


<p>KANUN INSTITUTIONS AS HERITABLE CULTURAL CODES: THE FAMILY</p>		<p style="text-align: center;">Anthropology</p> <p>Keywords: Kanun, heritage, culture codes, family, kin, anthropology.</p>
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<p style="text-align: center;">Abstract</p> <p>The Albanian canons - set of customary laws and norms - deep in their hearts have many cultural codes which are heritable and define even nowadays the behavior and cultural understating of the Albanians. Some of the most important institutions are family, women, honor, property and I would like to address in this article the anthropological theoretical and Albanian context of the first institution, which is the family. As for the Albanian context I will address several researches' notes and testimonies and then, on a comparative base, the very pulp: the Albanian canons.</p>		

Introduction

For several centuries Albanians were self-governed by the ancient customary laws and norms, which were inherited in an unwritten form through generations. These customary laws helped Albanians preserve independency under attempts of territorial raids and occupations, even under such power as the one of the Ottoman Empire. The most important and well preserved set of laws and norms is the one of Lek Dukagjini, a medieval law enforcer, but several other set of rules have been detected throughout Albania. Today we have several canons, with a common core, but many differences, as a consequence of social, economic, political, migration exchanges and development. The main canons are the *Canon of Lek Dukagjini*, the *Canon of Skanderbeg*, the *Canon of Dibra*, the *Canon of Toskeria*, the *Canon of Laberia*. Despitedifferences these customary laws include several important *institutions*¹, such as *family, women, honor, property*, with respective subcategories; which accurately researched show heritable cultural codes patterns and schemas and define the typical behavior of Albanians, even nowadays. In this article I would like to go through one of the main concepts, which is “*family*”, by comparing thecanons and showing differences and similarities, in the attempt to bring an all-embracingconcept on the “*family*” in Albania before the end of the Second World War.

Defining *Family* and *Kin* in an Anthropological Approach

“*Family*” as a term, seems one of the most difficult to define. Usually people of the same culture know the meaning of the word “*family*” and they manage to explain this term to foreigners through contexts, but most of them find it difficult to clearly define what kind of relationship it is and at which extent. “*Family relations*” are an essential concept for anthropology, as they touch matters of birth, death, identity, personality, honor, shame, wealth control and authoritative positions heredity. Even though it is a very important concept, anthropologists still do not agree on

¹ A custom, practice, relationship, or behavioral pattern of importance in the life of a community or society: referred at - institution. (n.d.) *American Heritage® Dictionary of the English Language, Fifth Edition*. (2011). Retrieved September 29 2019, from <https://www.thefreedictionary.com/institution>

the right definition of “*family relations*”². Barnard and Goodin *Research practices in the study of kinship* (1984), after taking into consideration that “*family relations*” are not merely biological blood relations; neither emotional intimacy relations, attributed to Malinowski; neither a normative concept, as mechanism to preserve the social order, as pretends Radcliff-Brown; neither a social approach, as the wide point of view of Lévi-Strauss, nor a specific intellectual and cultural structure, where the individual relates the positions of the others starting from his own position, as the cognitive theories of Geertz and Geertz claim; come to the point that the concept of “*family relations*” has no proper shape and dynamics, and takes the shape of the specifics mostly encountered in a given social context³. The German sociologist Ferdinand Tönnies proposes a substantial difference between “*Gemeinschaft*” and “*Gesellschaft*”, which usually translate as “*community*” and “*society*”, as the difference between pre-modern and traditional societies. Communities work based on reciprocal and mutual actions, are generally rural and governed by customs; societies have as a main feature of voluntary accompaniment and bilateral exchange relationship, societies are generally urban and cosmopolitan and work on basis of rational reasoning⁴.

In the *Dictionary of the Albanian Language*, “*family*” is defined as *the group of parents, children and other relatives that live and dwell together; the group of people descending from a common ancestor*⁵. The last part of the definition overlaps with the definition of the “*kin*” in Albanian: *the group of people related by blood and marriages*⁶. The traditional and cultural perception of “*family*” in Albania, was actually that of Tönnies’ community and the Albanian society has always perceived the family as a kin, rather than as the nuclear family of the modern times.

