Theory and Empiricism in Slavonic Diachronic Linguistics

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SNEŽANA PETROVIĆ: SCR. НЕИМАР 'CHIEF ARCHITECT' – A TURKISH WORD IN SLAVIC GUISE?

Abstract: In this paper the etymology of the Serbian noun *неимар* 'chief architect, constructor', explained as a loanword from Turk. *mimar* 'id.', will be reconsidered and some problems of this interpretation will be analysed. A potential link with the Serb. verbs *наимати, најмити* 'to hire' will be pointed out. The specific context of epic poetry, in which this word was initially used, as well as the historical circumstances connected with the loaning process will be emphasised. **Keywords:** Turkish loanwords, etymology, Serb. *неимар*, Turk. *mimar*.

1.1. Most of the Turkish loanwords still present in the Serbian language have certain stylistic, semantic or regional peculiarities. Unlike them, the word *neimar* is not only usually unrecognised as a Turkish loan, but other than some archaic connotations on a contemporary linguistic level it has no other stylistic features. In descriptive dictionaries this word is generally attested in two types of sources: in epic poetry from the 19th century or in specialised texts, translations and newspapers from the second half of the 20th century. The noun appears in both types of sources while its derivatives figure almost exclusively in the later ones: *неѝмāр, нӗимāр* (Turk. *mimar*) 'chief architect, chief in charge of construction, building; builder, architect': Везак везла сеја тефтердара, На чардаку на дебелу ладу, Туд пролази Раде неимаре. Epic poetry Vuk; Међу њима је увек један који тражи, наплаћује посао, па после исплаћује остале. Њега зову неимар *или* аргат. T. Đorđević; По свој прилици (ће) бити да су неимари *били* зидари. Rasina; fig. 'builder, creator'; *неима́рити* impf. 'to build, to provide construction services'; *неѝмāрка, нӗимāрка* f. 'woman architect; bird species distinguished by the art of building houses from twigs' lit.; *неѝмāрски, нӗимāрски* adj. 'related to contractor, architect, construction' *неима́рство, нӗимāрство* n. 'architectural, mason skills; architecture, construction' (RSA).

1.2. Due to the fact that this word is not recorded in Serbian dialects, these examples are representative of the Serbian language corpora. The fact that the adjective, along with the noun, is attested in Vuk Karadžić's Dictionary from the year 1818 supports the popular character of these words: *неѝмāр* 'architect, constructor': Слуго моја, Раде неимаре, *неима́ров, неѝмāрскȗ* (Vuk 1818).

2.1. The etymology of the word *neimar* is given by Petar Skok, and we will cite the entire lemma from his Etymological Dictionary translated into English: *мàјмор* m. (folk riddles) = *наимар* Bosnia, folk short stories, *неѝмāр* (Vuk, epic poetry) 'constructor'. The Balkan Turkish loanword of Arabic origin < Turk.

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mejmar < *mi'mar*; Bulg. *маимар*, *маимарин*. The Serbo-Croatian form is based on the dissimilation *м–м* > *н–м*, attested so far only in this word; *-ор* instead of *-ар* comes about from the model of the word *мајстор*. In place of the Arabic phoneme *ain* we have, as in Turkish, *ej*, the difference being that the accent is moved from the last syllable – its regular position in Turkish – to the vowel *и* instead of *j*, probably due to interference with the verb *имати* (Skok 1971–1974, 2: 358 s.v. *màjmor*).

2.2. Skok's interpretation has certain shortcomings. The Bulgarian examples given are recorded only in Mladenov's Dictionary, without examples from other sources, and are not mentioned in BER. We can add parallels from other Balkan languges: Rum. *maimár* 'chief architect', Arum. *maimár* 'id.', *măimár*, *mamare*, Bulg. dial. *меймàр* 'architect', *мимàр*, *маймар*, Gr. *μαϊμάρης*. The Turkish loan word is also recorded in Hung. *majmár* (Sukhachev et al.) and Pol. *mejmar* 'architect' (Stachowski 2007: 274).[1]

