

Presence of alban population in the geographical area of Dardania /Kosovo and North-Western Macedonia/ during medieval times before the occupation of the Ottoman Empire of the Balkans (According to the Slav sources of the XIII-XIV centuries and otoman-Turkish sources of XV-XVI centuries)

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Abstrakt

Artikulli trajton praninë e popullsisë shqiptare në zonën gjeografike të Dardanisë, e cila përfshin rajonet e Kosovës dhe Maqedonisë Veri-Perëndimore, gjatë periudhës mesjetare deri në pushtimin e Ballkanit nga Perandoria Osmane. Studimi fokusohet në burime dokumentare historike nga shekujt 13-16 që dëshmojnë ekzistencën e vendbanimeve dhe popullsisë shqiptare para pushtimeve osmane. Burimet përfshijnë harta gjeografike antike mesjetare dhe gjetje arkeologjike. Territori, në lashtësi, ishte pjesë e Mbretërisë Dardane, e cila u krijua nga fisi dardan me origjinë ilire, i konsideruar si paraardhës i shqiptarëve. Shteti kishte strukturat e tij politike, administrative dhe ushtarake dhe monedhën e vet. Pas rënies nën sundimin romak në vitin 44 pas Krishtit, Dardania pësoi ndryshime të ndryshme administrative. Artikulli thellohet më tej në ndikimin e migrimeve dhe pushtimeve të ndryshme në popullatën shqiptare, duke theksuar qëndrueshmërinë e tyre ndaj romanizimit dhe asimilimit.

Fjalët kyqe: *Albanian population, Dardania, Ottoman Empire, historical documents*

Abstract

The article discusses the presence of the Albanian population in the geographical area of Dardania, which encompasses regions of Kosovo and North-Western Macedonia, during the medieval times leading up to the Ottoman Empire's occupation of the Balkans. The study focuses on historical media sources from the 13th to 16th centuries that attest to the existence of Albanian settlements and populations before the Ottoman invasions. Sources include antique medieval geographic maps and archaeological findings. The territory, in antiquity, was part of the Dardan Kingdom, which was established by the Dardan tribe of Illyrian origin, considered the ancestors of the Albanians. The state had its political, administrative, and military structures, and its own currency. After falling under Roman rule in 44 AD, Dardania underwent various administrative changes. The article further delves into the impact of various migrations and invasions on the Albanian population, highlighting their resilience against romanisation and assimilation.

Fjalët kyqe: *popullsia shqiptare, Dardani, Perandoria Osmane, dokumente historike*

Our study is aimed at the theme, which concerns, precisely with the historical media sources testifying to the presence and existence of Albanian settlements and populations before the Ottoman invasions of the Balkans, throughout the vast geographical space of Dardania respectively in the territories of Kosovo and North-Western Macedonia.

According to the sources, antique medieval geographic maps, Kosovo territory and today part of North-western in the antique times was part of the antique Dardan Kingdom with the main seat in Shkup (Scupi), established in century IV-I, before our era by the tribe of Dardan with the Illyrian origin, ancestors of antique Albanians and medieval Arberors more concretely of today's Albanians. This state had its political-administrative, military as well as territorial organisation, its currency which we could find from Nish (Naissus), in the North to Shtip (Astibos) and Veles (Bilassora), in the South. Under the rule of the Roman Empire, Dardania falls in the year 44. First, was part of the province of Mezia (Moesia Superior), and then in 279, a new unit of Dardania region was established.

Based on some archaeological findings in the territory of central Dardania and the largest space of South Illyria, it is seen that Illyrian-Albanian tribes managed to escape romanisation and remained very little affected, (with the spread of small groups). They also escaped assimilation during the massive influxes of barbarian peoples, Huns, Avars and especially Slavs who came from a province, beyond the Carpathians, of Bjelorussia called Polesje, moving towards Kijev and Warsaw, finally during the VI-VII, they settled in Balkan. Since the point of the conquests and of these barbarian peoples, as well as those Slavs, was, at first glance, to penetrate as far south as possible, they crossed the great barrier, the Danube River near the city of Singidunum. Then they continued their journey through the valleys of the rivers of Morava (Margus), and Vardar (Bardarios), by passing central Dardania. They managed to invade Thessaloniki, the main city, where large barbarian crowds gathered.

After the partition of the Roman Empire in 395, and with its destruction in 476, it was divided into two parts, that of the East and in that of the West. At the time, the territory of Dardania and its population were included within the East-Byzantine and for centuries they were under the domain until the second half of IX century. While the activity still had had still remained under the domain and

jurisdiction of the Western Church of Rome of the Holy See until the VIII century. After this, they enter under the jurisdiction of Patriarchate of Constantinople.

Later on, territory of Dardania with little interruptions, during years (850-1018), enters the rule of kings of Boris, Simeone and Samuile of the Kingdom of Bulgaria. However, during the bloody battles that took place during 1014–1018, between Byzant and Bulgaria, the Byzantine emperor, Basilios known as the Bulgarian (bulgarokton), managed to completely destroy the Bulgarian army of Samuil, on the outskirts of Prilep and Ohrid, and again the territory of Dardania is put under the rule of the Byzant (1019-1196). After this period, byzant's long wars with the crusaders of the Western crusaders followed, but they suffered catastrophic losses, since 1204, the crusaders invaded Constantinople, so Byzantine rule ceased for nearly 60 years, while the Latin Empire dominated and continued to rule. After the loss of the war with the crusaders, Byzantine, was weakened, while the medieval state of Arbanon and medieval Slav state of Ras-Rashka began to strengthen. Bulgaria strengthens again, under the rule of the king *Kalojan*, during the years 1197- 1207, and the last time during the rule of the king *Ivan Asen*, during years 1218- 1241, when they conquer and rule the territory of Dardania, for a period of 30 years. Byzant, strangely enough, after so great losses he had suffered from the Crusades, after 60 years, he was again strengthened with the arrival of Emperor Mihail VIII Palaeologus at the helm. As soon as he came to the throne, which ruled during 1259–1282, it made necessary reforms in state organization and arrived since 1261, with a large army to re-energize Costantino polis, which soon strengthened militarily, revived and rejuvenated the Empire of the Byzant. He immediately took rapid measures, making reforms to state institutions, and was able to reclaim most territories in the Balkans and those parts of the lands of Dardania-Kosovo that were actually and legally under the rule of Byzant, that were temporarily conquered by the Slavic state of Ras, during the time while the Byzant was fighting other states.

Although Byzant managed to regain power and rule for another 20 years on the territory of Dardania until 1282, for a longer period, as seen, there was no more economic or military power to face the vicious attacks coming from the states around. So, the Slavic state of Ras, with King Milutin at the helm that, until this time, was the vassal of the Byzant, when it investigated that the Byzant had weakened economically, but also military power had it distributed at some

borders against other states, then took the opportunity to attack it. And exactly in the year 1282, there was a S between a few regiments of the Byzantine army and the big military forces of the state of Ras led by king Milutin. His troops managed to break the resistance of the Byzantine forces and they managed to enter in Fushe Kosove, Ulpiana-Lipjan and Skopje into the north-western region of Macedonia. Historically, Slavs managed to enter south-western Dardania whose border went beyond Veles (*Bilasora*), and Shtip (antic *Astibos*), since at that time the territory of Macedonia was Greek region of Thessaloniki, while the very small portion of its territory which was in western Thrakia and partly in Aegean Macedonia, which went all the way to Gjevgjelia, which today borders with the rest of the territory of the antic Macedonia, a region in the north of Thessaloniki.

As we can see from other sources, the hypothesis of Serbian authors that allegedly towards the end of the XII century Kosovo was conquered by Slavs of Rashka. This Slav narrative doesn't have any documented proof, neither did Kosovo exist under such name, beside the name of Dardania. Only after the first battle Kosovo is mentioned as a historic toponym. Stefan Nemanja has managed to conquer only few small regions of north-western and north-eastern parts of Dardania, but Byzant, managed to regain lands conquered by Slavs as soon as it stopped the wars in which it has been engaged with other states. Stefan Nemanja on this occasion stated: "*I conquered parts of the Greek lands (byzantine I.R.)- (i o s v o j i h d e l o v e o d g r l k e z D r g k o v i n ð H e a d i d n t s a y I h a v e l i b e r a t e d l a n d s o f t h e s t a t e o f R a s h k a , b u t c o n q u e r e d t h e G r e e k o n e s . T h i s s t a n c e d o c u m e n t s t h a t t h e r e a l i t y w a s t h a t t h e t e r r i t o r y o f D a r d a n i a , c e n t r a l K o s o v o w a s n e v e r a p a r t o f t h e s t a t e o f R a s - R a s h k a e s t a b l i s h e d b y t h e S t e f a n N e m a n j a .*

Also, English historian Noel Malcolm states that Kosovo has never been inside the medieval territory of Rashka. Serb expansionism of Kosovo, from Nemanja starts only at the end of the XII century. However, some quasi scientists and Slav historians have falsified Nemanja words and have completely differently interpreted his words, by saying: Nemanja has liberated few parts of his lands which belong to the state of Ras, and that were earlier conquered by the Byzant. Some of the quasi Slavic authors of the XIX century have fictionally prepared the thesis that when Slavs came to Dardania (they use the toponym), they found Kosovo not inhabited.

Establisher of the state of Rasia was Stefan Nemanja, born in Ribnica in Zeta, Montenegro (in ancient times known as Docleatia-

Docleacia), was from a dark ethnic descent, with symbiosis of ethnic autochthonous Pre-Slav groups. Nor his name, or surname are of Slav origin, his name is of a Greek origin, Stefanos (meaning crown), while his name Neiman has the Jewish origin. At the beginning, he was baptised according to the roman catholic church and later on he was converted to orthodox rite. His ethnic origins are still not clear even today. It is an undeniable historic fact that Slavs that came from the Russian Carpaths have settled in the Illyrian lands, before the arrival of antic Albans and Medieval Arberor, reposting them in the southern part of the Balkan-Illyrian peninsula. According to the new data, we can conclude that the geographic location of Dardania in which also north-western part of Macedonia is included, is conquered by the Slavs of Ras, as stated above, in the last two decades of the last part of the XIII (1282-1283), and not during the last decade of the XII century. The territory of Dardania has long been under the rule of Bulgaria, when they before Serbs, during IX-X centuries, they have in an administrative manner made the first Slav toponyms in the territory of Dardania and medieval Arberia where Alban population lived, where we found many of the settlements with in Bulgarian language. Slavisation of settlements of the Alban population and the conversion in the orthodox religion continued with a high intensity, under administrative pressure during the conquer of medieval state of Slav Serb of Ras.

A) Source data of foreign scholars and local ones who testify the presence of the Alban-Arberor population, before the invasion of slav-serb (during the III-XIV centuries) of the territory of Dardania-Kosovo and North-western Macedonia.

Famous French Byzantologist Alain Ducellier is one of the first scholars that asserted the existence of the first layers of Slav toponyms in Balkan, which was done during the rule of the medieval state of Bulgaria. Slavisation continued with the same intensity also in the geographical location of Dardania-Kosovo and north-western Macedonia and medieval Arberia, during the medieval rule of Slav state of Ras. According to them, Slavs-Serbs are the oldest invaders of Kosovo and the medieval north-western Macedonia. He poses the question, if Serbs during the centuries. XIII-XIV, were majority in the territory of Dardania-Kosovo, then the question arises who lived before Slavs that came later to the above mentioned territory. We all know that Slavs are Indo-European population, who came to Balkan very late and are the latest invaders of Kosovo and Macedonia, and are Serbs

from Rashka. We also know that in that time for many centuries romanism couldn't disappear the autochthonous population; dakes in Rumania, thracks in Bulgaria, Illyrian tribes in Macedonia and Dalmatia, according to Alain Ducellier. Assimilation of the autochthonous population in Bosnia and Dalmatia (and partly in Dokleat and Dardania), was done by the many of the Slav tribes with the help of Huns, Avars and other barbarian tribes, and even the Byzantine couldn't stop their destructive and terrible assaults that left devastation.

The invasion of Slavs into the inhabited lands with Alban population, (formerly under the rule of Byzant), caused great destruction and massacres, displacing the indigenous inhabitants from their fertile lands who were forced to shelter some sheaths through caves and insurmountable mountains to survive. Therefore, Slav authors don't cite the parts that famous historians of Balkan such as Šufflaj, Jireček have made since a long time known for the histography and ethnography of Balkan that Slavs that came to Balkan have displace indigenous population from their fertile lands further down south. According to the Balkan studies scholar *Mi l a n Ć amofsf l a y* , historian and ethnographer from Croatia says that:

Settlement of slavs in the western Balkans had fallen on the Albanian population as sword that had cut off some of the main branches of its trunk in the North and South and narrowed them within a much smaller territory. Also other famous historian, Konstatiin Jireček with Czech origin, speaking of Illyrians, the Illyrians during the Roman period, were the first of medieval Albans, (Illyria su bili prteča srenjevjekovnih Abnasa), which during the denominations of Slavic populism, as he writes, the Illyrians from territories where until then they lived, between the space of Dalmatian and the Danube River were pushed (by Slavic tribes) further south of the Balkan peninsula.

Šufflay and Jireček both claimed that their medieval studies, in all regions included in the triagle *Ohër-Vlorë- Tivar- Prizren-with few other territories* far away in the Northern part of Prizren, (north-eastern part of Kosovo-I.R.), *were Arberor settlements (Zemlje Arbanasa)*. They wrote that *Arberore (Arbanasi)*, lived during medieval times in different cities in Kosovo and Macedonia, but they didn't say much for the Alban population that lived in the urban and rural settlements, which are also mentioned in medieval Slav registries¹ of the second half of the XIII-XIV centuries.

Stanoje Stanojević, is one of the first Slav scholars that has brought a short registry from Slav Crisobuls as an onomastic proof, where we can see that we are dealing with the process of slavisation of the Alban population during the medieval times, which the orthodox Church has baptised in the typical Slav names: Father Shodoje (Shodol) the son of Dragija, father Gjini, his son Mojan, father Maroj, the son of Beranit, Nikola the son of Rajko, his grandfather Lleshi, Bogdan the son of Progon, father, But'ko sons Shoqi and Dragoslavi²etc. From the book of registry: Rajko Gjin-ović, Brato Gjon'ović, Bogdan Llesh-ović, Rajko Krizmić (Krizma), Bogdan Krizmić (Krizma- Crissima), Nikodim Krizmić, Radosav, Radomir and Hrane sons of Lleshit, Stanoje Goden-ović, Bogdan Tanush-ević, Hlapo Guri'Bard- ić (Gurabardhi-I.R.), Dragoslav and Dragosh sons of Bogoje-s, their grandfather had the name Kuriku (Gurakuqi- I.R) etc. Radoj Troshan-ović, Pop Troshan, his brother (Tolja) and Priboja. Scholar Milosh Milojević, mentions few inhabitants of Çabiq and Xërxa (Zerzeva): Milc Toljan-ovik (Tolja), Stepan, Mileshe, Gjin , Gjergj, Preka (Prenka), Pavl'ovik, Rajko Gjin'ovik, Brata Gjon'ovik, Preka (Prenka) etc.

In the village of Korishë of Prizren, from the year 1348, it was gifted to the monastery of saints Mihal and Gabriel of Prizren, while in the year 1454, two members of the jury are mentioned: David Buzuluk (*Buz-Ulku*), and Dragoslav Mar'Četić (*Mark-Çeta*), in relation to the outlining of the property of the village. Also, archive sources of the archive of Dubrovnik offer few data on the Alban population and slavisation of the Albanian names in the region of Novaberda and Anamorava, where in the year 1428, in the book of the trader from Raguza (*Mihal Lukarevicit*), there was a number of registered inhabitants with anthropic symbiosis of names which were characteristic to Albanian catholic priests, but also of the orthodox priests of the Alban origin from Novoberda and in vicinity of Novoberda who worked as miners and were traders and craftsmen.

I will just mention some of them: Andreja Gjinović, Dragoslav Gjonović, Radoslav Gjonović, Gjorgje (Gergj) Progonović, Mark Pronogović, Johanes-Jovan- Gjon Progonović, Bogdan Lekić (Leka), Jakov (Jaka) Lešović (Lleshi), Nikša Lekić (Leka), argjensar, Nikša Čaretić (Niksha Qarreti), Radislav Zotić (Zoti) etc. These onomastic data were published by famous scholar Mihajlo Dinić. While he was

commenting the book of a trader Mihal Lukareviqit from Ragusa, among other, in relation to Arberor inhabitants concludes by saying: “We can see that in the registry there are hundreds of people from the city and surroundings of Novoberda, which have our name (in Slavic meaning), with exception of few Arberor names (arbanaških imena), who are simple miners, who have been brought as specialists from Germany and among our people. However M. Dinić, as many of the Slav author have attempted to negate and minimise the autochthonous presence of the Alban population although they are mentioned in the early sources of the Slavic documents but in a very scattered way, but in a very detailed way in Osman registries of the centuries XV-XVI, where Alban population as well as their settlements were registered, with very characteristic Albanian names: Binča of Vitia, begging of century XI.(1019), Rabana mtz. Arbana at Prokupi, of XII.century Arbanaški Potok, (from the Prroni i Arbneshit in Albanian) and settlement -Ljug- and the same name is the Slavic language Dolac of the XIII century. Arbanas of Xërxa of Rahovec, Arbanns of Janjeva, Arbanashka of Kumanovo and two Arbanas of Shtip of centuries. XIV. Muzaq of Prokoplje of XIV. Buzovik near Berana centuryXIV, Buzovik near Vitia, Butofc near Prishina century. XIV. Berisha in the mountains of Komaran and Berish in the Mushitisht of Suhareka, century. XIV. Burmaz and Shalinofc at Novi Pazar and Shalinofc at Istog in the XIV century (Novaković).

Tens of medieval settlements before Slavs, that are based on the name of Illyrian-Arber-Dardan as, Bardus-Bardon, Bardin, Bardoniq and Bardofci, have been found registered in the ottoman registries of the centuries XV-XVI, before invasion of the territory of Dardania, by the medieval state of Ras.

Claims by this author and other Slav authors that allegedly Arbanaset came to Kosovo and Macedonia at the end of the XVII century and the beginning of the XVIII century. This thesis that is invented without any scientific bases, beside medieval sources, negates this also the registry of Novoberda, of the year 1497/98, not only in 38 settlements of this medieval town, but also in 210 rural settlements, including the county of Kazaja-Novoberdo (Rexha, 2002). This was registered in the cadastral registry and the Alban ethnic population belonging to the orthodox and the catholic rite. The most convincing proof that Alban population was in majority are the proofs of priests, which have been registered in the settlements of Anamorava: priest Braja Arbana's, priest Berashi, priest Dashi, priest Jaku, priest,

Petri, priest. Dimitri³, priest, Gjon'i, priest Gjin'i, priest Pljaki, Pava (Pal) son of Gjoni, priest Delash son of priest Gjonit, Gjin son of Protopopit, Jovan son of priest Mati-t, and the priests of catholic of Alban origin: priest Nikola Priest, Marko, priest Mati, priest Bardo (Bardhi), priest Pepa, priest Ulku-Ujku, priest Simon, priest Jozef, Andreja don Gjergji, don Pavli (Pali), dom Nikola Progoni, dom Nikola Tanushi, etc. It is interesting to say that as many of the Slavic scholars, Mihaljo Dinić, known also in Balkans, remained committed scholar of the propagandistic school of Balkan of Jovan Cvijićit who established the Institute of Ethnography and Anthro-po-geography to publish edition of few sets of books under the title: "Settlements and the origin of the Serb population", to study ethnic structure in Serbia, but also categorically negate the existence of Alban population, during medieval times in the geographic area of Dardania-Kosovo-North-Western Macedonia and Southern Serbia in the region of Nish.

This political and propagandistic project has been negated five decades ago also the sources of the Archive of Dubrovnik, but also onomastic and demographic data which were found near the Christian objects and churches as well as the official registries of the Ottoman cadaster of the centuries XV- XVI, that there were churches and monasteries of the Alban ethnic origin, which according to the official correspondence of the Holly See of Vatican, were forcefully converted into orthodox churches.

As for the ethnic and religious issue, according to the regiments of the defts, it is clearly seen that, the process of slavisation of the structure of anthropometries of the Albanian population, was ongoing, but in the anthroponomic it seemed like the Slavic populism, (since during medieval Slavic rule, it was dressed administratively, even violently, with typical Slavic names), It was in reality in ethnic and linguistic terms, mostly Albanian and non-Slavic ethnicity. This process of Slavisation also affirms Slavic registries. As well as its conversion to the Orthodox religion of the Pravoslav rite that had been done in an administrative and violent manner, through the Pravoslav Church, had almost ended. For this process of slavisation and the conversion of the Alban population, beside the Slav sources in the transparent manner it is also shown In more than 20 cadastral registries of the official ottoman administration of the centuries XV-XVI, (which are considered diplomatic sources, which have been drafted by the

official committees, with the order of Sultans and in the preamble of these documents there was their Monogram-Tugra making it impossible to falsify it).

The Slavisation of the settlements with Alban population in the onomastic aspect and the conversion in the orthodox rite are also presented in the works for the existence of Alban population, even before the ottoman rule in the territory of Kosovo and North-Western Macedonia. These studies were partly based on Slav sources and more in depth on the ottoman cadastral registries of the following authors: Handžić (1969), Pulaha (1974), Rizaj (1983), Tërnavë (1979), Duka (2009), and Rexha (2016). We have to bear in mind that, Jireček and Šufflay like medieval scholars of the Balkan history, at that time didn't possess data of the registers for the registration of population registry, since they couldn't offer the data that are connected to the ethnic, religious and monographic structure of the above mentioned regions. Their thesis that Albans (Arbanas) have lived only in the area of *Tivar i Prizren i Ohër - Vlorë*, has been overthrown with the discovery of the ottoman cadastral registries of the centuries XV-XVI, that prove the existence of the Alban population in all rural settlements of Kosovo and North-western Macedonia and Southern Serbia, since this thesis has been documented since five decades ago.

Serb-Slav authors are trying to contest the proofs of the authentic ottoman registries, basing their assumptions only on the Slav registries, that re copies to the original ones, as the famous Russian paleologist Vladimir Moshin (2011) also testified to, who for many years in a row has studied those registries and has said that some of them are not very credible, since they have been re-written and reduced with different annexes by the priests of orthodox monasteries and churches.

Based on the historic toponyms of the Albanian language, that are considered established during the antique time and the medieval period, they prove that Alban population lived in Balkan even before ottoman and Bulgarian rule (centuries 9-10), but also before the rule of Slav-Serbs, during the second half of the 13-14 centuries, in the geographical area of Dardania.

According to the historic toponyms of the Albanian language that have been registered in the fragmented ways in the Slav sources of the XIII- XIV centuries and in the detailed manner in the ottoman registries of the XV-XVI century, that went from Nish and in the north-

eastern region, while in south-western part from Shtio in the border with Bulgaria.

In the north-western part from Jeni Pazar to Vishegrad in the border with Bosna. According to the cadastral registry of the XV-XVI century, we can see that also properties in the region of Nish⁴, were registered and that catholic inhabitants of the Alban population: Gjon son of Mihajl, Mati son of. Gjerjash, Tominik son of Petri, Nikola son of Arbanas, David son of Dhimitri, Petri son of Boja, Daka son of Filip,. Kolj, son of Gjon- Dermi, David son of Gjon, Jovan son of b. Gjon. Also, in the registry there were 3 pre Slav settlements, also connected to the Albanian on the bases of - mal-malj+ča-slav suffix Slav> Maljča, 2 of those are in the northern part of Nish, while third settlement is written in the deformed manner Maljoshishta, because in the topographic card of Austria of 1690, they wrote it in the Albanian form of Maljishte and it was placed in the southern part of Nish. Also in the settlement of Maljisht where inhabitants have Christian names, they have also registered: Kostandin the son of Arbanas, Marko son of Kostandin Arbanas, Gurguri son of Pavli, Pavli son of Brajsalit, Petri son of Brajsal, Dushman son of Brajsal, Gurgur son of Brajsal.

In the Christian neighbourhoods of the settlement of Prokuplje, they have registered inhabitants with the traditional Albanian Christian names: Kostandin son of Berjan, Nikola son of Bardo (Bardhi), Vasil son of Jaku, Jaku son of Dimtri, Petri son of Dimitri, Mara son of Dimitri, Shin Todor, Pava son of Shin, Matosh son of Petri, Nikola son of Plana, Mil Mati, Mil Shati, etc.

According to the detailed registry of year 1477, from few unpublished onomastic data, we can see that that some of the neighborhoods of the city of *Prishtina* (BOA.TD, 1477), there were Christian Heads of the families registered with ethnic Alban origin: Dimitri Daci, Brajko Daci, Ulko Kupili, Mihajl Domi, Bogdan Paleci (Pal'Leci), Nikola Buzala, Bogdan Qarreti-q, Jovan Qarreti-q, Jovan Gjovani (Gjoni). Nikola Shodra (ShenTodra-I.R.), Petri son of Popit, , Petri son of Jani, Jaku son of Maxharrit, Todor son of Gjon Buçi, Radi Dimitri, Radi Prnon, Nikola son of Gjon, Gjorgj (Gjergj) son of Dash, Jovan son of Botush (Batush), Radosav son of Pljak, Radosav Sharra, Buzati Dimitri, Dimitri Doda,, Duka (Doka) Novata, etc.

Also in the older registry of the year 1525, we find onomastic data which have not been published until now, in which in Prishina's

neighborhoods were registered heads of the families with very characteristic names of Alban origin: Konstandin Domeli, Mati Gjini, Raja Gjini, Raja Raban-i (mtz. from Arban), Petri Gjini, Gjon Nikla, Jako Dominik, Andre Mati, Vuka Mati, Marush Martini, Raja Doka, Simon Tojlin, Raja Duka, Konstandin Leshjani, widowed Spana, widowed Mara widowed, etc. Most of the head of the families of the city of Prishtina had Christian-Slav names, as a continuation of the activities of Orthodox Church that has some status of the cultural autonomy, from sultan, while the activities of the Catholic Church since the medieval times was suspended and remained in that way since ottoman rule, where religious services for Alban Catholic population were done through assimilation and baptising with the typical Slav names.

In the settlement of Vushtrri (*Vilçiterrin*), according to the registry of Vilk Vilyaet of the 1455 year, in the societal settlement of Christian-Alban-Slav, there were 40 heads of the family that were still of catholic religion, 91 heads of the families were of Christian Alban-Slav origin, orthodox and Alban ethnicities, 66 heads of the families of Slav origin, 15 head of the families of Vllah-Rumanian origin, 2 of Greek origin and 2 of Hebraic origin.

In the year 1530, in Prizren there was a settlement (mahalla) Andreja Laç-Arnauti with total of 15 houses. We will provide just few examples on how the Slavisation of the Alban population happened where most of the heads of the families had typical Slav names, whereas in onomastic aspect heads of the families had typical and traditional names of roman-Latin and Greek-Byzantine origin. Stepan, son of Boardos (Bardhit), Radivoj son of Gjonesh, Jovan son of (Gjoneshit), Dimitri son of (Gjonesh-it), Gjura, son of (Gjonesh-it), Radic, son of Arbanas, David son of Shala, Nikola son of Shala (Rexha, 2005). According to the registry of Rumelia of the year 1451-1452, in the city of Skopje, there was a neighbourhood of Gjinaj (Mahale-i Gjinko). Whereas Macedonian historians M. Sokoloski and A. Stjanovski, didn't manage to read this toponym properly, transcribing the names in a wrong way as Maalo Genko, instead of the ottoman-Turkish form neighbourhood of Gjinko, which derives from the patronym of brothers and families of medieval noble families that are mentioned since XIV-XV centuries, in Slav and Ottoman documents.

In the neighbourhood Gjinko there were registered also these head of the families: Gjinko Kundraxhi, who was a cobbler: (as it seems the whole neighbourhood took the name after him), Tadori

brother of Gjini the cobbler, Nikola the son of Sopat (Sopa), Dragoslav the son of Sopat, Dimitri the son of Prenç, Nikola the son of Jonç, (Gjonç-it), Dragan the son of Malja, Nikola the son of Drralla, Drralla dhe son of Mark, Nikola the son of Bertoris. In the year 1467, after 15 years, in the neighbourhood Gjinko (Gjinaj), we find it registered the son of Gjinko, the above mentioned cobbler Mark the son of Gjinko, with the following heads of the families: Dimitri the son of Mitresh', Nikola dhe son of Gjesha, Todor, dhe son of Mirush, Rela dhe son of Sapat (Sopat), Todor the son of Liko. In the neighbourhood Svetko Samarxhi of Skopje of the year 1467, the following heads of the families were registered: Nikola the son of Muzaka, Todor the son of Shendre (Shen Andre), Gjura son of Marin, Jovan the son of Suteç (Suta). Another head of the family under the patronym Muzak we find registered in the Muslim neighbourhood Ahrijan Hasan, who has converted to Islam and was in the blood relations with *Nikola Muzakën* catholic, from the Christian neighbourhood of Skopje.

These two heads of the families from Skopje, one of them catholic and the other Muslim apparently had blood ties with 2 other heads of the families of the orthodox religion with Radoslav Muzakën and Ivan Muzakën, of the village Ponorç of Tetovo that converted to the orthodox religion in the orthodox church.

In the Muslim neighbourhood of the city of Tetovo, in the registry of the year 1451-53, there were 5 head of the families registered under the ottoman names and under 5 surnames, traditional for medieval Alban: Hizir Gligori, Shahin Godeni, Jusuf son of Gjon, Hamza son of Ulku (Ujku), Murati son of Domjan. In the Christian neighbourhood of Tetovo there were many heads of the families registered, we will mention only some of them:

Andreja the son of Arbanas, Nikola the brother of Arbanas, Marin the brother of Arbanasit, Nikola the brother of Gjergj, Gjura the brother of Lazor. Lazor the brother of Buzota, Dimitri the son of Prenko-s, Lazor the son of Tush-ko-s, Gjon the son of Arbanas. Niko the son of Tanush. etc. In the year 1467, in the settlement of Kërçova, there was an Alban neighbourhood but in the ottoman form, Mahalle (neighbourhood) of Arnavut, which is a result of merging of two words, from the Greek form Arvaniti, and Serb neighbourhood (Mahalle'i Serf).

In both neighbourhoods there were inhabitants of Alban origin and according to the majority of names that were held by heads of the families, in the first one it was dominant the form of Roman-Latin-

Greek-Byzantine in the Slavic forms that during medieval times were held by Albans of catholic religion. In the Serb neighbourhood, there were names of Greek-Byzantine origin in symbiosis with the Slavic ones that were held by Albans of the orthodox religion of the Greek and Slavic rite.

Also, Alban population was settled in the outskirts of *Shtip* (*Astibos*), and *Veles* (*Bilazora*). Also, according to the medieval historic toponyms of the XV- XVI centuries, a considerable number of medieval settlements with Albanian names exists in the region of Radomir, *Qystendil*, and *Sofja*, (*Serdica*) in Bulgaria, they were inhabited with Christian Alban population. Data from registries prove the existence of Alban population in Dardania, Kosovo and North-western Macedonia, while early sources of medieval Slav administration in a scattered way, shows only a small part of the settlements that are part of Slav churches. Beside from registries of the medieval Slav-Serb kings of the Peja and Prizren region, Alban are also mentioned by Serb despot Stefan Lazar, as permanent inhabitants in the area of Morava of Gjilan, like: Nikola Gojsali, from the village of Livoq, Buljan and Berush, from the village of Çërnice (Çarring), and Sular and Rrapush- Rrapi, from Zhegra. Datas collected from registries are proving the thesis of K. Jirečekut, who has asserted that Gryka Suki - (Klanac Succu), later on called Porta e Trajanit (The port of Trajan, Trajanova Kapija), from that time was a border between the East and the West: Thrakia was part of Praefectura praetoria Orientis, while the rest part of the peninsula all the way to Danube and the southern part of Peloponnesus were within Praefectura praetoria Illyrici.

According to the research and onomastic studies conducted by famous scholar Fanulla Papazoglu, came to the conclusion that, Dardania should be considered as a specific onomastic area. The fact that Illyrian names in the whole territory of Dardania and a large number of them, are with no doubts of an Illyrian origin and exist only in Dardania. This shows that Illyrian onomastic in Dardania was autochthonous and not imported from the outside. Alban population being autochthonous in Balkan is also proved by local and international scholars through toponyms, ononyms and antic pre-Slav hydronyms that took the form of Albanian language: *Naissus-Nish*, *Scupi- Shkupi*. *Astibos- Shtip*, *Scardus-Sharr*, *Ulpiana- Lypian*, *Scodra- Shkodra*, *Lissus-Lesh-Lezhë*, *Drivastum-Drisht*, *Drinus-Drin*, *Scumbus-Shkumbi*, *Isamus-Ishëm*, *Barbana-Buna*, etc. Based on these data and toponomastics of antique famous linguists such as the Austrian N. Jokl,

Von Han (1854), V. Georgiev (1974), Barić (1955) and Çabej (1960), they have supported the thesis that it was exactly the territory of Dardania that other names such as *Nish*, *Sharr*, *Shkup*, *Shtip* etc. were the cradle of the old Alban population. There was another fact that has been proven according to the toponomastic evidence by the famous Dutch linguist N. Van Wejk, that in the early medieval time, Serb population was separated from the Bulgarian ones, by the non-Slav population, that is explained though the existence of the Alban population. From this we can conclude that this territory of Dardania, have been inhabited by antique Albanians as well as the medieval ones. Also according to the German scholar G. Stadtmüller, among others, he asserts that, those names of the cities are the ones that preserve the proof of Albanian speaking population, and tells us that this population was not composed from the shepherds that were found in the mountainous area, but a prosperous population that was living in an urban area. After the invasion of the territory of Dardania, medieval state of Ras, immediately established its administration and forced military presence, along with the structure of the administration of Serb Orthodox Church that is a part of the executive power of the state. With the initiative of the Orthodox Church they have approved also the decision for the transfer of its Holy See, which until that time was in Žića- Studenica of Ras in Peja in Dukagjin area, with a special program to convert autochthonous Albanian population and Vlachs to make convert them in Slavs in their language and ethnic belonging. During their medieval rule, Slavs managed to gradually turn into Slavs Vlach population (that during the roman rule according to the Alojz Benac was Illyrian and completely Romanised). They were a minority in comparison to the autochthonous Alban population, that resisted the Slav assimilation, all but one small part that was converted and included in state administration of Ras state and individuals that were converted into orthodox religion and that served in orthodox church as priests.

Majority of Alban population, which was persecuted was considered as heresy, from Serbian kings, Milutin and Dushan was not turned into Slav, despite all pressures, persecutions, drastic fines by burning and hurting them physically all the population, that belongs to catholic religion and resisted the conversion in the orthodox religion, especially catholic clergy that didn't accept the orthodox religion, they were persecuted and executed based on a Legal Code (Zakonik), of the king Stefan Dushan that was adopted in 1339. Conversion of Alban

population was done from the administration of Slav Churches, since the activity of catholic churches was prohibited, because they were put under the service of Slav churches. In 1346, Pope Clement VI, addressed the king Stefan Dushan, in which he mentions catholic churches: in Prizren, Prishtina, Trepça, Novobërda e Janjeva, that during that time were under the jurisdiction of the church of Kotor. In the letter it was stated that few kings of Ras, predecessors have taken catholic churches and kept them occupied.

After the pressure and brutal fines of forcefully converting of Alban population of Roman origin, especially of his clergy, by the Slav kings, since the time of the rule of Stefan Nemanja, which continued also during the rule of Milutin and Dushan. When the Holy See, headed by the Pope Clementi V (Berisha, 2003), immediately reacted and has addressed the state of Ras, requesting that they allow catholic priests to perform religious services without barriers for catholic population.

B) Onomastic historic pre-Slav proofs that testify the existence of Alban population in Kosovo and North -Western Macedonia, during antic and early medieval times, since there was a lack of archaeological findings and epigraphic writings from antics and medieval times, in this context, data of historic toponyms with Illyrian-Arber origin, that offer real indications that they have been established during the medieval time based on the proto-Albanian language, and can be used as an evidence for the existence of Alban population that lived here before, before the occupation of Dardania. Therefore, toponyms represent linguistic traces of an ethnic group or a population, same as the fossil remains show places where something existed in a certain time. Detailed documented recordings for the majority of settlements before the ottoman time, they were lacking, except a small number that were registered during the XIV century in Slav registries of their medieval churches, while earlier Bulgarian recordings disappeared.

In ottoman cadastral registries, beside the settlements with popular endonym Arbanas, we can witness that that were settlements in proto-Albanian language in the sources of medieval Bulgarian administration, where we mention settlement Bineç - Binça of Vitia of the year 1019, again written as a registry of Bulgarian king Konstatin Asen, where Binça is given in possession of the Saint George Monastery (Sveti Đorđe), near Skopje, that confirms that Alban settlements existed even before that occupation of Serb-Slavs in the territory of Dardania. In ottoman registries, there are tens and tens of

registered Alban settlements that were covered in the names of Slav administration that the administration of that time has removed and used only Slav names.

Ottoman administration because of fiscal-tax reasons, during the registration of settlements has discovered many settlements with two names, the one of the Slav administration and the other that was used by the local Alban population. We will bring few proofs for few settlements that are pre Slavs and that in etymological and semantic ways, are formed on the bases of proto Albanian language and in the very narrow sense they belong to geographical area of Dardania, the areas of Illyricum- Balkan.

These toponyms are written in medieval sources, have the latin, Greek and Slav prefix: Bardus, Bardon, Boardisa, Bardos'ane, Bardoniq, Bardiq, Barlova Barlofc, Darda, Dardos, Dardhosh, Dardash, Dardishte, Dardet-in, Darllan, Dardiq, Dassa, Dassius, Dassos, Dashiq Dashefc, Dashinofc, Lulisa, Lulosa, Lulash, lulaç Lulkofci, lulashefc, Malentum, Males-Malesh, Malos-Malosh, Malush, Malisht, Malesheva, Maleshefc, Maljeva, Malça, Petra Barda , dhe Gures Petra (Guri Bardh), Guri Bardiq, Petra Rosa and Petra Kuq (Guri Kuq), Petra Negros (Guri Zi). Some settlements based on the proto Albanian language that we find in the medieval sources, with suffix and forms: latin-roman, Greek-byzantine or tautological forms that prove that these toponyms have been found also inside and outside of the territory of Dardania, and have been used by population of Albanian ethnic origin that existed during the byzantine rule.

These toponyms with the origin of the proto - Albanian language in Latin and Greek forms have been passed from generation to generation from the Alban speaking population until late medieval time that prove its existence under the roman and byzantine rule in the territory of Dardania, before occupation of Dardania by Slavs: Toponyms with proto Albanian bases and the Greek suffix, of the antique city of *Vendenis-Vindenis* of the II century of new era, that was near Podujevo, that was missing since medieval times. Another toponym of the antique settlement *Dassa-Dassos*, the first time is mentioned with the inscription from V-VI century, which most of the foreign and local scholars consider that has Illyrian-Dardan origins. While, scholar Andreja Vukičević, considers that the toponym *Dasto-Dastus*, is based on the proto Albanian language *Dashtun- Dashun*. Settlement *Dassa*, was found near the archaeological site of antique Ulpiana, in south-western part of Prishtina, and was missing. Based on

the name *das-dash* there were tens of settlements that existed under that name. In the ottoman registry of the year 1444, there was a settlement called *Dashing* in the vicinity of Prokuplje *Dashing* in vicinity of Rozhaja *Rijeka*, in Rogozno of Bihorit, *Dashefc*, in the vicinity of Peja, *Dardashi* in the vicinity of Ohrid, etc.

Today's territory of Kosovo and North-Western Macedonia, in its historic past, firstly it was included in the state that was called the Kingdom of Dardania, headed by Shkup that was established in the IV-I of our era by the Dardan tribe with Illyrian origin. These countries had their borders from (Nishi) in the North all the way to (Astibos) in the south. Also in the topographic map of the Roman Empire of the East during the time of the Justinian rule (527-565) there was a name of the *Dardania province* written in the context of this empire.

The word *dard- dardhë* of Albanian language, some of the scholars of the Indo-European languages, while E Çabej considers with the origin of Ilirian-Balkan, while J.G. Von Han, considers that geographic name *Dardania* from the antique time, can be explained with the word *darda - dardha* of the Albanian language.

Toponym *dardhë* of the antique time, during the medieval Bulgarian rule (century IX-X), the of a Slav-Serb (XIII-XIV), was passive, but in many cases only considered in the Serbian word *k r u ğ k a* . Some toponyms based on the word *dard- dardhë*, appear again in the ottoman registries of the XV-XVI centuries, but in the Slavic forms, such as: *Dorllan*⁵, of *Leskofc*, *Darllan*⁶, Çarniç of Gjilanit, *Dardetin*, of Rogoznës of Bihorit, *Dardiiq*⁷, in the vicinity of Rozhaja, in the Albanian form such as *Darda*⁸, of *Pashtrikut*, *Dardashi*⁹, of Ohrid, *Dardishte*¹⁰ etc, that have been found in the area of Dardania. These toponyms written in a Slavic form, prove that ottoman administration took those toponyms from medieval Slav administration and has except the process of complete slavisation.

According to the data of Byzantine historian, *Procopius Casareas* (500-565), in the vicinity of Naisus-it-Nish there was a fortress *Dusmanes*¹¹. In th ottoman registries of the years 1477 and 1478, there was a settlement of *Dushman-ofc* and the settlement under

⁵ BOA. TD No, 55. TD, Icmal defter-i livi- i Alaca Hisar.

⁶ BOA, TD. Maliye defteri .No. 25.

⁷ BOA..Rumeli Timar defteri, No. I67.

⁸ BOA.Rumeli mufassal defteri, No. I2.

⁹ BOA, Rumeli Timar defteri, No.7. p. I5-50.

the same name *Raban-ofci*¹², in the region of *Llapit*, changed version of the same Slav word, taken from the popular name *Arban*. From medieval time, in Dukagjini region, there is a tribe *Dushmani*¹³. The first proof of the Illyrian-Arber names in the Latin form *Bard-us* > *Bardus*¹⁴, (from the word *Bardh*); that are given from the famous historian that you can find in Pag of Croatia since the XI (1071). Word *Mali Bard* (*Mali i Bardh*), we find at the Arab geographer, Al Idrisi at the end of the XI century and the first XII century. apparently has to do with mountainous area *Alpes Albanicae* (*Malet e Bardha*). Word *Vardar* of an early form *Bardarios*, some scholars like: I Duridanov, V. Beshierliev, V. Georgiev, J. Zaimov, extract from an indo-european database *Snordo-uori* (*black, water, river with black water*). According to J. Ivanov, this word derives from *Var* (big) and *Dar*¹⁵, river, sea, meaning *Big River*.

While a famous romanist Sh. Sejdiu, the source of the word *Bardarios* based it on the indo-European word *Borgh-uori* (*the water is white*), *white water-Lumi i Bardhë*, while the toponym with the bases *bard*, in Raguza and Slav documents of the XIV century and it was registered in Slav registries as *Bashtina Bard-ina*, in Slav format *ina*, in the Prizren region.

Patronym *Dominik Barda* (*Bardhi*), is mentioned since the year 1335. In ottoman registries there was a pre Slav toponym used based on an Albanian language spoken in the vicinity of Kurshumlia, in the Latin form¹⁶ *Bard+us*. > and in the topographic Austrian map of the year 1689, registered in the Latin form of *Bardus*. In the registry there were only 4 houses registered, names of the heads of the families were made Slav, one of the head of the families had the name *Belati*, transformed in a Slavic form from the *Illyrian-Arber*, *-Bardi*. Another toponym that is registered in the registries of the 15 century, also in the Latin form was *Bardus*¹⁷ - *from the region of Dibra*. In the cadastral registries there are 5 other settlements that are based on the very early Albanian language and registered under Greek-Slav form: *Bard+on-sf. g r e k + i í > s f .*¹⁸, *11 Julg+is sf. Greek and Slav iformat*

¹⁶ BOA, Rumeli Timar defteri. TD. No.167. p. 493-449. TD. No.179. TD.No. 567.

¹⁷ BOA.Tpu tahrir defteri. No.367.

¹⁸ BOA. Defter-i mufassl-i livi-i Alaca Hisar, No. 179. TD. No.567.

+a> *Ljulisa*, in the region of Bolvanit of Leskofc, *B a r d* of *Ilöplica*, *Shen Gjino-ova*²⁰ today in Southern Serbia. In the city of Rozhaja, there was a settlement *B a r d*, as well as another settlement *B a r d + o n + i l* > *B a r d*²¹, in the vicinity of Rozhaja, settlement *Shen Gjino-ova*²², in the vicinity of, *Bard-is+a>Bardisa>Bardiza*²⁴, between Prizren and Shkodra, a place with mountains and vineyards. *Bard+on* > *Bardon*, in vicinity of Ulqin, today in Montenegro. In vicinity of Gjakova there were 3 registered settlements: *Bard+on- s f . g r -esfe Slav* > *i l* > *B a r d*²⁵ and with similar name in Slavic form *B e l sedond* settlement is *Bardosan-i*, from the bases, *Bard+ os sf. grek + formanti sllav +an* > *Bardosan*²⁶, made in a Greek form, calculated also under the Slav name *Lipovac*. *Petra Barda* ²⁷(*Guri Bardh*, White Stone), *Petros Kuq*²⁸ (*Guri Kuq*, Red Stone) other name of *Obrinja*, *Drenas*, *Petra Rosa*²⁹ (*G u r i K u q , R e d S t o n e*) , *D i b l* > In Slav-Bulgaria forms: as *Bard+eva*³⁰ *Shtip*, *Bard+ofci*³¹ *Skopje*, *Bard-ofci*³², of *Qystendil*, *B a r d a* , ³³*Bard Ljldj+ke-f a ofci* > *Ljuljko-fci*³⁴, in the vicinity of *Vushtrri*, *G a r b a n* o f o t h *B a r d*³⁵, in the vicinity of *Prishtina*. *Dragush Barda*³⁶, near *Prije Polje*, *Bard+ova* at *Bijelo Pplje*, *Barl+ovi*,³⁷, *G. Ljulj+aç* and *D. Ljulj+aç*³⁸ in vicinity of *Yeni Pazarit*. In the area of *Dardania* that

¹⁹ BOA. Defter-I mifassal-i liva'-i Hisar, No.179, p-121.TD.No. p. 111.

²⁰ BOA. Muhasebe-i Vilayet-i Rum-ili Defteri, No.197, II, sene,937-1530. Dizim-Tipkibasim, Aankara,2004, p.423.

²¹ BOA Tapu Kadastro Arşivi, Ankara. Defter-i mufassal-i liva-i Prizren. No.55.

²² BOA. Tapu timar Defter-i mücmel-i liva- i Pizren, No.92.

²³ BOA. Tapu tahrir-Defter-i mufassal-i liva-i Prizren. 368.

²⁴ TKA. Defter-i mufassal-i liva-i Iskenderiye, No.59. I. R. Onomastika mesjetare arbane, vep.cit.95.

²⁵ BOA. Tapu Kadastro Arşivi, Ankara. Defter-i mufassal-i liva-i Iskenderiye, No.59.

²⁶ BOA. Tapu Kadastro Arşivi, Ankara. Defter-i mufassal-i liva-i Iskenderiye, No.59.

²⁷ BOA. Tapu tahrir-Defter-i mufassal-i liva-i Prizren. 368.

²⁸ BOA. Tapu defteri. No. 9. Iljaz Rexha . Onomastika mesjetare, vep.cit.144'145.

²⁹ BOA. Tapu defteri. No. 367.

³⁰ BOA. Defter-i Esami-i Voynugan-i liva-i Küstendil. No.21. TD. No.74.

³¹ BOA. Rumeli defteri. MAD. No. 12. Tapu timar defteri. No.544. TD. No. o4.

³² Boa. Tapu Defter-i mufassal- i liva-i Sofya.TD. No.236. sene 915H/1544.p.538.

³³ BOA.Tapu Defter-i mücmel-i liva-i Vilçiterrin. TD.No.22, viti 1487.

³⁴ BOA.Tapu Defter-i mufassal-i liva-i Vilçiterrin.No. 1048, sene, 1477.

³⁵ BOA. TKA.Defteri-i mufassal-i liva-i Vlçiterrin, No. 124.

³⁶ TKA. Defter-i mufassal-i liva-i Bosna. No.6

³⁷ Salname-i Vilayet-i Kosova, Üsküp, 1986.

³⁸ BOA. MAD.No.544. Hazim šabanović, Krajište Isa-Bega Is'hakovića, Zbirni katastarski popis iz 1455,godine.OIS, u Sarajevu, 1964, 12 dhe 45.

existed during medieval times, tens of settlements on the bases of the word *Bard- Barl dhe Barz*, today they exist only 2 of them in the vicinity of Gjakova, that were demolished by the Slav administration and has turned them in Slav names, same as it has named many of the Slav priests.

Name *Bard*, is a very old name of the Illyrian-Dardan province from *Bardus*, later on used among many other inhabitants of Balkan, and has been known from Illyrian-Antic time. Foreign scholars (Mayer, 1957), (Krahe 1929), (Rendć & Miočević, 1948), (Çabej, 1970), (Ajeti, 1982), (Grković, 1977), (Ilievski, 1984) the word *bard*, be it patronym or toponym, they claim that it derives from the proto Albanian word *bardh*. Also other antique toponyms that have Illyrian-Arber bases, beside the medieval sources, they have been registered also in the ottoman registries of the centuries XV-XIV, with bases *mal*, *mol dhe maje*:, *Malj-ić+ka*> *Maljićka*, *Malj'ča*, *e Nishit*, *Malj-ishte*, *Maljesh-efci* *Malj-efci*, *Maljosh*, *Maljush-ic*, *Malj-uk*, *Maljet-ino*, *Malj-ese*, *Malj'evo*, *Majdevo*, *Majkovac*, *Majevica*, *Majanci*, *Maljçishte* *Shkupit*, *Maljesh-eva*, and *Shtipit*, *Maljoshefci* and *Sofjes*, etc.

All these settlements that have a word *mal* during medieval times could be found in the geographical location of Nish and further than Shtip and Qystendil in Bulgaria, and on the other side from Yeni Pazari further then Vishegrad.

Word *mal*, is pretty widespread and characteristic for Dardania area. According to the Serb historian Milivoje Pavlović, the word *mal*, during the process of Romanisation and later of Slavisation in the area of Dardania, resisted the change of the latin word *mont* and Slavic word *planina*. Beside local Albanologists and also foreign scholars (Cimovski 1958, 47-48), Dujce Rendić Miočević, Milivoje Pavlović, (Skok 1972, 47-48), (Barjatarević, 1987), words *mal*, *mol dhe mul*, have Illyrian or Arban source of the proto Albanian language. These are proofs that tell us the existence of settlements and Alban population in the wider geographical area of Dardania-Kosovo and North-Western Macedonia, before the Bulgarian occupation of the IX-X centuries, and the Slav ones that took place during the second half of the XIII and XIV centuries. In the Slav medieval sources we find some Albanian toponyms that were written only in Slavic words, while we find also a very old version of them written only in Albanian form, but which was covered by Serb administration and used only in Serbian form.

Ottoman administration, because of fiscal and financial reasons, in order not to have problems with collection of taxes,

therefore has registered these settlements in the Slavic administration language and the popular Proto-Albanian language, as they called settlements with ethnic Alban population as called in daily life. As it happened frequently, the official Committee for the registration of population and wealth, when they visited a settlement that was registered only in Slavic language, then the management of the settlement would notify the Committee of the change, that the local inhabitants will be called differently as it is the case with the village Beliq and Bardhaniq of Gjakova. Other toponyms passed on proto-Albanian language that are considered with the Illyrian-Arber can't be treated this time, since the work is limited and the toponyms are numerous. Interested parties can be informed from the book with the title: I. Rexha, Medieval onomastic in the area of Dardania. Printed by Europrinty, Prishtinë, 2005.

C) First and the earliest proof of the existence of ethnic Alban name in the territory of Dardania-Kosovo and North-Western Macedonia

22 years ago, in 1992, by a group of Macedonian archaeologists in the suburb of the city of Stipi (Astibos), in Necropolis called Suburbium, by a group of Macedonian archaeologists, a varsity was discovered from the 19th century. III-IV, of our era with the stone plate with the epigraph- the Greek inscription , which in this case in the absence of Greek and Cyrillic, we present the Macedonian author's transcription and desecrating, only with Latin writing: Na svoeto dete Flavio Albanos, Emilianos Albanos za spomen. Flavio Albano, to his son, Emilianos Albanos in his memory). The first reports of this ancient cemetery as archaeological discovery were published by archaeologist Gordana Spasovska-Dimitrovska. This announcement of the author in question, made it known in Albanian, scholar Qemal Murati. After the first mentioning of the Tribe Albanoi and the name of the town Albanopolis, (in the surroundings Kruja), by the geographer of Alexandria, Claudio Ptolemeos in the II century of our era. This is the second proof of mentioning of Alban name but now in the domain of Dardania. Also, famous archaeologist Emil Čerškov informs us that in in the Geography of Ptolemais, there is mentioning of an antic city of Vendenis, based on the substrate of the proto-Albanian language -venden+ is, sufiksi grek> Vendenis which is based in the vicinity of Glamnik, in the road of Lissus- Naissus, that connected the inner Western Balkan with the Adriatic Coast which was placed 5 km in the south-western part of Besiana-Podujeve.

This antique settlement, now archaeological site, Ptolemeos in *Tabbula Nona*, mentions *si statio Vendenis* in the II century of our era, while another author, *Ravanatis Anonymis* *si Vindinis*, but these two authors talk about the same location, more concretely, for the road mentioned *Tabula Pentingeriana*, there was a distance of different stations that was written from the border: *AD FINES XX- VENDENIS- XIX-VICIANO- XXV- THERANDA- XXX- ABULERO*. In the geography of Arab geography Al-Idrisi, it was written in the old version of the Slavic name, as settlement *Rabana* at the end of the XI century- and the first part of XII century (1099-1152), which is a result of merging of toponym *Arbana*, that was found in the area between Nish and Ras, and has been long time disappeared.

In the ottoman registry of the XVI century, there was a settlement under the name of *Alban*³⁹ in the vicinity of Prokuplje, but as it seems, it exists in the deformed form by the Slav medieval administration as *Alabana*. In the area of central Dardania, there were few toponyms of Proto-Albanian language with Bulgarian pre-fixes *ki-ko, ka*, that testifies that *ethnic name of Arban* has been since the period of Bulgarian rule during the centuries IX-X registered in the medieval Bulgarian administration, before the occupation of the territory of Dardania-Kosovo and of North-Western Macedonia by the medieval state of Ras, since the toponym written in Bulgarian form *Arbanashki potok* was mentioned, in a document of the prince Miroslav, since before the years 1253-1254, that went missing during a Bulgarian attack during those years at the side of Huma. This document was renewed later by the king Urosh the first, by repeating the registry of his father through which he was proving the ownership of the monastery of Saint Peter of the region of Lim (Lymit) that was given as a gift to the prince Miroslav and himself he has gifted few villages in the region of Dukagjin (in the document, in Slav language, Hvosno) and in Drenica region, written in Slav language Držkovina). *When princ Miroslavi, before years 1253-1254, was determining the borders of the village Kryshefc (today Skenderaj), was mentioning the border of this village, that went from the mountain in the creek of Arbanas (Arbanashki Potok), in the mountain and from there in the river, in Klina.*

³⁹ BOA, Muhasebe-i Vilayet-i Rumeli timar defteri, No. 167, 937/1530. II. Vilçiterin, Prizren, Alaca Hisar ve Hersek Livalari, Dizim ve Tipkibasim, Ankara, 2004.

From the diploma of Stefan Dushan of the year 1354, we can see that he gave the right and various benefits to Hilendar Monastery asking from state institutions to determine the borders of the monastery in the villages: Ponorc, Krushic and in Llabçevë, today's Llapushës. In this document, king Dushan forbids all nobility Vllehs and Arbanas, not to graze the cattle near the church. Other proof was connected with the payment of certain percentage from the agricultural, pastoral and Alban population that was ordered since 1355 to do so. In this document of this year in which the land was given to the monastery of Hilendar in Atos, Dushani not only he forbid Arbanas not to graze the cattle, but also he ordered that this population pays the taxation for the vine production in the market of Klina. From this document, we can clearly see that population was paying tax for the vine, and this shows us that in this area there has been harvesting of grapes that was not the profession of pastoral-nomad, therefore this evidence shows the existence of Alban ethnicity in those agricultural settlements even before the XIV century when this document was written⁴⁰. King Dushan, in his registry asked that Arbanas are found near churches need to work according to the Serb traditions, meaning to practice orthodox religion, the mess and all the rites to be performed in Slav language.

Beside the toponym Prroi i Arbnesht (Creek of Arbnesht) in Drenas, there were many other toponyms under the ethnic name of medieval Arbans: Arbanas of the year 1296, in the region of Rijeka Crnojevića and other Arbanas, in the area of Kraja - Tu, in Montenegro. Arbanas of Rudos, Aarbanas of Borač, Arbanas of Višegrad and Arbanas of Trebinje from Bosnia.

In the territory of Dardania-Kosovo and North-Western Macedonia, in the books of the king Milutin of the year 1330, the settlement *A r b a n* ~~*A r g b k a n*~~ *written* in Bulgarian poem in the North-Western part of Kumanovo, then Arbanas of Shtip, in his Slav work *Zhiganc* and other Arbanas under the name of *Zubac*, in the vicinity of *Shtip*, *Arbinvo*, in the vicinity of Ohrid, village *Prush-ka*, of the year 1254, near Bijelo Polje and *Buzovik* near Berana, of the year 1314, today in Montenegro.

Buz-ofc of Tetovo of the year 1348, which is changed to *Boz-ovac*. In the region of Nish, Prokuplje and Kurshumlia also there were other settlements written in Slavic names of the XIV century such as: Muzaćeve Kuće - Muzaq, of the year 1318, Arbanasi of Kushumlia of

the year 1455, Arbanas of Peokuplje, other Slav name Krushevic, Arbanas and its Slav version Sušic, and Arbanas and its Slav version Hobotinç. Bukmir and Tanush of Prokuple. Arbanašic of Vranja, of the year 1486. Arbanas of Radomir-Qustendil, Arbanasiof Soffa of century XV and Arbanas of Trnava-s of the XIV in Bulgaria. Bernicë Arbanas of the year 1477, in the region of Ostrovica in Novoberda and Petril Arbanas in the region of Medvedja of the year 1455-1477. Neighbourd Arbanas in Janjevo of Novoberda of the year 1497-98, etc.

D) traces of churches and monasteries that testify the existence of Alban population in the area of Dardania-Kosovo and the North-Western Macedonia (according to the Slav and Ottoman sources).

In this part of the paper we don't speak of churches and monasteries that exist today in Kosovo, in the ruins of these churches of Byzantine and Roman time after the occupation of Kosovo in the second half of the XIII and XIV centuries, Slav-Serbs of Rashka rebuilt them, with the claim that Kosovo land is a holly Serb land and before its occupation it was un-inhabitable. This is how the works of few of the Serb authors are based on no proves and facts. We will bring few proves that there were churches and monasteries that existed in the geographical territory of Dardani that were built by autochthonous Alban population before the rule of the Slav state.

Beside the historic medieval sources, the presence of the Alban population in the geographical region of Dardania-Kosovo and North-Western Macedonia, are being proved also by the Christian religious sites of the Latin-Catholic origin and the Greek-byzantine church that were built by the autochthonous Alban in their permanent settlements. Some of them had the names of the word *A r b a* ~~not the~~ special, characteristic and traditional name of medieval Alban as it was: The church of st. Merry (Crkva Sveti Marija), in Ohrid, called Saint Clement and that was built at the last decade of the XII century. Progon Zgur, with Alban origin, who at that time held a high position in the society and was the son in law of the Byzantin emperor Andronik Paleolog (1282-1283).

As we see, Ohrid at that time was a big cultural and religious centre of the Orthodox Church and had the importance in the region and beyond...also nobility with Alban origin had their powers in the south-western part of Macedonia. In Ohrid there was a church of *Nikolla Arbnes*h, of the century XIV, written in Slav sources, under the name of *Nikola Arbanashk built by Alban population. In vicinity of*

Skopje, there was a *Monastery of Shën Gjergji*, where Albans and Christians went. In Kratova of Macedonia there was a church of Arnaut, of the XV century, but we don't know when it disappeared.

In the vicinity of Prespa there was a Monastery of priest Gjergj -orthodox priest with the alban origin registered under the Albanian name and not the Serb version of the name, *η ο ρ δρ Georgije*. Also, a settlement Glabonik, near Leskofc in the southern part of Serbia, there was a *Monastery of Saint Arbnes*, registered under Slav form in the cadastral registries of the *Monastery of Saint Arbanas*, without any priest, abandoned since a long time. Later on the Slav Church has been transformed in the orthodox monastery, under the name of *Sveti Stanisha*. This monastery, with no doubt was build by the Alban population since the medieval Bulgarian rule. The lad of this monastery was registered in the ottoman registries. In Prizren, according to the Slav sources, there were two churches: Church Saint Nikolla (Crkva Sveti Nikola), of the XIV century, that was built by Rajko Krizmiç (Krizma), from Prizren, while other church Kisha e Bogdanit (Klise-i Bogdan) is mentioned also in the ottoman registry TD. No. 368, that was build between (1361-1368), by Bogdan Krizma (Krizmiç), the son of Rajko Krizmas, son and dad, both of Alban origin.

In the documents of the Archive of Dubrovnik, he is mentioned as *Bogdan Crissima* as noble, trader and the minister of finance in the administration of the Slav despot Vukashin. In Prizren also according to the Ottoman registries of the XV-XVI centuries, only in the neighbourhood Ribar in Prizren there were 4 churches registered, two of those were orthodox churches – Church priest Vlatko and Church of priest Stepanit and two other Chatolic churches, church of priest Nikola and priest Latin (chatolic). In this neighbourhood, according to the registry there were the following heads of the families registered:: Nikolla Gjoni, priest, Nikolla Tolja, Bogdan Nikola, Dimitri Duka-Doka , Nikolla Vida, Nikolla Lleshjani, Pejo prishliç, Vasil prishliç, Jovan Pavli, land in the possession of Spanko Toljes, land in possession of Stepan Jovanit, land in posesion of Andrea, in posesion of Katerinës, land in possession of the priest Gjon popit, Tuna Leca, widowed, Rada Toljka, widowed, Roza, widowed, Kalina, widowed and Belja, widowed

In the settlement Hoça, according to the same registry, in the neighbourood Filip was registered Church of Saint John, in the latin form (Kilise- Shen Gjovani). Even today Albanians of the catholic fate hold those names of the roman-latin region. Later, after 40 years, in

the year 1591, same church was registered in the Slav form Church Sfeti Jovan (Saint John), as we can see the orthodox church has perpetuated this Alban church. Same thing happened also in the church in the vicinity of Novoberda registered as a Church of Saint John, with the catholic priest Simon, later on was changed to the Slav name Church of Saint John (Crkva Sfeti Jovan). In the settlement of Smira near Vitia there were two churches old Christian, Klise of Atanas of the orthodox religion and Klise of Nikola of the catholic religion. The names of the priests didn't exist and they didn't register their property. It seems that they were abandoned a long time ago. In the settlement Kmetofc of Novobërda there are traces of the church which was registered in a registry of XV century, in the form of Albanian language, Church- Klise-of Shen Mat, but also that church was abandoned, without any catholic priest and there were no other data for that church. In Prishtina there were 2 catholic churches. Saint Miria and Shën Nicol, and one orthodox church. In Trepç, there were also 2 catholic churches. The church of Saint Petrit and Saint Mary. In a testament written by Damijan de Naissis (in the year 1428), Church of Saint Mary in Trepça had 4 ounces. From this source, we can learn that Trepça in that year had 3 priests of Alban ethnicity and 1 Priest that was Sas, that are mentioned under the names of: Don Marini, Don Gjoni, Don Marku, Don Tanushi, and the last one Don Hansi.

According to the registry of XV century of Novoberda (Novamonte) there were 3 churches⁴¹ big ones within the settlements that are called according to those churches: Neighbourhood Church Sase, Neighbourhood Church Saint Peter and the Church of Saint Friday that turned into Slav church of Neighbourhood of the Church Sveta Petka. According to the ottoman registry we can see that that they existed in the neighbourhoods of this city and the villages, there were few priests of the Albanian origin, such as Dom Nikolla Zoti⁴², priest Gjoni, priest Gjini, priest Pepa, priest Biba, priest Braja Arbanas, priest Dimitri, priest Petri⁴³, priest Tanush, and the priests with the Vllah origin, Dançul, priests Radul, etc. State administration and the one of church administration, of the Albanian Slav and Vlachs that are registered under the name pop (orthodox priest), was considered form the Slav Church, where priests that held the title of iqiin pop (official

⁴¹ BOA. Tapu maliye deferi, No.28.

⁴² BOA. Tapu maliye deferi. No. 28. TD. No. 133. TD. No. 234.

⁴³ BBOA. TD, No, 28. TD.No.133. TD. No. 234. TD. No. 368. TD. No. 495.

priest), creating dilemmas on their ethnic origin for new generations and there was a general impression that since those priests held the official title Pop (Slav version) and not priest or father dom-don, then these priests were considered as Slav priests and not of Albanian or Vlah origin.

Slav imagination of Slav population in order to assimilate autochthonous non Slav population was very organized. Slavs that came from Carpathian mountains, managed that Bulgarians that had Tranic-Tartar origin and Romanised Vllahs to convert first in orthodox religion and also change their language to Slav, while the largest part of dalmatian population and Bosniac one that have origin from Illyrian tribes managed to convert them not only when it comes to the language but also ethnically and religiously. Considerable part of Alban population were converted in the regions of Nish, Novi Pazar, Nikshiq and Tivar of shestan in Montenegro, especially tribes and fraternities of Burmaz and Matarug that during the medieval times (century XIII-XIV), before ottoman rule were living in the triangle of the borders Nikshiq- Trebinje -Prijeppole, that included a territory that was big as Montenegro. According to the ottoman cadastral data, 40 settlements were of Burmaz and 10 of Matagure.

In the registry of Sandzat of Vushtrri No. 1048, of the year 1477⁴⁴, in the village Prilepnicë of Gjilan there was a Byzantine church that was registered in the Greek form of *Ayo Yorgi- Klise-i Ayorgi* with the Greek word that means the Monastery of *Saint Jorgjit* was abandoned without any priests.

In the registry of Krushefc of the year 1530, Village Slishani of Medvexha was registered as another monastery under the name of *Saint Jorgji* in the Slav form of *Sveti Jorgi*. There two monasteries were inhibited from the Byzantine time, and we can see local Alban population held this name until the second half of the century XVI, that earlier was called *Ayo Yorgi*, Slav Church administration, later on the word *Ayos* changed it with the Slav word *Sfeti*, and the second word *Yorgi* with the Slav form of *Sveti Gjorgje*. By doing so these two churches changed names to the Slav forms of the names. Slav scholars those churches of the Byzant times that were also frequented by Alban Christian population they were registered as Slav Churches and not Byzantine, while the Alban Orthodox population of those time called them by the proper name of *Ayo Yorgji- Shën Jorgji (saint George)*. In

⁴⁴ BOA. Tapu defteri. No. 1048. sene, 1477. TD. No. 22. sene, 1478.

the ottoman registry of the XVI century, village *Godosak*⁴⁵ of the region of Rudina that was situated between Prizren and Tropoja, was registered a catholic church in Albanian form and in ottoman alphabet *Church Saint Mary (Klise-of Shen Mëria)*, but also in the Serbian version of the name *Sveti Marija*, that during the Slav rule was turned into a Slav Church, without any priest, abandoned. The name of this church even though in the settlement it existed there were no Slav houses in the area of *Godosak*⁴⁶ there were the following heads of the families that were registered: *Iljas Pepa, Hamza Pepa, converted into Islam*, while 4 heads of the families have managed to preserve catholic religion: *Biba Kolja, Gjon Gjeka, Kolja Biba, Kolja Dida*. The above mentioned can't be found in the later registries and apparently at the end of this century was abandoned. In Domeshtica in 1571, there was another catholic church registered with two names *Kisha Sveti Marija* (church of saint Mary in Serbian) and her version in Albanian *Kisha e Shën Mirisë* (Church of Saint Mary in Albanian), when we see how medieval administration also the Slav one of the state of Ras during the rule it has not turned in Slav settlements only the Alban settlements but also the medieval monuments of Christian cult.

From the detailed data of registry of Vushtrri of the year 1477, there was a Gracanica settlement registered along with its monastery and 98 houses, 13 single and 9 widows. Names of the heads of the families of these households were mainly Slav, but we can't in no way testify in ethnic aspect that majority were of a Slav origin, because among those there were also heads of the families with characteristic names for Christian Alban tradition, with symbiosis of the typical Slav names: Bogoslav son of Pllana, Pllana his son (Bogoslav), Boja, son of Progo (Progonit), Stefan, son of Duka-s-Doka-s, Jovan son of Lazorit (Albanian form of the name), Goja, son of Boja, Mark, son of Brajkotas, Radosav, son of, Gjergji, son of Uka, etc. Settlement Gracanica was registered also in the registry of the year 1569, with 115 houses, 43 singles and 1 monastery. Heads of the families of Alban ethnicity of the orthodox religion, after almost a century started to abandon popular Slav names, and again they preferred to be baptised in the Christian-roman-latin names and in the form of Albanian language: *Raja Jaku, Nua Jaku, Leshjan Mati, Stepan Dimitri, Andreja Dimitri, Nova-Nua Dimitri, Nikolla Dimitri, Filip Leshjani, Mark Leshjani, Petri Marku*,

⁴⁵ BOA, Tapu defteri. No. 386. TD. No. 495. TD. No. 499.

⁴⁶ BOA Tapu defteri. No. 386.

Nikolla Marki, Stepa Marku, David Marku, Raja Pavli, Tom Gjurka, Ljuka Petri, Pejo Ljuka, Pepo Simoni, Filip Pepo, Tom Pejo, Nua Bisha, Simon Stepani, Nilolla Belja, Simon Pejo, Nikolla Dimitri, Petri Niko, Stepa Breca, Toma Ljuka, Filip Tom-i, Daba Dimitri, Tom Dimitri, Simon Dimitri, Mati Raja, Ljuka Mati, Ljuka Nikolla, Mati Nikolla, etc. While the heads of the families of the Slav-Serb ethnicity continued to have popular onomastic Slav names, and very little of the Latin origin.

At the end of the settlement were 6 properties registered, among others property Filip Nua, property Buljku, in the possession of Petri Markut, property of Gjura Marini, property of Ljuka Petri, Monastery of Preçista (i Stërkulluar, Immaculate), near Gračanica and in the possession of the nun Gjonesha, was registered also the depot of doves, that was owned by the person named Gjin. If we analyse names of the heads of the families of this settlement, we can see that in the year 1477, there were more of the Slav area in symbiosis with Christian ones, that were baptised by the Serb Orthodox Church, while 100 years later in this settlement, heads of the families were carrying names of the roman-Latin and Greek-byzantine sphere, that during medieval times, as Konstatin Jireček concluded that Arbanas, Arunun and Croats were carrying Christian names, while Serbs popular Slav names.

Based on names of the heads of the families, we can clearly see that a considerable number of Alban population was turned into Slav one in onomastic aspect as well as the religious, the elements that used by today's Serbian scholars to count this population as ethnic Serbs, but in reality that was not the case, but they were Albanians with orthodox religion. Slav-Serb population was a minority in comparison of Alban population, that was managing civilian, military and orthodox church administration. It is the same case also with 500 years of the ottoman rule, where most of the Alban population was converted to Islam in onomastic and religious aspect, but in ethnic-linguist sense this was Alban population. Vllah population, romanised, because it was a minority in comparison to the Alban population didn't have the power to resist pressures towards the conversion in orthodox religion and imposing of Slav language, therefore most its population has been assimilated as a result of the activity of state and church administration in the territory of Dardania and wider.

History scholars and ethnographic scholars of the Serb population that has been converted to the Slav one in onomastic aspect, but not in the ethnic, during the rule of Ras was considered ethnic Serb

population, taking into consideration that most of the Slav names were held by: Serbs, Vllhs and Albans, to determine the ethnic structure of population, saying that most of the population was Slav-Serb.

This thesis is negated by data of ottoman cadastral registries that 90% of Alban population until the end of 15 century were under the influence of the political-administrative and cultural-religious factors especially of the Orthodox Church that had cultural and religious autonomy and was conducting services for non-Slav population with a sole purpose of conversion and baptising Alban population with typical Slav names, since the activity of Catholic Church since the time of medieval Serb rulers has been banned and this continued also during the Ottoman rule, since it was not loyal towards the rule of Sultans and Ottoman empire.

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BOA. Defter-i mufasssal-i liva-i Prizren. No. 368.

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BOA. Rumeli defteri. MAD. No. 12. Tapu timar defteri. No.544. TD. No. 04.

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