпанске историје. С друге стране, у бугарштици су историјски елементи редуковани или занемарени, контекст је измењен а војни сукоб представљен је као социјални. Ауторка показује да је прелаз из историје у фикцију (псеудоисторију) паралелан заокрету од епске форме према баладној, и закључује да ова бугаршtica није савремена историјској епизоди присуства Шпанаца у Херцег Новом.

Кључне речи: бугарштице, историја, фикција, Херцег Нови, Пераст, Франциско Сармиенто

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