2.3. To the Skok's etymological explanation some additional facts can be submitted; beside the mentioned Turkish forms *mimar* and *mejmar*[2], recorded are also archaic *meymar* and *memar* (Sukhachev et al.). The Arab origin of the Turkish word (from Arab. *mi'mār*), as well as the original orthography of the Ottoman language, do allow for the possibility that the word was pronounced as **meimār*, **meymār*. The Turkish form *mimar*, although well attested, and given already by Škaljić, is usually recorded in Turkish dictionaries as a craft term. However, it should be stressed that the word *mimar* has not been attested in dialectal dictionaries so far, and in the Tarama Sözlüğü (TS), a dictionary containing lexical material from Turkish written sources, primarily from literature, from the 13th up to the first half of the 19th century. On the basis of numerous Turkish lexicographic sources it is clear that the Turkish word *mimar* was used mainly as an administrative term, the title of chief architect at the Ottoman court.

2.4. As far as the formal part of Skok's interpretation is concerned, he was right in stating that the dissimilatory shift from the initial *м-* to *н-* is not common among Turkish loanwords, nor is it regular. This is supported by the fact that this feature was recorded only in two examples in Serbian dialectal material: *нимбар* from *мимбер* and *нитип* from *митит*.

2.5.1. Finally, and perhaps most importantly in interpreting the origin of the word *неимар*, raises the problem connected with the Serbian words given by Skok. In the first place, word *мајмор* is recorded only in one folk riddle: *màjмор*

1 This word occurs in Bulgarian as an onym, according to the legend of Mimar Sinan, cf. § 7.
2 The adequate orthographic form of this word in the contemporary Turkish language is *meymar*.

m. (from the Turk. *mimar*) 'architect, constructor' Пет мајстора, пет мајмора, начинише кућу без ивера 'Five masters, five *majmors*, made a house without woodchips' (knitting needles) Serbia (RSA). Such an example, especially being a hapax, is not a reliable enough basis for interpreting the origin of a whole group of words. Its semantics are not always clear and its form is often the result of arbitrary and irregular morphological processes.

2.5.2. Serbian dialects show some words that, while not phonetically identical, could support the possibility of a popular character and the authenticity of the Skok's word from the folk riddle: *мàјмāр* m. 'the first one, leader in some work, enterprise': Мајмар значи први у послу. Levač; 'leader'; *мàјмарбаша* 'leader': Чисти понедеоник је бекриски дан. Ко се тога дана опије он је мајмар (старешина) бекриски. Levač, Vojvodina (RSA). Yet their semantics do not exactly match either the original meaning of the Turkish word *mimar* or the Serbian *неимар*. Thus they may be considered to be later and independent loans, and be related to the above mentioned Turkish loan words from other Balkan languages: Rum. *maimár* m. 'chief architect', Arum. *maimár* m. 'id.', *măimár*, Bulg. dial. *мейма̀р* m. 'architect', *маймар*, Gr. *μαϊμάρης*, Hung. *majmár*, as well as to the Rum. *maimar-başa* (Sukhachev et al.), and Pol. *mejmar* 'architect' (Stachowski 2007: 274).

2.6. On the basis of the analysis offered of Skok's lemma, it may be concluded that there should also have existed a Turkish loanword in Serbian in the same form, *мимар*, as a precondition and a link between Serb. *неимар* and Turk. *mimar*. However, the only attestation of this form, as a reflex of Turk. *mimar*, can be found in Škaljić's dictionary, without examples, and nowhere else in Serbo-Croatian language territory: *ми́мāр* 'architect, constructor' from Turk. *mimar* < Arab. *mi'mār* (Škaljić 1979: 464). Therefore, just as in the case of the example from the folk riddle *мајмор*, it cannot be considered a sufficiently reliable basis for etymological explanation.

3.1. One possible way of explaining Serbian *неимар* could be traced through examples from folk epic poetry and literature, where the form *наимар* appears together with *неимар*. Attestations of the later word and its morpho-semantically related words are the following: *наѝмāр, -а́ра, нȁимāр* m. = *неимар*: Чујеш ли ме, Јово наимаре, Нај ти ово латинско дијете, Узидај га кули у бедему. Folk poetry; Иза тога нареде ... Поп Мата да пише за мајстора Зарију Осаћанина, који је већ био на гласу у околини, као наимар особито вешт у своме занату; А он ти лепо своме наимару Марку: –Мајстор Марко; Купио сам плац ... Да ми, са друштвом, помогнеш да кућерак начиним; Хоћу градит по Босни хаире, Најнапријед на Дрини ћуприју, Па он гради књигу на кољену, Па је посла Митру наимару. Folk poetry, Bosnia;

Катедрала је поновљена, па бих њеном наимару, да имам власт – даровао 50 врућих (пољубаца); fig. O, срећно да је дело наимара Словенског Југа; *на̏јмар* ‘id’ (RSA)[3].

3.2. An alternation between the forms *неимар* and *наимар* in early records can be seen in two versions of the folk epic poem *Зидање ћуприје у Вишеграду*, published for the first time in 1888 (Hörman 1888: 68–72). In this edition, the word *неимар* appears eleven times, and always in the phrase *Митар неимар*. In 1901, the poem was reprinted, but this time some corrections were made, where the form *Митар наимар* appears the first three times, followed by the form *Митар неимар* the next eight times (Vukićević 1901: 70–74).

3.3. The original form of Serbo-Croatian *наимар* or *неимар* and possible subsequent hypercorrection and unification as *неимар* will be analysed in a separate paper, but what is important to point out here is that in recent editions of Serbian folk epic poetry almost only the word *неимар* is found. This could be explained as the influence of the standard Serbian form.

3.4. Of all the Serbian words mentioned, the form *најмар* can most easily be linked to the Turkish *meymar*, but being a hapax, it is more likely to be a secondary formation influenced by the verb *најмити* rather than the initial form that gave birth to all the other Serbian words. Although all three forms, *неимар*, *наимар* and *најмар* could, with certain formal constraints, be linked to the Turkish *mimar*, it can be assumed that the influence of the Serbian verbs *наимати*, *најмити* ‘take into rent, service, engaged for pay’ did play a significant part in their formation.[4]

4.1. The semantic closeness of the Turkish word *mimar* ‘chief architect, one who organises and oversees construction work’ and the Serbian verb *најмити*, could have been of major importance in the process of creating this hybrid as the result of adaptation, during the loan process, of an unclear Turkish administrative term.

3 Cf. also *на̀им* m. Dalmatia and Herzegovina; *наима́рити* impf. ‘to build’: Гради цркву Радмиловић Мијо; Сам ми јунак тужан наимари, Зидари су бескућни Требњани. Zagreb; *наѝма̄рскӣ*, *на̏има̄рскӣ* adj. Они ће све то замазати дебелијем малтером, да не вријеђа њежне очи данашњега наимарског укуса. Serbia; *наима́рство*, *на̏има̄рство* n. Човек помишља да је геологија некако сродна с наимарством, Вароши има на обе стране реке Неретве преко које је озидан на свод високи мост од тесана камена, по свој прилици остатак још од римскога наимарства; *наѝма̄ч* m. ’one who hires someone to do the job for a fee’, *наѝма̄ча* f. Господ. Хицингер пише, да је обично у Славонији наимаче … узимати, да за мртвим плачу и туробне пјесме говоре, кје за њими сви назочни тужним гласом понављају. Slavonia (RSA).

4 Cf. *на̀имати* (dial. *најимати*) impf. ’to hire’ У Кастелима, поред мора између Спљета и Трогира, имају нарикаче, које пријатељи и познаници покојникови наимљу и шаљу му кући, да га жале, Крџалије су се послије и најимале те војевале коме је требало. Vuk, Они наимаху каменаре и дрводјеље, да се обнови дом господњи. (RSA).

4.2. The verb *најмити* is of Slavic origin and the forms *наимар*, *најмар* could be derived from this verb, with the suffix *-ар*, which is productive in the formation of such types of nouns from the basic verb, cf. Serb. *возар* 'driver' < *возити* 'to drive' (Skok 1971–1974, 1: 50, s.v. *-ar*[2]). An *-ар* derivative from this verb occurs only in Serbian and this formation is not attested at Common Slavic and Proto Slavic levels, cf. PSl. **najьtati (sę)*, **najьtačь*, **najьtatel'ъ*, **najьtitel'ъ*, **najьtitъ*, **najьtьsь*/**najьtьsa* etc. (ĖSSJa 22: 105–111).

4.3. The motivation for this formation in the Serbian language could have come from the Turkish word *mimar*, where the *-ар* is recognised as a relatively productive suffix, and *мим-* as an unclear word base. However, for this word to cross, as has been shown, in the absence of a reliable record of an appellative Turkish loanword, there should have been certain extra-linguistic circumstances that created conditions for the loan and later formal adaptation of this Turkish term.

5.1. For a better understanding of these processes, observing the word *неимар* in the context where it was first used – in epic poetry – could be a helpful starting-point. Along with those already mentioned from RSA, here are a few additional examples: О мајсторе, Петре неимаре, Прави цркву што год лепшу можеш *Зидање Манасије* Vuk 1899; Књигу пише паша Соколовић, Па је спрема Митру неимару. „Чу ли мене, Митре неимаре! Хоћеш градит на Дрини ћуприју? *Ћуприја на Дрини* (Matica Hrvatska 1890; Него једног Богом побратима. Побратима неимара Ђура, *Мустај бег Делибеговић и будимски везир* (GP).

6.1. If the Turkish loanword *мимар* has barely, if any, trustworthy attestation in the Serbian language, and if the Turkish word *mimar* was used almost exclusively as a title, the question arises as to how and in what circumstances it could be loaned as an appellative in the Serbian language? It can be assumed that it was not loaned as a single word, as an appellative, but as part of a particular phrase. This possibility may be supported by the fact that the word *неимар* is recorded in epic poetry almost exclusively with the name of the builder. The variations in their names, in these phrases that appear, *Раде*, *Петар*, *Митар*, *Марко*, *Ђуро*, *Јово*, point to the use of the noun *неимар* within the framework of the Serbian epic tradition. We may therefore assume a situation in which in a collective popular consciousness already existed a character conditionally named 'the archetypal architect' and was connected to a certain Turkish historical figure, a chief architect, a *mimar*, a character who served as the basis for the formation of the noun *неимар* in this context. The most famous architect in the Serbian epic poetry is *Раде неимар*, and the historical model for him could have been the *протомајстор Раде* (*chief*

architect Rade), whose name and title is mentioned for the first time in an inscription in the church of Ljubostinja monastery: *Протомаисторь Боровикь Раде.* (Stojanović 1902, No. 209).[5] The old title of *протомајстор* meaning 'the person in charge of organising construction work' in a context related to church-building and icon-painting, almost entirely corresponds to the meaning of Turk. *mimar*.[6]

6.2. The most famous Turkish figure to hold this title was *Mimar Sinan*, chief architect of the Ottoman Empire at its height. However, the name of *Mimar Sinan*, the great architect of the 16th century, is not recorded in the Serbian folk tradition, and to answer the question as to whether he, indirectly, could have been the model for the loanword we need look no further than at the examples in epic poetry. They show that the word *неимар* also occurs in the context of building the bridge on the river Drina at Višegrad, the famous bridge from Ivo Andric's novel *Na Drini Ćuprija*, whose main architect was none other than *Mimar Sinan*.[7] In the same poems we likewise encounter the name of the Grand Vizier Mehmed Pasha Sokolović who ordered construction of the bridge and who was born near the region where these epic poems were recorded. Just as the *неимар* in epic poetry builds *Skadar on the river Bojana*, the monasteries of *Manasija* and *Ravanica*, as well as the *Tower in the city of Prilep* and other buildings, the remote and by this time slightly obscure personage of *Mimar Sinan*, could have served as a model for first the loan and then the changes, according to the local words *наимати*, *наимар*, into the title of *неимар Rade*, *Jovo*, *Mitar* and others.

6.3. With the passing of time, the word *неимар* in this phrase could have been separated from the name in the other phrases and used autonomously in the Serbian language, which is confirmed by the examples in the initial paragraphs of this paper.

6.4. The noun *неимар* was used as an onym in Serbian as well. Nikola Zivkovic, the first architect of Serbia's renewal who was the chief architect of Princess Ljubica's Palace in Belgrade, among other buildings, and was Minister of Construction during the second reign of Prince Milos in the second half of the 19th century, bore the nickname *Hajji Neimar* (EJ 8: 476).

5 Cited from: Глас xxi: 44, where the name of the *protomajstor* is written as *Радь*, and is identified with *Rade neimar* from the epic poetry, cf. Maretić 1966: 203.

6 Cf. also the phrase *први мештар* used as a synonym for *неимар* from the 18th century: Три (х)иљаде и шест стотина неимара алити Први(х) мештара. (RJA)

7 Especialy in poems in which this event appears in the very title: *Ћуприја на Дрини*, *Зидање ћуприје у Вишеграду*, *Зидање ћуприје на Вишеграду*, *Како се оградила Ћуприја на Вишеграду*, etc.

7. Although the name of *Mimar Sinan* was not recorded in Serbian folk tradition, in the popular tradition of other Balkan nations, he is mentioned. As an illustration, here is part of the discussion of the legend that Mimar Sinan was born in the Bulgarian village of *Široka luka* into a family of Pomaks[8], taken from one Internet portal: Question: В българския фолклор има предания, че Мимар Синан с рождено име Мехмед Синанов е помак родом от "Помашката махала" на с. Широка лъка, Смолянско, откъдето е взет да служи като еничар от Родопите. Според други предания Майстор Манол (както се твърди, че е рожденото му име) в края на дните си литва от минарето на Султан Селим джамия. По-късно този мит се затвърждава в народното съзнание поради ролята, която изиграва българската военна авиация за превземането на Одрин през Балканската война.

Answer: Коджа Синан (1490–1588 г.) няма как да е бил роден в Широка лъка поради простата причина, че когато се е родил селото все още не е било създадено. Още по-малко пък може да е помак от т.нар. Помашка махала – не само защото през 1490г. селото не е съществувало, но и защото по това време все още не е имало помаци. Освен това, както е добре известно за еничари са взимани християнски деца, което отново показва, че не може да е бил помак. Мисля, че обвързването на името на Синан с Широка лъка, се дължи на факта, че през XIXв. основният занаят на жителите на селото е било дюлгерството и тази леганда е нова и няма абсолютно никакви аргументи в нейна защита (BS).

8. On the basis of the material analysed it can be concluded that the initial motivation for creating the Serbian word *неимар* probably came from the Turkish *mimar*. The long *i*, incomprehensible phonetic structure and insufficiently clear appellative use of this word out of an administrative context or even the specific phrase itself (Turk. *Mimar Sinan*) may have connected it with the possibly already existing Serbian noun *наимар*, replacing the old title of *протомајстор* and resulting in a form with the initial *н-* in Serbian. The closeness of meaning could have further contributed to the phonetic change, producing Turkish loanword *мимар* > Serb. **нимар* > Serb. *неимар*. The role of the historic context and discourse in which the word was originally used is of fundamental importance in explaining its origin. And although the word *неимар* has no reliable parallels in Slavic or other Balkan languages, the methodological process of reconsidering the word and giving a more precise explanation of its origin, as presented in this paper, could be applied to similar

8 The Pomaks are considered to be a population of Slavic or Bulgarian origin who converted to Islam during the period of Ottoman rule in the Balkans.

cases of loanwords, in which the etymology, once written, has been copied from one dictionary into another without a clear picture of the historic circumstances and morpho-semantic details influencing the loan.

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GP: http://guslarskepesme.com.
EJ: *Enciklopedija Jugoslavije*, 1-8, Zagreb 1971.
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Сх. *неимар* – ‘главни, протомајстор’ – турска реч у словенском руху. У овом раду се анализира постојећа етимологија именице *неимар* ‘градитељ, главни мајстор који руководи градњом’, која се изводи од тур. *mimar* у истом значењу. Разматра се могућа веза и евентуално укрштање ове именице са лексичком породицом домаћег глагола *наимати*, *најмити* „узимати некога у најам ради извршења одређеног посла“. Указује се на специфичност употребе речи *неимар*, најчешће у синтагми са личним имено: *Раде*, *Митар*, *Јово*, *Петар неимар*, и која је, по свему судећи, из народне поезије продрла у књижевни и стандардни језик.

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