

EPIC FORMULA

A BALKAN PERSPECTIVE

EDITED BY
Mirjana Detelić
Lidija Delić



INSTITUTE FOR BALKAN STUDIES
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FOREWORD

In 1985, when his *Annotated Bibliography* on oral-formulaic theory was published (*Oral-Formulaic Theory and Research: Introduction and an Annotated Bibliography*. New York: Garland Publishing; rpt. 1986, 1989 – 718 p.), John Miles Foley made it clear that, although big enough, it could not do justice to everything written about the epic formula and still of any importance. Since then the number of works in this field has multiplied many times over and now an endeavour such as Foley's would be hard, if not impossible, to achieve. From that point of view, yet another book on epic formula may seem redundant in every respect. The editors of the *Epic Formula: A Balkan Perspective* nonetheless believe that such a title has been long overdue, and here is why.

The epic poetry of the South Slavs has been the subject of research and discussion on many occasions since it was introduced to the world for the second time by Parry and Lord in the 1930s.¹ Seldom, though, has any Slavic researcher of oral epics, except for few giants such as Jacobson and Bogatyrev, been invited to contribute to some of the numerous edited volumes, and of the South Slavs almost none. Any serious study of the oral epics of the South Slavs ought to welcome a native speaker's contribution if for no other reason than a correct reading of texts and solid knowledge of historical data.

It may prove difficult to note all lapses and errors made with regard to the oral tradition of the Balkans. A recent case in point is an ambitious project under the title *History of the Literary Cultures of East-Central Europe. Junctures and Disjunctures in the 19th and 20th Centuries* (Volume III: *The Making and Re-making of Literary Institutions*, Amsterdam/Philadelphia 2007). Part III (Forging the Past: The Uses of Folklore, pp. 269–343) is devoted to the use of folklore

¹ The first introduction, by J. G. Herder, Vuk Karadžić, J. W. Goethe, G. W. F. Hegel, TALVJ (Therese Albertine Luise von Jakob), P. Mérimée, took place during the romantic movement in nineteenth-century Europe.

for political purposes. There, Estonian, Baltic, Latvian, Czech, Slovakian, Romanian, Bulgarian, Albanian and Macedonian folklores are introduced as representing Central- and East-European cultures. The author of the introductory text, which happens to be about Serbian oral poetry and about Vuk Stefanović Karadžić, the most respected of all collectors of Serbian oral tradition in the nineteenth century, is John Neubauer, one of the volume editors. In this text, “Introduction: Folklore and National Awakening” (pp. 269–285), the author has confused the titles and editions of Vuk Karadžić’s works: he mistakes the four-volume Leipzig edition *Narodne srpske pjesme* of 1823, 1824 and 1833 for *Narodna srbska pjesnarica*, a collection published in 1815, and then builds on this mistake and says that the latter, *Pjesnarica*, is Vuk Karadžić’s ultimate collection (*Srpske narodne pjesme* printed in Vienna in 1841, 1845, 1846 and 1862). One would let it pass as a mere technical error were it not for the fact that the subject spoken about is one of the most important events in the history of romanticism and oral tradition collecting in nineteenth-century Central Europe: it was Goethe, Mérimée, the Grimms, TALVJ and other leading members of European literary circles who responded heartily to Karadžić’s collections.

The author also misspells the names of Vuk’s singers. The most favoured of Vuk’s reciters, Tešan Podrugović, figures as “Podgurović”, and the blind woman singer Živana as “Živena”. Moreover, he describes Živana as “another unnamed blind woman, sometimes referred to as Živena”. In fact, the blind Živana is known quite well indeed, she is known better than any other of Vuk’s female singers. She was a widow of Pavle Antonijević, a registered taxpayer from the town of Zemun which was in Austrian territory in the nineteenth century, and she was a Serb by birth. She did travel, as a beggar, as far as Bulgaria, but Zemun was her regular place of residence. She died in 1827 (December 20) leaving behind a granddaughter, Julijana. Vuk precisely noted which of the songs he collected from her.

Another mistake concerns the historical prototype of the most famous Balkan hero, Prince Marko. The author explicitly claims that he became “king of Prilep” after the death of his father Vukašin at the battle on the river Maritsa in 1371. In point of fact, Marko Vukašinović (Mrnjavčević) was the last lawfully crowned Serbian king. His father, king Vukašin, had been a co-ruler with the last Nemanjić ruler, the Serbian emperor (tsar) Stefan Uroš V, son and heir of the emperor Stefan Dušan, and he had been crowned king with Uroš’s blessing. Marko Kraljević (literally Prince Marko or Marko the Prince) bore the title of “junior king” as his father’s successor, and upon the demise of both Vukašin and Uroš, he was the only crowned Serbian king left. However, his real power was small because local lords had become virtually independent. Marko the

Prince was the last owner of the Serbian crown instituted by the Nemanjić dynasty, and by no means just a “king of Prilep” (a small town in today’s Macedonia).

One reason for this volume was to present a variety of views from scholars grounded in a personal knowledge of the region and the material. A second reason was geographical. The source of all interest in the epic formula and the starting point of the oral-formulaic theory as we know it today is closely connected with Homer and ancient Greece – part of the Balkan Peninsula. It is reasonable to suppose that the old tradition had spread across all of the Balkans, and that was the reason Parry and Lord came to the Kingdom of Yugoslavia to test their theory about the oral roots of Homer’s epics. In fact, Serbo-Croatian epics, which they recorded, are not the only ones to be taken into account. There is also the Albanian, Greek, Bulgarian, Romanian and Macedonian oral epic poetry of a similar style in terms of both poetics and performance (with or without the accompaniment of the *gusle*). Finally, the issue of Turkish influence is also to be considered seriously, for Ottoman rule in the Balkans lasted almost five centuries. Due to the language barriers, that influence could not have been direct, but its impact, from the point of view of anthropology, sociology, and culture in general, was enormous.

A third reason for this book was its timeframe. Our intention was to connect the present-day epics with their ancestors, but not in a comparative manner. That is why we asked a few scholars to examine the possible provenance of motifs and poetics, some kind of nuclei all the epic traditions could have started from. It is exciting to see that the analysis proves – for example in the case of the formulaic attributes *white* and *bright* and their transpositions – a very old origin common to traditions coming from regions extremely far from one another. It points to even deeper roots which could probably be found in the Indo-European substratum. It is the editors’ hope that this volume will offer a new way of thinking about old things and some answers to some of the questions, old and new.

***I BASIC CATEGORIES: SPACE AND
TIME***

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POETIC GROUNDS OF EPIC FORMULAE

Abstract: The study of oral formulae in the twentieth century had several phases. After the initial – very stimulating and influential – research by M. Parry and A. B. Lord, who focused on the technique of composing the poem and the mnemotechnic function of formulae, the focus at first shifted to the concept of *performance* (J. M. Foley), and then to the *mental text* (L. Honko), which introduced into research horizons social, ideological, psychological and mental conditions of improvisation, interaction between the singer and the audience, collective and individual factors of memorising, cultural representation, and the like. Although all the abovementioned aspects undoubtedly determine the structure of a specific variant, it should be kept in mind that formulae transcend concrete improvisations and connect different epic zones, different local traditions and different times. The formula precedes verbal improvisation both chronologically and logically. Therefore – before explaining the repeating of formulae by the needs and nature of improvisation (composition-in-performance) or the generating of formulae in specific variants by textualisation of mental text – we must explain the existence of the formula in the first place. This paper seeks to point out the complex system of factors that determine the genesis of formulae. Formulae are regarded as cultural codes, which combine elements from different spheres (the conceptualization of space, time, colour and so on, elements of rituals, customary norms, historical experience, life realities, ethics, etc.). Therefore, their structure is described in terms of *hidden knowledge*, *hidden complexity*, *frame semantics*, *the tip of the iceberg*, *compressed meanings*. Meanings “compressed” in the formulae are upgraded with new “income” in every new/concrete realisation (i.e. poem) and this is the area where aesthetics rivals poetics.

Keywords: oral formulae, oral epics, poetics, conceptualization of space and time, South Slavic tradition, folklore

Although the theory of formulae may be said broadly to go back to Antiquity (more securely it is linked to the rhetoric of the Neoplatonist Hermogenes; Mal'tsev 1989: 24), and although, in a narrower sense – as the study of specifics of oral poetry – it dates back at least to the first decades of the twentieth century (A. van Gennep, *La Question d'Homer*, Paris 1909), its founders

are with good reason considered to be M. Parry and A. Lord. Their work and papers connected homerology with living oral tradition, putting on a broader basis both the study of ancient epics and the study of oral folklore. However, the specified analytic position had its disadvantages. Contact with live oral performance focused the attention of researchers on the *technique* of composing the poem, whose importance has been made absolute at the cost of marginalising all other aspects of oral epics and oral formulae:

[...] it must have been for some good reason that the poet [...] kept to the formulas even when he [...] had to use some of them very frequently. What was this constraint? [...] The answer is not only the desire for an easy way to make verses, *but the complete need of it* [...] There is only one need of this sort which can even be suggested – the necessity of making verses by the spoken word [...] The necessity shows its force most clearly [...] in the simple numbers of formulas. (M. Parry; cf. Sale 1996: 379–380; italics mine)

Formulaity is, however, not just a feature of oral folklore, but of a whole range of arts, both linguistic and non-linguistic, which is a serious argument in favour of the thesis that the essence of formula does not lie in its mnemotechnic function – which, of course, cannot be denied, but which cannot be considered as a starting point of formula and formulaity:

Formulaity is not specific only to lyric poetry, nor even to folklore in general, but to the multitude of canonical systems of art, both literary and other (e.g. folklore painting and visual arts, medieval literature and iconography), where neither orality nor mnemotechnics can be spoken of. (Mal'tsev 1989: 18)¹

The other extreme was the reaction to the Parry-Lord positions which led to the expansion of studies that observed/considered formula only as a *means* of compositional technique and narrowed the field of research to the formal/mechanical and statistical aspects. The focus was shifted to the concept of *performance* (“from composition as the central element of the theory of oral poetry toward the notion of performance”, Bakker & Kahane 1997: 3) and *mental text*,² which introduced into the scope of research social, ideological,

¹ “Формульность является спецификой не только лирики, не только фольклора в целом, но целого ряда канонических художественных систем, как словесных, так и несловесных (например, народное изобразительное и прикладное искусство, средневековая литература и живопись), где ни о какой устности и хранении в памяти не может быть и речи.”

² “The last few years have seen a dramatic and gratifying upsurge of interest in the Homeric formula. This new interest has gradually come to focus on the real nature of the formula as a mental template in the mind of the oral poet, rather than on statistical aspects of ‘repetition’ found among phrases in the text” (Nagler 1967: 269).

psychological and mental conditions of improvisation, interaction between the singer and the audience, collective and individual factors of memorizing, cultural representation, and the like. In this case too – as in the studies by M. Perry, A. Lord and their “harder” followers – the fact was overlooked that the formula, both chronologically and logically, precedes verbal improvisation (because singers learn formulae before they use them in performance) and the constituting/structuring of a mental text (the latter being based upon already existing formulae). This further means that before we explain the repeating of formulae by the needs and nature of improvisation (composition-in-performance) or the generating of formulae in specific variants by textualization of mental text (L. Honko), we must first explain the existence of formula at all.

Lauri Honko criticized the “classical” approach to oral epics for putting texts that do not belong to the same segments of tradition on the same level:

The days are past when a scholar sought for a “master form” by combining elements from different singers of epics, sometimes from different areas, too. Such composite texts were in danger of gliding outside the local poetic system. Their connection to sung performance was lost or skewed.
(Honko 2000a: vii)

Yet, formulae do connect poems of various epic singers and texts that belong to different epic zones, different local traditions and different times (in Serbian/South Slavic tradition there are records from the late fifteenth century to the present day). If we all agree with L. Honko (and many other researchers of similar methodological orientation) that better insight into the meaning of specific variants cannot be established if we neglect the performative situation, and that the semantic potential of oral presentation exceeds the semantic potential of records,³ there still remains the fact that formulae (except the

³ “Yet the performance paradigm has made it perfectly clear that the oral performance is as medium totally different from the printed text. Its spectrum of expressive means is much wider than that of print, and if effectively utilizes contextual, allusive understanding of the verbal message, often supported by the invisible presence of traditions not expressed verbally but influencing the processing of meaning. What we have here, in fact, requires intersemiotic translation, i.e. ‘the transference of a message from one kind of symbolic system to another’ (Nida 1964)” (Honko 2000b: 13). L. Honko and theorists of similar provenance neglect, however, the fact that meaning is always established in individual consciousness (which automatically means that it is not something fixed, something that can be completely and accurately described). That fact, however, makes the distinction between the *text* and the *recorded performance* based on the scope of detected meaning – less based. The idea that all factors that influence an improvisation can be “collected” is especially problematic: “If we are able to gather information on all the factors which influence the performance, we may order our knowledge in a processual profile of the textualization of a particular story. In so

simplest types, such as adjective + noun) cannot even be detected on the basis of one performance (no matter how meticulously recorded and no matter how minutely described), or based on the corpus of a single singer. The existence and meaning of formulae can be discussed only in the much broader context of a local (epic) tradition.

Hence, if we want to explain the nature of the phenomenon, the origin, meaning and sense of formulae and their survival in an extremely long, often immeasurable period of time, despite variations in every new improvisation and the opportunities for singers to distort the canon (which they most certainly often did!), we must turn to poetics (broadly understood), which is what even some proponents of the idea of a mental text plead for:

Furthermore, it is an unfortunate fact that, despite many suggestions and some preliminary attempts, no coherent aesthetic theory has as yet emerged which would equip us to understand or appreciate the special nature of oral poetry as poetry. Unlike Parry himself, some students of the formula have tended to regard it as a “phrase type” or “metrical type”, without complicating the issue with meaningfulness or aesthetic value – a simplification which, as I shall try to show, throws the baby out with the bath water. (Nagler 1967: 273)

Although M. Nagler has not gone far in constituting a coherent aesthetic and poetic theory of oral epic poetry, this statement can certainly be the *credo* of any similar attempt. Insisting on meaningfulness and aesthetic value turns us back, however, to one important distinction made (without the pomp and echoes that follow Homeric studies, and in a language much less known than English) between *formula* and *formulaity*:⁴

doing we must critically assess – and fight against – such stereotypes as ‘one story’, ‘variant’ and ‘fixed form’. The story may be modulated in ways for which we possess no textual evidence. ‘Variant’ raises the question of inertia, continuity and invariant in oral poetry (what is the ‘thing’ that varies?); to avoid the problem we may try to use such terms as ‘telling’, ‘rendition or ‘performance’ instead of ‘variant’” (Honko 2000b: 16). One possible answer to the question “What varies?” the author gives in the sentence that precedes it – *the story* varies: “The *story* may be modulated in ways for which we possess no textual evidence” (Honko 2000b: 16). It is not possible to speak of inertia and continuity as of some “thing” that is transmitted from one performative situation to the other, because in that case we would have to argue that not even the same man ever improvises twice (which even Heraclitus knew, when he stated that a man can never step in *the same river twice*).

⁴ Albert Lord (2000: 47) also noticed that difference: “There’s nothing in the song that is not formulaic”. However, he is not terminologically (or logically) consistent, and in the first sentence that follows the one just quoted, “formulaic” starts to mean the same as “formula” by his definition: “Moreover, the lines and half lines that we

[...] the epic formula is a tool resulting from the “working” of formulaity within the framework of the secondary linguistic system of epic poetry; the relation between them is a generic one, formulaity being only one of the conditions necessary for creating formulas and not identical with them. (Detelić 1996a: 220)

Formulaity is not characteristic of epic language only, but of verbal communication in general (Vinogradov 1938: 5; cf. Kravar 1978), because it is “a paradigmatic element of every primary linguistic system” (Detelić 1996a: 220). Syntactic norms/structures inherent in language are a basis of formulaity even before epic modelling starts. Metric form is an additional, and the first, poetic factor of restrictions: “Oral verse created a syntax within a syntax: within it occurred a particular phraseologization, the fixing of a separate set of syntactic patterns” (Petković 1990: 201). Even A. Lord fell into the trap of not distinguishing between two levels of formulaity – linguistic and epic/poetic – singling out as formulae groups of words linked only by morpho-syntactic form (a *three-syllable noun in the dative* followed by the reflexive, for example):

djogatu se
junaku se (Lord 2000: 47)

In an attempt to draw a distinction between the two aforementioned types of formulaity, M. Detelić introduced the term “real formulae”, referring to the formulae generated by the epic system, and not by the language (and verse) itself:

[...] therefore it is necessary to discern between formulas coming from everyday speech (and necessarily going through changes while adjusting to metric-syntactic pattern of asymmetric decasyllabic verse) and the formulas as an important element of technique, style, and composition in traditional epic versemaking. (Detelić 1996a: 219)

To some extent (but not quite!) the distinction is compatible with the difference between formulae derived from the plot/sujet of the poem (imposed by the logic of narration/story development) and those generated from non-sujet and non-epic context. The latter can lead to a collision of layers of dif-

call ‘formulaic’ (because they follow the basic patterns of rhythm and syntax and have at least one word in the same position in the line in common with other lines or half lines) not only illustrate the patterns themselves but also show us examples of the systems of the poetry”.

⁵ “В системе русского языка слова, по большей части, функционируют не как произвольно и неожиданно сталкиваемые и сцепляемые компоненты речи, а занимая устойчивые места в традиционных формулах. Большинство людей говорит и пишет с помощью готовых формул, клише” (Vinogradov 1938: 121; cf. Mal'tsev 1989: 6).

ferent origins (sujet and non-sujet), from which appear situations recognized as paradoxes/oxy-morons (the “white throat” of a Black Arab; the attribution of an unfaithful wife as a “faithful one”, a burnt tower as “white”, and so on; for examples in Homer *cf.* Combellack 1965).

Although in the quotation above “technique, style, and composition in traditional epic versmaking” are especially accentuated, the generic system (of formulae) is predominantly based on the complex semantics whose origins are in the depths of folk memory, the type of culture and imperatives/norms of the genre. The “right formulae” are points/hubs that connect different genre systems and different levels/layers of epic tradition and tradition in general (Detelić 1996b: 104–106). They have a high semantic density and hold cultural information of the first degree (*cf.* Mal’tsev 1998: 6), which – by definition – cannot be transmitted directly. Therefore, formulae are elements that mediate basic social stratification, basic ethical and ritual-customary norms and the structures of thinking, as well as sublime experience of traditional communities. Repeatability is the most striking feature of formula, but repeatability, as G. Mal’tsev noticed, is not the essence of it:

We cannot agree with J. Hainsworth (and his school of thinking) that “the essence of a formula is its repetition”; repetition is only an outcome, a result of the formula’s “essence”, i.e. of the inner liability of the given representation, of the given meaning as a traditional idea.⁶ (Mal’tsev 1989: 43)

1. Space conceptualization

1.1. Semantization and structuring of spatial oppositions

Among three main categories of symbolic thinking (space, time and number) space is the only one that is perceived by senses. This fact has made spatial orientation a basic human orientation and set apart the mentioned category as a basis of conceptualizing:

- (1) time and number (which are non-perceptible categories)⁷ and
- (2) a series of social/cultural categories.

⁶ “Нельзя согласиться с положением Дж. Хайнсворта (и представляемой им школой) о том, что ‘сущность формулы в ее повторяемости’ (‘The essence of a formula is its repetition’); повторяемость – только следствие, результат ‘сущности’ формулы, т.е. внутренней обязательности данного представления, данного смысла как традиционной идеи.”

⁷ Time metaphors are mainly based upon spatial categories (*cf.* Lakoff & Johnson 1999: 139–161; Johnson 2007: 6–12), as well as the concept of number, which can be

Conceptualization of time by spatial determinants is, however, characteristic of human thinking as such and it is embedded into the very foundations of the linguistic and phraseological system. We speak of “*getting closer to Thanksgiving, approaching (or coming up on) the weekend, passing the deadline, arriving in a minute, leaving some unhappy event far behind, reaching Saturday, and being halfway through the month*” (Johnson 2007: 8).⁸ In oral epics it resulted in formulaic attribution of time (and some categories that imply time, such as the length of a particular condition or the duration of some action) – as “long” (Serb. “*dugo*”): “It was not for a long time” [“To vrijeme za *dugo* ne bilo”] (SM 5); “Sister Heike, stay miserable for a long time” [“Seko Hajke, *dugo* jedna bila!”] (SANU III, 50); “This promise – not for a long time” [“Ova vjera ne za *dugo* vr’jeme”] (MH II, 20); “It’s been long and time has passed, / And for a long time the *ban* stayed” [“*Dugo* bilo i vrijeme prodje, / I *zadugo* bane začamao”] (Vuk II, 44) and so on.

This aspect of formulaity – taken from the linguistic system – has to be differentiated from formulaity generated within the epic genre. Such is, for example, the formula in which the length of time that the hero was bed-ridden relates to the length/width of the bed in which he lay (space) (although in a particular case correlation is, to some extent, based on realities):

Brzo trči dvoru bijelome, Pa mi steri mekanu postelju, Ni dugačku, ni vrlo široku, Jer ti <i>dugo</i> bolovati ne ću. (Vuk III, 78: 235–238)	Run quickly to the white court, And make a soft bed for me, Neither long nor very wide, Because I will not ail for a long time.
--	--

illustrated by elementary arithmetic operations. If it is tasked to specify the sum of 7 and 5 or the difference between 7 and 5, it just means that one should start from 7 and count 5 steps *forward* or *backward*. Number 7 becomes the starting point of a new series and assumes the role of zero (cf. Cassirer III 1985: 219).

⁸ On the other hand, space is conceptualized by time determinants – hours and days. Here again we are not speaking about “true” epic formulae, but the formulae taken from linguistic/phraseological system: “How big is the field in front of Novin? / It is wide four hours [of walking/riding], / It is long twelve hours [of walking/riding], / And it is all covered by Vlachs” [Koliko je polje pod Novinom, / U širinu četiri sahata, / U duljinu dvanaest sahata, / Sve je vlaški tabor pritisnuo] (Vuk III, 33:300–303). “When Ivo Crnojević decided to marry / He requested a girl from afar / Three days walking through the flat fields / Four days walking over the black mountains / One month sailing over the grey sea / From that ban of a maritime state” [Kad se ženi Crnojević Ivo / daleko je prosio djevojku / tri dni hoda priko ravna polja / četir’ danah priko crne gore / misec danah priko sinja mora / u onoga bana primorskoga] (ER 188).

Steri meni mekanu ložnicu, Ne steri je dugu ni široku, Jer ti neću dugo bolovati. (Rajković, p. 242)		Make me a soft chamber, ⁹ Make it neither long nor wide, Because I will not ail for a long time.
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More often it is, however activated tendency of mythic thinking to stratify physical space and make it heterogeneous by a specific type of semantization.¹⁰ Not a single pair of spatial relations stayed immune to this action of mythic thinking: “near” became “our”, “far” – “strange”, “in front of” – “life”, “behind” – “death”;¹¹ “right” and “left” became positively or negatively connotated in local variants of traditional culture. Although all previously mentioned pairs are multiply semantized (pure : impure, human : inhumane/demonic, etc.), the opposition *up* : *down* is by far the most generatively productive. Reason for that could be found in the fact that this opposition, among other things, constitutes the vertical (Axis Mundi), which is – due to gravity and human perception – favoured direction (in vacuum or mathematical space there are neither preferred directions, nor spatial categories like *up* : *down*, *left* : *right*, *in front of* : *behind*, etc.). Although polymorphic (phytomorphic/tree, anthropomorphic/Odin/Christ/Virgin Mary, pole/stick/Axial rod, ladders, etc.), this spatial axis is universal in all traditional cultures. In South Slavic oral epics this characteristic of spatial cognition generated an entire system of formulae:

- | | | |
|--|--|---|
| 1) <i>Dolje</i> leže, <i>gore</i> ne ustade.
(Vuk II, 74:121) | | [He lay <i>down</i> , and did not get <i>up</i> again.] |
| <i>Dolje</i> pade, <i>gore</i> ne ustade.
(Vuk III, 88:149) | | [He fell <i>down</i> , and did not get <i>up</i> again.] |
| <i>Dolje</i> pade, više ne ustade.
(Vuk VI, 10:189) | | [He fell <i>down</i> , and never got <i>up</i> again.] |
| (up/vertical = life : down/horizontal = death); | | |
| 2) Vodi konje u <i>donje</i> podrumе,
A delije na <i>gornje</i> čardake.
(MH IX, 14) | | [He takes horses to the cellars <i>bellow</i> ,
And the heroes to the <i>upper</i> tower.] |

⁹ *Ložnica* (chamber) is not quite the same as *postelja* (bed), but it also can be soft: in the houses of the Muslim upper class, there were no beds in the western style. It was more like a Japanese concept of space where bedclothes were kept in wardrobes during the day, and pulled out for the night. In that sense, a chamber can be soft if necessary.

¹⁰ Mythic thinking tends to alter differences of all sort into the spatial differences, and to present them directly in that (spatial) form (cf. Cassirer II 1985: 101).

¹¹ In folk legends and folk beliefs some demonic beings have been presented with no back (Radenković 2008: 103). Prohibition of looking back is based on the same symbolic structure: space behind belongs to the demons, and looking back can open a channel between the world of the dead and the world of the living.

Konje vodi <i>dolje u podrum</i> , A Ivana <i>gore u čardake</i> . (SANU III, 27)	[He takes horses <i>down</i> to the cellars, And Ivan <i>up</i> to the tower.]
Konje vodi u <i>ahare donje</i> , Bega vodi na <i>gornje čardake</i> . (Vuk II, 75) (cf. Vuk II 92; MX I, 66)	[He takes horses to the cellars <i>bellow</i> , He takes Bey to the <i>upper</i> tower.]

(down/bellow = inhuman/animal : up/upper = human/socialized)

- 3) Ono su ti *pod kamenom guje* (Vuk III, 24:304, 314)
Ljuta, brate, *pod kamenom guja* (Vuk III, 24:380)
Kako ljuta *guja pod kamenom* (Vuk IV, 33:224)
Kao ljuta *guja pod kamenu* (Vuk VI, 67:326)
Ali tuži ko *pod kamenom guja* (KH III, 4:1573)
i šarena *pod kamenom guja* (KH III, 6:148)
kako ljute *zmije pod kamenom* (SM 37:146)

(All quotes refer to the “snake[s] *under* the stone”, mainly through comparison.)

In the last examples, the bottom of the Cosmic Axis (“*under* the stone”) is symbolically marked by the creature that is steadily related to it – snake/serpent/adder.¹² Complete Vertical axis is established in the Slavic antithesis that involves the same formula (down = snake : up¹³ = fairy [Serb. “vila”]):

Bože mili: čuda velikoga! Što procvilje u Banjane gornje? Da l' je vila, da li guja ljuta? Da je <i>vila</i> , na <i>više</i> bi bila, Da je <i>guja</i> , <i>pod kamen</i> bi bila; Nit' je vila, niti guja ljuta, Već to cvili Perović-Batriću U rukama Ćorović-Osmana. (Vuk IV, 1:1–8; cf. Vuk VI, 78:1–8)	Dear God, what a great wonder! What is whining in Upper Banjane? Is it a fairy, or a bitter snake? If it were a <i>fairy</i> , she'd be <i>up</i> in the sky, If it were a <i>snake</i> , it'd be <i>under</i> the rock; It's neither a fairy nor a bitter snake, But it's Perović Batrić whining In the hands of Ćorović Osman.
Što procvili u Zadru kamenu U tavnici mlad' zadarskog bana? Al je vila, al je zmija ljuta? Nit je vila, nit je zmija ljuta.	What is whining in the stony Zadar In the dungeon of Zadar's young ban? Is it a fairy, or a bitter snake? It's neither a fairy nor a bitter snake.

¹² Snakes are really associated with stones and rocks (as their habitats), but not exclusively. It is indicative, however, that nowhere in the corpus an adder is positioned *on* a stone/rock, but always *under* it (there is just one exception: “Like angry [dangerous] snakes *in* the rock” [“Kao ljute u kamenu guje”]; Vuk II, 70:44).

¹³ Forest/mountain [Serb. *gora/planina*] figures as a point away from house/court/city [Serb. *kuća/dvor/grad*] both on horizontal and vertical levels: as far and as high.

Da je <i>vila</i> , u gori bi bila,	If it were a <i>fairy</i> , she'd be in the <i>forest</i> ,
Da je <i>zmija</i> , u <i>stini</i> bi bila,	If it were a <i>snake</i> , it'd be in the <i>rocks</i> ,
Već to <i>cvile</i> sužnji u tamnici.	It's the whining of captives in the <i>dungeon</i> .
(MH III, 23:1–7; cf. Vuk VIII, 35:1–6)	

In these examples the fairy (as a winged creature) figures instead of a bird – which in mythology and folklore is universally and consistently connected to the top of the Axis Mundi (whether this Axis is imagined as the World Tree, Caduceus, Uraeon/Uraeus or some similar model; cf. Delić 2012). Although the fairy is nowhere in South Slavic folklore described as a bird,¹⁴ in another type of (introductory) formulae she alternates with it. It is a formula in which a “voice” (news about an event) reaches the addressed person from a great distance, or from the future. In these cases, the mediators are:

- (1) a bird, as in Bulgarian folklore (Blg. “pile [пиле]”):

Пилѣ пѣе всрѣдѣ морѣ,	The bird sings in the middle of the see,
каино пѣе, дума дума:	As it sings, it speaks:
по турци щѣ мор да станѣ,	The sea will retreat for the Turks,
по християнѣ плѣн щѣ плѣни.	And they will plunder the Christians.
(SbNU 34, p. 17)	

- (2) *birds* – two black ravens (Serb. “dva vrana gavrana”), or –

(3) a *fairy* (it is particularly significant that it is only in this type of formulae that the fairy produces/emits a sound like the falcon [Serb. “klikatī”]).¹⁵

¹⁴ Fairies are typically imagined as young, beautiful, slender girls with long golden hair, sometimes also with animal attributes (goat, donkey, horse, cow's feet, etc.) (Sl. M: 80). Some of them are called “oblakinja” (from Serb. “obлак” – cloud); they have the power to influence the rain (“I'm neither crazy, nor too wise, / Nor a fairy to lead the clouds” [Serb. “Nit' sam luda, nit' odviše mudra, / Nit' sam vila, da zbijam oblake”]; Vuk I, 599) and some sort of flying equipment – “krila” (wings) and “okrilje” (the word derived from the word *krila*, but it is not known what it is exactly or how it looks like). Although called “wings”, they are not parts of the body: they can be taken off or given as a present (cf. MH I, 75:15–30). In one type of sujet (group of poems/variants), the hero has to steal the fairy's wings before he can marry her. In Bulgarian folklore fairies sometimes wear dresses decorated with bird feathers (Sl. M: 80), which may also be a relic of the ornitomorphic image of fairies.

¹⁵ In oral epics, this kind of announcing is transferred to the hero too [Serb. “Kliče Stojan tanko glasovito”, “Kliče Iva kroz lug popevati”, “Kliče Nikac grlom bijelijem”, etc., with meaning: “Stojan/Iva/Nikac... starts to sing”], which correlates with their attribution [Serb. “Ban udade sestricu Jelicu ... Za sokola Brđjanina Pavla”, “Strahinbane, ti sokole srpski”, “Jo Kaica, moj sokole sivi”, etc.; in these examples heroes are metaphorically named as *falcons*].

In all cases, the “voice” [news] is bad – it reports about the accident that already happened or foretells an accident that will happen soon – which posits messengers between life and death:

GAVRAN GLASONOŠA

Polećela dva vrana gavrana,
Sa Mišara polja širokoga
A od Šapca grada bijeloga,
Krvavijeh kljuna do očiju,
I krvavih nogu do koljena.
(Vuk IV, 30:1–5)

Polećela dva vrana gavrana.
(Vuk III, 88:1; Vuk IV, 45:1; Vuk IX, 25:4; similar in: Vuk VI, 54:59; Vuk VII, 56:1; Vuk VIII, 2:1; SANU IV, 23:1; Vuk VI, 54:1; Vuk IV, 2:1; 26:1; SANU III, 19:1; Vuk VIII, 28:1; Vuk VIII, 65:1; Vuk IX, 6:63; MH VIII, 18:13, 26; SANU III, 52:10; SM 24:1; Vuk IV, 59:1–2; Vuk II, 45:119–120; Vuk II, 48:57–58)

KLIKOVANJE VILE

Kliče vila s Urvine planine,
Te doziva Kraljevića Marka:
“Pobratime, Kraljeviću Marko!
Znadeš, brate, što ti konj posrće?
Žali Šarac tebe gospodara,
Jer ćete se brzo rastanuti.”
(Vuk II, 74:19–24)

Kliče vila prije jarkog sunca.
(Vuk IV, 34:98; similar in: Vuk IV, 43:4; Vuk VI, 67:80; Vuk VIII, 42:3; Vuk IX, 26:671; 27:1; SM 8:1; Vuk IV, 21:1; Vuk VIII, 23:49; 54:1; Vuk IV, 49:1; Vuk VIII, 17:73; 47:1; Vuk IX, 4:1; KH II, 72:1; MH IX, 19:1; SM 49:1; Vuk IX, 2:135; EH 12:165; SANU IV, 44:1; SM 134:13; SM 174:1; Vuk II, 95:3; Vuk IV, 31:430; Vuk IV, 56:142; Vuk VIII, 52:1; SANU IV, 37:1; KH II, 48:1; MH I, 68:292; SM 27:55; SM 134:3)

RAVEN THE NEWS-BEARER

Flying there come two coal-black ravens,
From afar, from the plain of Mišar
From the white fortress of Šabac,
Bloody are their beaks to the very eyes,
Bloody are their claws to the very knees.¹⁶

Flying there come two coal-black ravens.

FAIRY'S CRY

A fairy cries from Urvina mountain,
And she calls Marko the Prince:
“My blood-brother, oh, Prince Marko!
Do you know, brother, why your horse stumbles?
He mourns you, his master,
Because you will be parting soon.”

A fairy cries before the rising sun.

¹⁶ Translated from Serbian by John Matthias and Vladeta Vuckovic. (http://www.kosovo.net/history/battle_of_kosovo.html; 19/7/2013).

Although ravens could be incorporated in this formula on the basis of realities – as the last participants in battles (they were scavengers that fell on the bodies of dead warriors, which made them associated with the god of death, and – also – they could easily be taught to talk) – the very jagged mythological background indicates a more complex and deeper origin of the formula. However, even if we establish a parallel with:

(1) Odin's two birds (ravens Huginn and Muninn [Thought and Memory]), which leave Odin at dawn and fly around the world to bring him news of what is happening (Loma 2003: 121), or –

(2) shamanic practice (North Eurasia) “in which the raven plays such an important role of pre-shaman, cult hero and demiurge” (Loma 2003: 125), or –

(3) Mesopotamian myth of the Great Flood, where the raven that does not return (analogous to the biblical dove) indicates the end of the flood (Loma 2003: 110) – there still remains the fact that the archetype of mediation is steadily associated with this bird, and that it goes beyond specific myths and specific folklore traditions. In this respect, the “report of ravens” (the pattern that G. Gesemann and A. Schmaus named “raven the news-bearer”; Geze-man 2002 [1926], Šmaus 1937) is not different from the “fairy's cry/prophecy” [Serb. “klikovanje vile”].

Becoming tied to underlying cultural codes – such as the basic structure of spatial axis – the archaic image of a fairy–bird in the epic formula becomes ossified, deformed and barely recognizable. Out of this formula, and in other folk genres, this notion is practically forgotten and almost completely suppressed by other layers of tradition. Extremely rare and hardly noticeable signals confirm our findings. One of such comes from a ritual poem the purpose of which is to call down rain (Serb. “dodolske pesme”), where the ritual situation has contributed to its conservation. In that lyric poem the fairy is positioned on the top of the fir, high “up to the sky”, as well as a bird on the top of the World Tree in mythologies and their folklore derivatives:

<p><i>Nasred sela vita jela, Oj dodo, oj dodole! Vita jela čak do neba. Na vr' jela b'jela vila, U krilu joj ogledalo; Okreće ga, prevrće ga. Pevrnu se vedro nebo I udari rosna kiša. Oj dodo, oj dodole! (AnL 132)</i></p>	<p>In the middle of the village – a thin fir, Oh, dodo, oh, dodole! A thin fir up to the sky. On the top of the fir – a white fairy, With a mirror in her lap; She's turning it over and over. The clear sky turns over And a dewy rain sets in. Oh, dodo, oh, dodole!</p>
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1.2. Segmentation and semantisation of physical space

Different segments of physical space carry the same system of connotations as the aforementioned spatial relations (up : down, left : right, in front of : behind, etc.). Among them, as particularly accentuated, stand out *house/tower/court* and *city* (as closed, safe human spaces), on one hand, and *mountain, water* (sea, lake) and *road* (as open, demonic/chthonic, dangerous locations), on the other (Detelić 1992). The logic of systemic oppositions determined – among other things – formulaic epic attribution: mountain (forest) became *black*, sea – *grey*, tower/court and city – *white* (Detelić & Ilić 2006; Detelić & Delić 2013).¹⁷ Similarly, the typical epic antagonist is the Black Arab (from the Turkish perspective: Black George [Serb. Karadjordje, Turkish “kara” = black]), while the attribution of the hero¹⁸ inclines toward the opposite semantic field: his throat and arms are formulaically described as *white* (Serb. “*belo grlo*”, “*bele ruke*”), his cheek – as *bright* (Serb. “*svetli obraz*”), his weapons – as *shiny* (Serb. “*svijetlo oružje*”) (Detelić & Delić 2013).

The described segmentation of space has generated a whole range of formulae based upon characteristics of chthonic zones and taboos related to them. Correlation *voice = human : silence = inhuman* generated the formula “singing through the mountain”, which figures as a typical sign of violating the chthonic space. In entire circles of variants (different models of sujet/story/plot), singing through a mountain initiates a conflict between hero and demon (fairy) or some isomorphic figure (rebel/rebels [Serb. “*hajduk*”/“*hajduci*”] / mountain wolfs [Serb. “*gorski vući*”). This formula usually includes the motif of an extraordinary/destructive power of the voice, inherited from mythic layers.¹⁹ The origin

¹⁷ Origins of attribution are not the same (*white city* [Serb. “*beli grad*”] carries the traces of sacredness, as well as *white church* [Serb. “*bela crkva*”], for example), nor is the symbolic of colours monolithic and uncontroversial (both *white* and *black* can carry different, mutually contradictory symbolic values); cf. Detelić & Ilić 2006; with a bibliography.

¹⁸ This refers not (only) to the character that is perceived as “our” from the author’s position (perspective of a singer), but to the hero as an eponym of a genre, with the following structural elements: parts of the body, clothes, horse, weapon (as private/personal), and family, court/tower and city (as public). Therefore, the second type of attribution – imposed by the rules and the imperatives of a heroic genre – sets apart formulaic description of body parts, weapons and duels as *heroic* (cf. Detelić 2008).

¹⁹ The symbolic aspect of that voice partly overlaps with the notion of the (cosmic) vertical: “The strength of the voice is usually expressed through two elements: the leaves fall from the trees (= up – down) and the grass flies up from the ground (= down – up), creating a symbolic axis Heaven – Earth” (Radenković 1998: 240).

of the motif (in narrative terms) – as supposed by Lj. Radenković – could be found in the myth of Thunder God and his family (cf. Sudnik & Tsivian 1980: 242; Radenković 1988):

<p>Kad ugleda mlada Andjelija, Zapiva mu grlom debelijem. Kako piva, kuja je rodila! <i>S gorice je lišće poletilo</i> <i>Po planini trava pokleknula.</i> To začuo Malen harambaša, Pijuć vino s trideset hajduka. (MH VIII, 16:24–30)</p> <p>Като окне Елена невеста на гората шумки отпаднале, по полето трева повейнала, у извори вода пресъхнала. Дочул я е Лалош из горица. (SbNU 53, no. 532, p. 647)</p>	<p>When young Andjelija saw it, She started to sing in a loud voice. How does she sing! Bitch gave her birth! <i>The leaves flew from the trees</i> <i>The grass flattened in the mountain.</i> Harambasha Malen heard it, while drinking wine with his thirty hajduks.</p> <p>As Elena the bride began to sing <i>The leaves fell from the trees,</i> <i>The grass withered in the mountain,</i> <i>The springs dried up.</i> Laloš from the mountain heard it.</p>
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Similarly, the correlation between the oppositions *pure dead* : *impure dead* and *graveyard* (consecrated space) : *mountain* (chthonic space) generated a very complex formula – “burial in the mountain”, which sublimated a number of key elements of the cult of the dead. Those who die in an impure place – even if it is through no fault of their own – assume the characteristics of the space itself and have to be buried where they died (Detelić 1996b: 99). Therefore, such persons are not carried to the cemetery. The grave is dug on the spot (in the mountain or some other impure place – by the road, near the crossroads and the like), and arranged in a way that incorporates elements of ritual/cult (water, appropriate plants, funeral gifts – small coins and gold coins [Serb. “groši i dukati”], etc.; cf. Detelić 2008; Detelić 2013). This case shows as evident the distinctive tendency of mythical thinking toward tautology – i.e. multiplication and accumulation of details from the same semantic field:

- (1) *mountain* is a liminal space (entrance to the other world);
- (2) *water* is “strong” border (between the worlds of the living and the dead);
- (3) *tree* and *liana* (grapevine, rose) as mediators between the upper and nether worlds (analogous to the world of the living and the world of the dead);
- (4) *sitting in the forest* – as an absence of movement – is a metaphor for death.

THE GRAVE OF LJEPOSAVA,
THE BRIDE OF MILIĆ THE STANDARD-BEARER
(in the mountain)

<p>Sastaše se kićeni svatovi, Sabljama joj sanduk satesaše, Nadžacima raku iskopaše, Saraniše lijepu djevojku Otkuda se jasno sunce radja; Posuše je grošim' i dukatim'; Čelo glave vodu izvedoše, Okolo vode klupe pogradiše, Posadiše ružu s obje strane: Ko j' umoran, neka se odmara; Ko je mladjan, nek se kiti cv'jećem; Ko je žedan, neka vodu pije Za dušicu lijepe djevojke. (Vuk III, 78:189–201)</p>	<p>The wedding guests came together, They made her casket with sabres, They dug her grave with hatchets, They buried the beautiful girl Where the bright sun rises; They threw groats and ducats on her; They brought water to the head of the grave, And made benches around the water, And planted a rose on either side: For him who is tired – to get rest; Who is young – to spruce himself with flowers; Who is thirsty – to drink water For the soul of the beautiful girl.</p>
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THE GRAVE OF IVAN SENJANIN'S NEPHEW
(by the road)

<p>Lepo ga je uja saranio, Javor-sanduk lep mu satesao, Šaren sanduk k'o šareno jaje S leve strane te šarene grane, S desne strane sitne knjige male. Jošt na lepšem mestu ukopa ga, Raku kopa kraj drumu careva, Okolo groba stole pometao, Čelo glave ružu usadio, A do nogu jelu usadio. Do te jele bunar iskopao I za jelu dobra konja svez'o: Koji prodje tud drumom carevim Ko j' umoran, neka otpočine, Ko je mladjan, pa je za kićenje, Nek' se kiti ružicom rumenom, A koga je obrvala žećca, Bunar ima, nek' utoli žećcu, Ko je junak vredan za konjica, Nek' ga dreši, pa nek drumom jezdi Sve za zdravlje Ive Senjanina I za dušu nejaka nećaka. (SANU III, 40:93–114)</p>	<p>His uncle buried him nicely, He made him a maple-wood casket, Colourful casket like a colourful egg On the left side – those colourful branches, On the right side – tiny little letters. He buried him in an even nicer place, He dug the pit by the emperor's road, Around the grave he put tables, And planted a rose at the head of the grave, And a fir at his feet. By this fir – he dug a well And to the fir he tied a good horse: For him who passes by the emperor's road Who is tired – to get rest, Who is young and fit for bedecking, Let him bedight with the red rose, And who is overwhelmed by thirst, There's the well – to quench his thirst, Who is a hero worthy of a horse, Let him untie it, and ride along the road All for the health of Ivan Senjanin And for the soul of the young nephew.</p>
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In this case the epic is indifferent not only to the sex of the diseased (male/female), but also to the formal (confessional) differences between the Orthodox and Catholic funeral rites. The graves of both Christians and Muslims are treated in an analogous way:

THE GRAVE OF AHMED THE STANDARD-BEARER
AND BEJZA FROM VARAD
(in the field)

<p>Otalen se Turci povratili, Mrtvu oni Bejzu ponesoše. Kad su sišli u polje kaniško Do sokola Ahmed-bajraktara, Tu su konje dobre razjahali, A Ahmedu kuću načinili I kod njega Bejzi Varatkinji. Više bajre turbe načinili, Oko njega bašču ogradili, A po bašči voće posadili, A u bašču vodu navratili, Oko vode klupe pogradili, Kraj turbeta džadu načinili: Ko je žedan, neka vode pije, Ko je gladan, neka voće jide, Ko je susto, neka otpočine, A spominje Ahmed-bajraktara I divojku Bejzu Varatkinju. (MH IV, 44:430–447)</p>	<p>The Turks returned from there, And took dead Bejza with them. When they reached the field of Kaniža And the falcon, Ahmed the standard-bearer, They dismounted their good horses, And made a house for Ahmed And near him one for Bejza from Varad. They made a <i>türbe</i>²⁰ above the standard-bearer, Enclosed the garden around it, And planted fruit trees in the garden, And brought water to the garden, They made benches around the water, And a road by the <i>türbe</i>: Who is thirsty – to drink water, Who is hungry – to eat fruits, Who is tired – to get rest, And to mention Ahmed the standard-bearer And Bejza the girl from Varad.</p>
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2. Conceptualization of time

Unlike space, time does not have the “character of being” (*cf.* Cassirer 1985 III: 144) and, as noted above, cannot be perceived by senses. Therefore, the language itself is forced (before the epic modelling even starts) to denote temporal dimensions and relations by spatial determinants (*cf.* the examples in section 1.1). Even the exact sciences have not been able to avoid this type of figurative representation: time is imagined as an infinite *line*, as a *spiral* or *circle*, or – in non-standard topologies of time – as a *ray* (*half-line*) without beginning or end, as a *line segment*, or as a *branching* time (*cf.* Arsenijević 2003: 59–73). In folklore, time is predominantly conceptualized through cosmic and biologi-

²⁰ Turbe is a Muslim tomb similar to a chapel or a mausoleum, usually built for noblemen.

cal rhythms, which are perceived as fundamental. As the categories of physical space are defined in relation to the human body in a gravitational field,²¹ the experience of time flow is mediated through phases of human life, as they are biologically and socially defined and segmented. Hence, oral formulae are often associated with key rites of passage (birth, marriage, death) or daily and annual cycles. The first mentioned can be found in different positions in the text – initial (like in the *bugarštica*²² about the death of Vuk Grgureviċ Brankoviċ, written down in the mid-seventeenth century) or final (like in a Macedonian lyric poem):

INITIAL POSITION

Što mi graka postoja u gradu u Kupjenomu,
 Kupjenomu gradu,
 Ali mi se djetić ženi, ali mlado ĉedo krsti?
 Ah, ni mi se djetić ženi, niti mlado ĉedo krsti
 Za Boga da vam sam,
 Nego mi se Vuk despot s grešnom dušom razdjeljuje.
 (Pantiċ 2002: 75)

What’s that noise in the town of Kupjenovo,
 The town of Kupjenovo,
 Is it a young man *getting married*, or *a child being baptized*?
 Oh, neither is a young man getting married, nor a child baptized
 For God’s sake,
 But Despot Vuk is *parting with his sinful soul* (= dies).²³

²¹ In traditional societies space was even measured by parts of the body – foot, span, cubit, etc.

²² *Bugarštica* is a special type of oral poem, sung in long verses (15 or 16 syllables), mostly in urban areas. They were mainly recorded in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries on the Adriatic coast.

²³ Vuk Grgureviċ Brankoviċ – in oral epics known also as Vuk the Fiery Dragon [Serb. “Zmaj Ognjeni Vuk”; the name “Vuk” means “wolf”] – was a member of the Brankoviċ family “of Srem” [Serb. “sremski Brankoviċi”] and a famous fighter against the Ottomans. They were the last medieval rulers of Serbia before it was finally conquered by the Ottomans after the fall of Smederevo in 1459.

FINAL POSITION

<p>Ми го дочу крива лоза винена: – Що се фалиш, трендафилу окапнику!</p> <p>Јас ке родам многу грозбе в година, ке оженам многу млади юнаци, ке омъжам многу млади девојки, ке закопам триста стари старици, ке си крџтам триста луди дечина. (Miladinovci 21)</p>	<p>Curved grapevine has heard it: “Why do you boast, oh rose on the window!</p> <p>I’ll bear a lot of grapes this year, I will <i>marry</i> many young heroes, I will <i>marry</i> many young girls, I will <i>bury</i> three hundred old elders, I will <i>baptize</i> three hundred crazy kids.”</p>
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The same formulaic nucleus is identified in a group of poems in which three kings/nobles of another religion or nation invite the hero to baptism (= birth), to wedding (= marriage), or to war (= death). This formula is as a rule in the initial position:

<p>Ali Marku tri knjige dodjoše: Jedna knjiga od Stambola grada, Od onoga cara Pojazeta; Druga knjiga od Budima grada, Od onoga kralja Budimskoga; Treća knjiga od Sibirja grada, Od vojvode Sibirjanin-Janka. Koja knjiga od Stambola grada, Car ga u njoj <i>na vojsku poziva</i>, Na Arapsku ljutu pokrajinu; Koja knjiga od Budima grada, Kralj ga u njoj <i>u svatove zove</i>, U svatove na kumstvo vjenčano, Da ga vjenča s gospodjom kraljicom; Koja knjiga od Sibirja grada, Janko u njoj na kumstvo zaziva, <i>Da mu krsti dva nejaka sina</i>. (Vuk II, 62:3–19)</p>	<p>Three letters came to Marko: One letter – from the city of Istanbul, From that emperor Bayezid; The second one – from the city of Buda, From that king of Buda; The third one – from the city of Sibiu, From Captain Janos of Sibiu. In the letter from the city of Istanbul, The emperor invites him to join the <i>army</i>, In the bitter province of Arabia; In the letter from the city of Buda, The king invites him to the <i>wedding</i>, To be his best man, To marry the king to the queen; In the letter from the city of Sibirj, Janko asks him to be the godfather, To <i>baptize</i> his two young sons.</p>
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In traditional cultures, the daily cycle was measured primarily by the motion of celestial bodies (planets, Moon, Sun). In many ancient religions, and in South Slavic folklore, a key role was played by Venus [Serb. “Danica”, both a female name and the name for the morning star, daystar]. It assumed this role probably because of the correlation between its movement and the sunrise/sunset, which generated a system of formulae, mainly introductory, both in lyric and in epic poetry:

LYRICS

<p>Falila se <i>Danica zvijezda</i> Da je prose troji prosioци: Jedni prose za žareno sunce, Drugi prose za sjajna mjeseca, Treći prose za sedam vlašića. [...]</p> <p>Al' govori žareno sunašce: "Podji za me, Danice zvijezdo! Svu noćicu za sunašcem ajde, A u danu pred sunašcem ajde." (Rajković 185)</p> <p><i>Jarko sunce ide na konake,</i> <i>Pred njim ide Danica zvjezdica,</i> Pa je njemu tiho govorila: "Jarko sunce, jesi l' s' umorilo?" (Ristić 11)</p>	<p>The Morning Star bragged That three suitors ask her hand in marriage: The first asks her for the bright Sun, The second asks her for the shiny Moon, The third asks her for the seven Pleiades.²⁴ [...]</p> <p>And the bright Sun says: "Marry me, the Morning Star! All night long you'll follow the Sun, All day long – go in front of the Sun."</p> <p>Bright Sun goes to its residence (=to sleep), The Morning Star goes ahead of him, And she quietly speaks to it: "Bright Sun, are you tired?"</p>
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EPICS

<p>Kad <i>Danica</i> na istok izadje, Mesec jasan nad zaodom beše, Milošu obadva dodjoše, Pak Milošu govorit' počеше. (SANU II, 30:1425-1428)</p> <p>Još zorica ne zabijelila, Ni <i>danica</i> pomolila lica, I od dana ni spomena nema, Dok poklikta sa Javora vila. (Vuk IV, 38:1-4; cf.: Vuk II, 95; Vuk III, 10, 39, 47; Vuk IV, 38, 43, 46; Vuk VIII, 42; KH I, 25; KH II, 43, 57; KH III, 8, 10; MH II, 45; MH VIII, 6; SANU II, 31; SM 11, 134)</p> <p>Kad u jutru zora zab'jeljela, I <i>danica</i> pero pomolila. (KH I, 2; cf.: KH II, 50; MH IV, 50)</p> <p>Još zorica ne zabijelila, ni <i>Danica</i> pomolila krilca. (SM 85)</p>	<p>When the Morning Star rose in the east, Clear Moon was setting down, Both [heroes] came to Miloš, And began to talk to Miloš.</p> <p>The dawn has not broken yet, Nor has the Morning Star showed her face, And there's still no sign of daylight, But the fairy cries from Javor mountain.</p> <p>When the dawn broke in the morning, And the Morning Star showed her feather.</p> <p>The dawn has not broken yet, Nor has the Morning Star showed her wings.</p>
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²⁴ In Serbian, the nouns Sun (neutrum), Moon and Pleiades [Serb. "Vlašići"] are masculine nouns, so they can marry the "morning star" *Danica* (Venus), which is a feminine noun.

Such position in oral formulae and such importance in time conceptualization leads to the conclusion that Danica, the Morning Star (Venus) could be a folklore counterpart of the primordial deity of Time, which in ancient myths and philosophy precedes cosmogony (cf. Šćepanović 2012: 19–25 with relevant bibliography). This symbolic and ontological dimension, inherited from the most ancient cultural layers, could explain quite stable figuring of the “star” Danica in the initial oral formulae:

EPICS

Mjesec kara zvijezdu danicu: “Dje si bila, zvijezdo danice? Dje si bila, dje si dangubila? Dangubila tri bijela dana?” Danica se njemu odgovara: “Ja sam bila, ja sam dangubila Više b’jela grada Bijograda, Gledajući čuda velikoga, Dje dijele braća očevinu, Jakšić Dmitar i Jakšić Bogdane.” (Vuk II, 98:1–10)	The Moon scolds the Morning Star: “Where’ve you been, Morning Star? Where’ve you been, wasting your time? Wasting your time for three white days?” The Morning Star replies: “I’ve been, I’ve wasted my time Above the white city of Bijograd, Watching a great wonder, Brothers dividing their patrimony, Jakšić Dmitar and Jakšić Bogdan.”
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LYRICS

Sjajna zv’jezdo, dje si sinoć sjala? “Ja sam sjala više Biograda, Osvitala više Carigrada, Te gledala šta se tamo radi.” (Bašić 94)	Shiny star, where did you shine last night? “I shined above Biograd, Rose above Constantinople, And watched what’s happening there.”
Dve se zvezde na nebu skaraše, Preodnica i zvezda Danica. Preodnica Danici besedi: “Oj Danice, lena ležavkinjo, Ti preleža od večer’ do sveta, Ja obidjo’ zemlju i gradove.” (SANU I, 275)	The two stars quarreled in the sky, The Forerunner and the Morning Star. The Forerunner tells to the Morning Star: “Oh Morning Star, lazy slacker, You were lying from evening to morning, While I circled the country and the cities.”

The aforementioned ancient philosophical concept (time as primordial deity which precedes cosmogony) is based upon the distinction between mythical time (which is an absolute past) and historical time (within which each item points to another that lies further behind, so recourse to the past becomes *regressus in infinitum*; cf. Cassirer II 1985: 112). Mythical past – as the time of the “origin” of things both natural and cultural – is replicated in ritual situations and intervals that carry the quality of mythic/holy time through the logic of a “beginning”. Like the mythical experience of space and its con-

ceptualization in traditional cultures, mythical perception of time separates homogeneous physical continuum and validates its segments differently. As G. Mal'tsev showed in a broad comparative context, it highlights *early morning/dawn* as the densest and the most productive formulaic nucleus:

In the daily cycle, the “dawn”, the appearance of the sun – that is the time of the “beginning”, the time of birth and of rebirth, the time associated with destiny. The magic of sunrise is caused by these notions. As every “beginning”, the morning is sacralized and mythologized [...] It is on the morning – the beginning – that depends the development, the destiny of the coming day. (Mal'tsev 1989: 79–80)²⁵

The given complex of notions (“magic of the morning”) and the given logic of thinking founded one of the most widespread oral formulae. It has many stylizations (*cf.* tables below), occurs in a broad cultural areal (Panslavic context) and in a wide range of genres:

(1) in proverbs with the meaning “The *early* bird catches the worm” [Serb. “Ko *rano rani* – dve sreće grabi”; “Who gets up *early* – doubles his luck”], [Rus. “Кто *рано* встает, тому бог подает”, “Who gets up *early* – God gives him luck/goods”]

(2) lyric poems (especially ritual)

(3) epic poems

(4) phrases (such as “Good *morning!*”)

(5) legends/narratives, etc.

The formula shows a slightly higher lexical fixation in the initial position, but not a higher frequency, because every change or the beginning of an action can be linked to early morning/dawn/sunrise in the medial stages as well:

INITIAL POSITION (EPICS)

Rano rani ²⁶ djakone Stevane. (Vuk II, 3:1)	Deacon Stephen gets up early.
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²⁵ “В суточном цикле ‘рассвет’ появление солнца – это время ‘начала’, время рождения возрождения, время, связанное с судьбой. Магия рассвета обусловлена именно этими представлениями. Как свякое ‘начало’ утро сакрализуется и мифологизируется [...] От утра – начала – зависит течение, судьба грядущего дня.”

²⁶ In Serbian both the adverb *early* (Serb. “rano”) and the verbs with the meaning “to get up early in the morning”, “to do/start something early in the morning” (Serb. “rani”, “poranio”, “uranio”) are derived from the same root (*figura etymologica*).

Rano rani Turkinja djevojka. (Vuk II, 57:1)	Turkish girl gets up early.
Rano rani Kraljeviću Marko, Rano rani do ishoda sunca. (MH II, 7:1-2)	Prince Marko gets up early, He gets up before sunrise.
Podranio Kraljeviću Marko, Podranio u nedjelju svetu, Prije zore i bijela dana, Podranio u lov u planine. (MH I, 40:1-4)	Prince Marko got up early, He got up early on Holy Sunday, Before dawn and daylight, He got up early to hunt in the mountains.
Uranila Kosovka djevojka, Uranila rano u nedelju. (Vuk II, 51:1-2)	The Maiden from Kosovo got up early, She got up early on Sunday.
Zoran junak rano podranio. (Vuk IX, 7:1)	Brave hero got up early.
Sitna knjiga rano podranila. (Vuk VIII, 72:1)	The small book [letter] arrived early.

MEDIAL POSITION (EPICS)

Rano rani ljuba Prijezdina, Rano rani na sam Djurdjev danak, Rano rani na vodicu ladnu. (SANU II, 78:43-45)	The wife of Prijezda got up early, She got up early on St. George's day, She went early to the water.
Poranio beže Milan-beže. (Vuk II, 10:63)	Milan-bey got up early.
Prije beže bješe poranio. (Vuk VI, 6:56)	Bey got up early, before.
Dobro ti si jutro poranio. (EH 1:396)	You got up early on a good morning.
Na Ilinj-dan bijah poranila. (KH III, 4:135)	I got up early on St. Elias' day.
Uranio slavan car Lazare. (Vuk II, 43:106)	Glorious emperor Lazar got up early.
Noć noćio, rano podranio. (MH III, 4:134)	He stayed overnight, and got up early.

In lyric poems, the variational field of formula (the scope of variation) is slightly larger (among other things, because of the existence of multiple metric forms), but semantics is the same:

<p>Ranila rano, oj, i, Nedelja, i! U njojne nove gradine Da bere rosan tr'ndavil. (AnL 148)</p>	<p>Got up early, oh-e, the Sunday, eeee! To go to her new vineyards To pick dewy roses.</p>
<p>Uranila, koledo, stara majka, koledo! Svetoj crkvi na jutrenju, Susrete je sveti Petar Na jelenu zlatorogu. (Vuk I, 191)</p>	<p>The old mother, koledo, got up early, koledo! To go to holy church to the morning service, She met St. Peter Riding on a golden-horned deer.</p>

Another type of qualitative distinction is observed in the division into *good* and *bad* moments,²⁷ which chronological series makes discrete on the basis of the nature (features) of time intervals or moments:

GOOD MOMENT

<p>To vi, Bože, u čas <i>dobar</i> bilo! (Vuk II, 27)</p>	<p>O God, may it be in a good moment for them!</p>
<p>Id'te deco, pošli u <i>dobri</i> čas! (Vuk II, 82)</p>	<p>Go, children, may the moment of your depart be good!</p>
<p>U čas <i>dobar</i>, Osman-bajraktare! (KH III, 7)</p>	<p>In a good moment, Osman the standard-bearer!</p>
<p>Jer se ženim, u <i>dobar</i> čas bilo! (SANU III, 21)</p>	<p>Cause I'm getting married, let it be in a good moment!</p>
<p>Hajd' dorate u <i>sto dobrih</i> časa! (KH I, 8)</p>	<p>Go ahead, my bay, in hundred good moments!</p>

BAD MOMENT

<p>Dobro jutro, beže Ljuboviću! U <i>zao</i> čas po me ili po te! (Vuk III, 70)</p>	<p>Good morning, Ljubović bey! In bad moment either for you, or for me!</p>
<p>Simeune, dugo jadan bio! U <i>z'o</i> čas ga roda potražio! (Vuk II, 14)</p>	<p>Simeon, stay miserable for a long time! In bad moment you went to search for ancestors!</p>
<p>U <i>z'o</i> čas si zemlju zamutio, A u gori Kosovo razbio. (SM 62)</p>	<p>In bad moment you stirred the country, And in worse one – destroyed Kosovo.</p>

²⁷ Analogy with the notion of *kairos* in ancient and medieval cultures is imposed. In ancient traditions noun *kairos* (καῖρός) was sometimes used as a synonym for *chronos* (χρόνος). *Chronos* is, however, often associated with eternity (Šćepanović 2012), which make it the basic term in the area of philosophical categories (Radić 2012: 35).

* * *

Even this reduced and incomplete review indicates extreme complexity of codes that fund oral formulae and complexity of meanings generated or transferred by them. In this paper, the focus was on the conceptualization of space and time – and even that only partially. Among other things, a whole system of formulae which structures annual cycle (speaking in cultural categories) was neglected, as well as some other means of conceptualizing, like Church calendar (“From St. George’s to St. Demetrius’ Day” [Serb. “Od Djurdjeva do Mitrova dana”]) or seasonal changes. For the latter, the most beautiful example is the famous Slavic antithesis at the beginning of the *Hasanaginica*:

What is whitening there, in the green hills?
 Is it snow, or is it the swans?
 If it were snow, it would have melted long ago, MELTING OF SNOW = SPRING
 If it were swans, they would have flown away. BIRDS FLYING TO THE SOUTH =
 It is neither snow nor swans, AUTUMN
 But the tent of aga Hasan-aga.
 (Vuk III, 80: 1–6)

Out of our focus stayed the much wider area – actually quite a few segments of culture:

(1) ritual and ethical models: marriage to a maiden from a far away place, for example (exogamy) [Serb. *ženidba* “na daleko”]; establishing of loyalty or heroism, which generated a number of crucial “stable” epithets (*faithful* wife [Serb. “*verna ljubav*”], *heroic* head/shoulders/chest/duel [Serb. “*glava/pleća/prsa junačka*”, “*megdan junački*”]) (cf. Detelić 2008), and so on;

(2) elements of social stratification (social hierarchy and etiquette, entitling),

(3) whole areas where cultural codes (Indo-European heritage) converge with distinctive types of conceptualization; the best example of that sort is category of colour, especially domains of black and white and corresponding formulaic attribution.²⁸

On the other hand, *kairos* has a more specified meaning and generally is determined as time suitable for some action, both in antiquity (Aristotle) and in the middle ages (cf. Radić 2012: 35, 42). About beliefs in *bad moment* in Slavic traditions cf. Radenković 2011.

²⁸ Linguistic literature on the subject is quite extensive, especially studies based on the cognitive approach (basic study in this field is Berlin & