

## The Voevoda Atanas Kurshakov

Some images are like a thunderbolt, they rip the time and throw a sudden, bright light over events and history, they let us glimpse beyond the faces, frozen in time and the heroism that turned personalities into legends. Like the revolutionary captain, “voyvoda” Atanas Kurshakov from the village Kossinetz, Kostour (Kastoria) county (kaaza).

On the photo his family - brother and sisters honour his memory with a modest panihida service - an old Christian custom, putting on a tray water, wine, plate of wheat and a burning scent for the eternal peace of his soul. The portrait is a reminder of the deceased. His tragic death brings not only sadness, rather there is a contained pride interwoven in it. On the chair with a cane seat are the dagger and the revolver of the captain. To remind. To appeal!

Atanas Kurshakov takes his own life, after being deadly wounded in a battle against Greek “andart” detachment and Turkish regular forces. In order to save his body from desecration the members of his “cheta” cut the head from the body and bring it to the nearby village of Dumbeny, Kostour county where they pose for the historical photo with the head, crowned with a laurel wreath. Even being fearful the act is a bearer of a deep symbolism. According to the popular legend, the head is the spirit of the hero, whose strength is being transferred to those who had the privilege to cut it, thus taking away from the enemy the power over the dead body.”

*Photo (probably) from the archive of Leonid Papazoglou*

*Text: “Illustration Belo More”*

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