The anthropological kin studies are divided in three major areas: the group structure (where is included the blood inheritance and shared roof), unions (connections through marriages) and relatives classification. In each of the areas there are rules and restraints. The very core of the rules is the overlapping area, which is the heart of the “*social structure*”⁷. Linda Stone in *Kinship and gender* notices that the studies of Robin Fox and Bernard Chapais, show that kinship systems were not born out of nothing and that they have deep roots in our evolution from apes, but human kinship systems have become complicated, have set rules and have been institutionalized due to the human capability to talk, understand and communicate through symbols. Kinship became

² Good A.; Barnard A., Spencer J. (ed.), (2010), *The Routledge Encyclopedia of Social and Cultural Anthropology*, 2nd edition, Oxon, UK, Routledge (Taylor & Francis e-Library version), pg. 396-397

³ Barnard A. & Good A. (1984), *Research practices in the study of kinship*, London, UK: Academic Press; pg. 184-189

⁴ Turner, B. S. (ed.), 2006, *The Cambridge Dictionary of Sociology*. New York, USA: Cambridge University Press. pg. 592

⁵ Thomai J., Samara M., Haxhillari P., Shehu H., Feka Th., Memisha V., Goga A. (2006), *Dictionary of the Albanian Language*, Tirana, Albania: Akademia e Shkencave e Shqipërisë, pg. 352

⁶ Thomai J., Samara M., Haxhillari P., Shehu H., Feka Th., Memisha V., Goga A. (2006), *Dictionary of the Albanian Language*, Tirana, Albania: Akademia e Shkencave e Shqipërisë, pg. 355

⁷ Barnard A. (1994) *Rules And Prohibitions: The Form and Content of Human Kinship* published in *Companion Encyclopedia of Anthropology* edited by Ingold T.; New York, USA: Routledge (Taylor & Francis e-Library version), pg. 783

really important and the very frame of social structure, as it is inextricably intertwined with economic, political and religious relationships⁸.

Defining *Family* and *Kin* in an Albanian Anthropological Setting

The kin can be of several types, but this article will take into consideration the agnatic kin, with fatherblood heritage through males, as it characterizes the Albanian sort of kin before the end of the Second World War and after a theoretical analysis, it will go through a concrete research of these features.

In accordance to the way of living, an agnatic kin has vertical or horizontal structure. Denich claims that among the Balkan tribes, in the agnatic kin depending on agricultural living, the males of the house after marriage, quite often separate from the main family core and dwell under autonomous roofs, and do not have narrow co-habiting relations with the other members of the kin. In the mountain communities, in the kin depending from cattle, the family ties to the main core are really strong. This happens due to survival needs and includes under the same roof even non really close family members. This kind of mentality derives even from isolation of these tribes from the state authorities, which easily access among the villagers that live through agriculture⁹ and nothing shows it better rather than the huge difference between the *Canon of Lek Dukagjini* and the *Canon of Scanderbeg* with the other canons, on the matters of separation of the new families from the first “fire” [zjarr]. If the *Canon of Dibra*, the *Canon e Toskeria* and the *Canon of Laberia* have articles that consider and regulate the separation of the married males from the father family core, in the *Canon of Lek Dukagjini* is written: *if one of the sons decides to leave his father, he leaves without share or property*¹⁰.

Nopcsa calls the kin system a primitive feature in the timeline of a population. People are inclined to believe that when a civilization is not fully developed, like the north Albania case, even the kinship structure of the area is an old institution, which never changes. But there are changes and they are constant and considering the fact that they still keep intact the structure, this society shows not to be primitive, but to have an ancient origin¹¹. Durham states that the kin system is a social phase and the human societies go constantly through it.

Even Europe once was made of kin systems, which through times contributed to the actual nations¹², but at the time Durham was visiting Albania (1903-1921), the Albanian north tribes,

⁸ Stone L. (2010), *Kinship and gender*, Colorado, USA: Westview Press, pg.61

⁹ Denich B.S. (1974) *Sex and Power in the Balkans*, published in *Woman, Culture and Society* edited by Rosaldo M. and Lamphere L., Stanford, USA: Stanford University Press, pg. 246

¹⁰ Gjeçovi Sh. (1989), *Kanuni i Lekë Dukagjinit - The Code of Lekë Dukagjini*, translated by Leonard Fox, New York, USA: Gjonlekaj Publishing Company, pg. 46

¹¹ Nopcsa F. (2013) *Fiset e malësisë së Shqipërisë veriore dhe e drejta zakonore e tyre*, Tirana, Albania: Qendra e Studimeve Albanologjike, Instituti i Historisë, pg. 280

¹² Durham E. (2019), *Për fiset, ligjet e zakonet e ballkanasve*, Tirana, Albania: Argeta LMG, Pg. 17.

with chieftains and counselors were the last tribes in Europe, to preserve such autonomy¹³. Robert Elsie claims the same as Durham. He opens his book *The Tribes of Albania: History, Society and Culture* with a question: “A tribal society in Europe? Yes, there is one, or at least there are still noticeable traces of one, in the mountains of northern Albania. This unique society and culture thrived until the early days of the 20th century and was still largely intact when the communist regime seized power in Albania in 1944. It is regarded as the only true example of a tribal society surviving in Europe up to the mid-twentieth century.”¹⁴ According to him, in the beginning they were isolated family groups, which evolved into self-governed tribes with common culture and very often even common origin, connected by the same social models. Not only the north, but even south Albania, had kinship structures, but they were not as developed as in the north¹⁵.

There are plenty of researchers’ references that note on the tribal system in Albania. Villari in *Albanian customary law and norms—The canon of Lek Dukagjini*, claims that *one can encounter the kinship system throughout all high mountain areas, with no exception [...]*¹⁶. He perceives the Albanian tribes similar to small aristocratic republics, headed by a chieftain that enforces the law and works according to the population best interests¹⁷. According to Villari, the strong tribal and kinship connection is a very important concept for the canon itself, being its context, because as he claims, *it has been proved that out of the kin, the canon does not exist, or loses its value at the point you cannot recognize it anymore*¹⁸. Even Durham claims that the canon is everywhere connected to the tribe, which executes its right within the kin territory¹⁹.

Kazuhiko Yamamoto notices in the study *The ethical structure of the Albanian customary law* that the Albanian society in north Albania was organized in the structure *house-brotherhood-kin*, and that the individual didn’t live for himself, but as a member of the kin, by limiting personal rights and freedom and by sharing with the whole respective group achievements and dishonoring²⁰.

Yamamoto writes about the same structure analyzed by Nopcsa that makes a deep analysis on the “*fis*” (clan) term, on language and ethnic comparisons. Eventually, Nopcsa defines *fis* as a group of several marriage alliances, family trees, which are called *bajrak*, a situation which at some point will end in marriages within the group. According to him, some *fis* concern of one *bajrak* and the chieftain is called *bajraktar* (flag bearer), an inheritable position, which the first born inherits from his father. *Bajrakis* made of many groups, which are called *vllazni* (brotherhoods). A *vllazni* is

¹³ Durham E. (2019), *Për fiset, ligjet e zakonet e ballkanasve*, Tirana, Albania: Argeta LMG, Pg. 80

¹⁴ Elsie R. (2015) *The tribes of Albania – history society and culture*, London, UK: I. B. Tauris, pg. 1

¹⁵ Elsie R. (2015) *The tribes of Albania – history society and culture*, London, UK: I. B. Tauris, pg. 3

¹⁶ Villari S. (2012) *Normat zakonore juridike të Shqipërisë – Kanuni i Lek Dukagjinit*, Tirana, Albania: Ombra GVG, pg. 21

¹⁷ Villari S. (2012) *Normat zakonore juridike të Shqipërisë – Kanuni i Lek Dukagjinit*, Tirana, Albania: Ombra GVG, pg. 24

¹⁸ Villari S. (2012) *Normat zakonore juridike të Shqipërisë – Kanuni i Lek Dukagjinit*, Tirana, Albania: Ombra GVG, pg. 23

¹⁹ Durham E. (2019), *Për fiset, ligjet e zakonet e ballkanasve*, Tirana, Albania: Argeta LMG, Pg. 84

²⁰ Yamamoto K. (2008) *Struktura etike e të drejtës zakonore shqiptare*, Tirana, Albania: Almera, pg. 28

made of family groups that include cousins of more than an agnatic level. Nopcsa claims that *shtëpia* (house) in Albania is the same as *familje* (family) and it is not important at all if it is a nuclear family made by the father, the mother and unmarried children or a family of many generations: there is no difference between them and the individual never lives as such, but as part of this family²¹.

Ultimately Elsie has best defined the Albanian kin in the book *The Tribes of Albania: History, Society and Culture*. According to him, the term “*fis*” (tribe or clan) definition should take origin from different premises, as in Albania it is made out of two different concepts. The first concept relates to the kin group generating from the paternal blood line, which not necessarily implies a geographical territory. Being related by blood they were exogamous and didn’t marry within the kin²². Probably Elsie created this concept and definition on Durham, because she claims the same in the book *Some Tribal Origins, Laws and Customs of the Balkans*, adding that the chieftains *know by heart the whole long genealogy of their tribe, a really important knowledge, as marriage and blood feuds are regulated based on the blood institution.[...] The kinship instinct is even stronger than the church law*²³.

The second concept is the one of *bajrak*, (also can be translated as tribe or clan) which is more a political structure and was mainly defined from a specific geographical territory. So, *bajrak* meant territory, while *fis* blood descent. Still, the majority of the clans had their own territories, clearly bordered, which they protected from other clans and foreign enemies²⁴. A north Albanian *fis* might have one or more *bajrak*, which had joined their forces and *abajrak* might have members of more than one *fis*. The overlapping of both concepts brings the creation of a specific structure of these northern clans, making it quite often impossible to fully grasp²⁵. Hasluck writes that according to the Albanian tradition, the *bajraktar* did not exist before the ottoman occupation and the only leaders were the chieftains of each kin (she confirms this through a document of 1403). Flag bearers were created as a result of the continuous ottoman attempt to weaken the chieftains. Sultan Mahmud II liquidated 36 Albanian clans, while his son, Abdulmejid I a higher number²⁶. The clan power is not the same on every generation and it strongly depends on the power and wisdom of his chieftain²⁷.

To return once more to the *house* concept, it is not in the hands of the family council, but depends from the family father. He governs it in full power, by managing wealth, marriages and takes all kind of decisions, until he is no more able to clearly judge. The houses become bigger and

²¹ Nopcsa F. (2013) *Fiset e malësisë së Shqipërisë veriore dhe e drejta zakonore e tyre*, Tirana, Albania: Qendra e Studimeve Albanologjike, Instituti i Historisë, pg. 257-258

²² Elsie R. (2015) *The tribes of Albania – history society and culture*, London, UK: I. B. Tauris, pg. 3-4.

²³ Durham E. (2019), *Për fiset, ligjet e zakonet e ballkanasve*, Tirana, Albania: Argeta LMG, Pg. 20.

²⁴ Elsie R. (2015) *The tribes of Albania – history society and culture*, London, UK: I. B. Tauris, pg. 3.

²⁵ Elsie R. (2015) *The tribes of Albania – history society and culture*, London, UK: I. B. Tauris, pg. 4.

²⁶ Hasluck M. (1954), *The Unwritten Law in Albania*, Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, pg. 128.

²⁷ Nopcsa F. (2013) *Fiset e malësisë së Shqipërisë veriore dhe e drejta zakonore e tyre*, Tirana, Albania: Qendra e Studimeve Albanologjike, Instituti i Historisë, pg. 269-270

bigger through descending generations, because the married sons and nephews do not detach from the common house²⁸. Probably the father dwelling is the main reason why some societies chose to follow the father blood line heritage and not the one of the mother or the combined one (of the father and mother). By living under the same roof or on the same territory, the people of this group know for sure that they share the same fatherhood origin²⁹. They can also keep control under the common wealth and inherit it from generation to generation, same as beliefs, political roles, legal responsibilities and ensure to the members a common group identity³⁰. As for the women, they never trace permanent marks of their existence in the formal terms of the kin³¹.

Comparative *Family* and *Kin* Perception in the Albanian Canons

At this point let's go through the canons to see what they say about the family. Generally the family chapter is the first one in the canons, but the actual structures of the canons we possess today depend on the codifier education and the system he chooses to use. So, in the *Canon of Lek Dukagjini* the first chapter is Church and not Family, while Dr. Prof. Ismet Elezi starts the *Canon of Laberia* with the General Norms and Principles, placing Family in the fourth part of the canon.

According to the *Canon of Lek Dukagjini*, *a family is a group of human beings who live under the same roof, whose aim is to increase the number by means of marriage for their establishment and the evolution of their state, and for the development of their reason and intellect. [...] the family consists of people of the house; as these increase, they are divided into brotherhoods [vllazni], brotherhoods into kinship groups [gjini]³², kinship groups into clans [fis], clans into banners [flamur], and all together constitute one widespread family called a nation, which has one homeland, common blood, a common language and common customs³³. Even the *Canon of Dibra*, approaches to family in the same way by starting the canon with the family, which consists of one or more "crowns" [kurorë], which might descend from the same progeny, or of several progenies. According to the Canon, the crown is the union of man and woman through marriage, which is achieved through popular rites and customs. In ancient times, the families used to be bigger, including several crowns³⁴. Frano Ilia in the *Canon of Scanderbeg* starts the definition of family from the kin: *kin or blood are all the people that descend from the same father, generation by generation, as long as people can remember, and are called brothers and sisters among them. The kin is created by common blood, hence the father. Brothers**

²⁸ Nopcsa F. (2013) *Fiset e malësisë së Shqipërisë veriore dhe e drejta zakonore e tyre*, Tirana, Albania: Qendra e Studimeve Albanologjike, Instituti i Historisë, pg. 258-259

²⁹ Stone L. (2010), *Kinship and gender*, Colorado, USA: Westview Press, pg. 71

³⁰ Stone L. (2010), *Kinship and gender*, Colorado, USA: Westview Press, pg. 72

³¹ Denich B.S. (1974) *Sex and Power in the Balkans*, published in *Woman, Culture and Society* edited by Rosaldo M. and Lamphere L, Stanford, USA: Stanford University Press, pg. 246

³² *I have to note that the translation of Fox is not accurate regarding gjini, as gjini is not a kinship in its classical concept. An Albanian kinship is only from the father blood line, so more accurate for gjini would be marriage alliance, as English is missing the specific term Albanian language has.*

³³ Gjeçovi Sh. (1989), *Kanuni i Lekë Dukagjinit - The Code of Lekë Dukagjini*, translated by Leonard Fox, New York, USA: Gjonlekaj Publishing Company, pg. 14

³⁴ Martini Xh. (2007), *Kanuni i Dibrës*, 2nd edition, Tirana, Albania: Emal, pg. 37

*descending from the same father are of the same blood, therefore there is no distinction among them [...] The kin is divided into brotherhoods [vllazni], brotherhoods in progenies [barqe] and progenies in houses [shtëpi]. Brotherhoods are closest generations parted from the same fire [zjarr]. Progenies are all those who descend from brothers of a brotherhood³⁵. This definition of Article 54 in the **Canon of Scanderbeg** recalls what Durham noted on the kin importance, as it is related to the blood feud: *Close kin is distinguished from the fact that: [...] they seek to revenge blood of their brotherhoods; they get into the blood feud within 24 hours, if any of them gets involved in such³⁶*. In this canon there is a special part for marriage alliances [gjini]. Durham notices that generally mother's blood was never taken into consideration, as the child inherits nothing from her blood³⁷. This canon does not allow marriages with marriage alliances, which indirectly recognizes the mother's line blood, not to mention that *Scanderbeg, following the people consent, allowed blood revenge "of the nephew for the mother's brother and of the mother's brother for the nephew.³⁸**

In south Albania canons', the definition of *family* and *kinis* much more relaxed and does not go along the rigid concept of the north. In the **Canon of Toskeria**, *family or house are the grandfather, the grandmother, the mother, the father, brothers, sisters, uncles from father's side, aunt's from father's side, brides, nephews and nieces descending from the same blood. [...] Those who dwell under the same roof, that eat and drink at the same table [sofra], that share the same food with each other, that sleep in the same place and share the same wealth, they are a singular house. [...] A house has its own hearth, fire, and wealth³⁹*. Bardhyl Prifti, the codifier of this canon, introduces a new concept of the close kin: *sofra* (the round low table they used to eat). *The table consists of the ones that used to eat at the same table, sharing the same sleeping place. The table includes first, second and third cousins⁴⁰*. The main significance of these articles is that the family concept is out of the rigid kin nature and more oriented toward the family wealth, as they connect the family concept with it. This clearly shows that the south areas had a strong economic and migration influence, which touched the internal regulatory laws, along the culture itself. In the **Canon of Labëria** family starts with *progeny, that are the children descending from a father and a mother or several progenies of sons and nephews. [...] Family is the union of the group of people connected through blood and alliances (marriage), which involves many crowns [kurora] of the same progeny or several progenies, and live under the same hearth smoke, with common economy and expenditure⁴¹*. Elezi describes three kind of families: the big patriarchal-kinship family (above three crowns and several progenies; 15-30 people); the medium family (2-3 crowns and 2-3

³⁵ Ilia, F. Dom, (1993), *Kanuni i Skanderbegut*, Milot, Albania: Editrice La Rosa, pg. 20

³⁶ Ilia, F. Dom, (1993), *Kanuni i Skanderbegut*, Milot, Albania: Editrice La Rosa, pg. 20

³⁷ Durham E. (2019), *Për fiset, ligjet e zakonet e ballkanasve*, Tirana, Albania: Argeta LMG, Pg. 20

³⁸ Ilia, F. Dom, (1993), *Kanuni i Skanderbegut*, Milot, Albania: Editrice La Rosa, pg. 22

³⁹ Prifti B. (2017), *Toskëria (Shqipëria juglindore): ligje të traditës: zakone, doke, ceremoni, rite*, Tirana, Albania: Vllamasi, pg. 34

⁴⁰ Prifti B. (2017), *Toskëria (Shqipëria juglindore): ligje të traditës: zakone, doke, ceremoni, rite*, Tirana, Albania: Vllamasi, pg. 35

⁴¹ Elezi I. (2006), *Kanuni i Labërisë*, Tirana, Albania: Toena, pg. 73

progenies; 5-10 people); small family with a crown and a single progeny⁴². Prifti as well mentions in Toskeria 2 types of family: the big house, where live more than 20-25 people and small house with 10-15 people⁴³. Even the *Canon of Dibra* considers several house types: small houses of a single progeny; medium of 2-3 progenies; big with more than 2-3 progenies⁴⁴. In the *Canon of Lek Dukagjini* and the *Canon of Scanderbeg* there are not such definitions.

What is common of the whole Albanian territory is that the family of any type has a headman [*kryetar, kryefamiljar, babëzot, zot shpije, plak shtëpie*], with full power and responsibility on decisions, wealth, marriages, even on life and death of the children, therefore he should be fair and honest, carefully preserving the customs and it should not necessarily be the oldest man of the house. As headman is chosen the one with the best common sense, *the best in conversation and in economy*⁴⁵, *who is wiser, more intelligent and more careful*⁴⁶, *that knows how to manage issues and knows how to lead*⁴⁷. A special hierarchic position, similar to the house headman, but within her gender, is the one of the homemaker [*zonja e shtëpisë*], who can be *the wife of the oldest man of the house or a widower, but never an unmarried daughter*⁴⁸. Her rights and duties and relationship to the heirs are really rich, from one canon to the other. These sort of regulatory articles on the relationships within the family and kin, bring the cultural taste of each area, and tolerances and constrictions depend on geographical and economic exchanges.

In the *Canon of Laberia*, the homemaker deserves the right to welcome hosts and to represent the house, when there are no men in the house⁴⁹. In Toskeria the homemaker takes the headman place, if her husband passes away and the children are still young. An old-homemaker-headman dresses like a man and is considered as such from the other villagers⁵⁰. The *Canon of Dibra* claims that when the headman passes away, his place is taken by the homemaker, if she is one that can keep the house under control and nobody can defy her. This sort of woman is called *The Big Mother [Nana e madhe]* and she is allowed to keep guns⁵¹. In the *Canon of Scanderbeg* and in the *Canon of Lek Dukagjini*, a widower is allowed just to decide whether she wants to marry the next husband that has been offered to her, but never the rights of the women in south Albania and Dibra. Still Rose Wilder Lane brings testimonies on how the flag bearer [*bajraktar*] of Shosh,

⁴² Elezi I. (2006), *Kanuni i Labërisë*, Tirana, Albania: Toena, pg. 73-74

⁴³ Prifti B. (2017), *Toskëria (Shqipëria juglindore): ligje të traditës: zakone, doke, ceremoni, rite*, Tirana, Albania: Vllamasi, pg. 35

⁴⁴ Martini Xh. (2007), *Kanuni i Dibrës*, 2nd edition, Tirana, Albania: Emal, pg. 47

⁴⁵ Prifti B. (2017), *Toskëria (Shqipëria juglindore): ligje të traditës: zakone, doke, ceremoni, rite*, Tirana, Albania: Vllamasi, pg. 37

⁴⁶ Gjeçovi Sh. (1989), *Kanuni i Lekë Dukagjinit - The Code of Lekë Dukagjini, translated by Leonard Fox, New York, USA: Gjonlekaj Publishing Company*, pg. 14

⁴⁷ Martini Xh. (2007), *Kanuni i Dibrës*, 2nd edition, Tirana, Albania: Emal, pg. 54

⁴⁸ Nopcsa F. (2013) *Fiset e malësisë së Shqipërisë veriore dhe e drejta zakone e tyre*, Tirana, Albania: Qendra e Studimeve Albanologjike, Instituti i Historisë, pg. 386-388

⁴⁹ Elezi I. (2006), *Kanuni i Labërisë*, Tirana, Albania: Toena, pg. 78

⁵⁰ Prifti B. (2017), *Toskëria (Shqipëria juglindore): ligje të traditës: zakone, doke, ceremoni, rite*, Tirana, Albania: Vllamasi, pg. 44

⁵¹ Martini Xh. (2007), *Kanuni i Dibrës*, 2nd edition, Tirana, Albania: Emal, pg. 65

used to have long political conversations with his grandmother from the mother side⁵². I do not want to further research on matters relating to women, as they are quite very large and compose a singular “*women*” institution, which I will address in a separate article. But being the canons so closely bound with the life and culture, it is impossible to clearly separate institutions boundaries and not overlap and merge their features, like I involuntarily ventured here from the *family* institution to the *woman* institution.

Conclusion

To bring this article to a conclusion on the perception of the *family* and especially of the *kin*, which is one of the most interesting and representative codes of the Albanian cultural heritage, I would like to mention the claim of Linda Stone. She duly writes in *Kinship and gender* that the kin goes beyond blood and marriage relations, beyond social structure, beyond rights and obligations of the kin members. The kin is an ideology of the human relationships, which includes cultural concepts on how people should be shaped or on the nature and meaning of their biological and moral relations with the others⁵³. What she writes embraces better than anyone the true meaning and the inextricable relation between laws, culture and heritage.

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⁵³ Stone L. (2010), *Kinship and gender*, Colorado, USA: Westview Press, pg.5

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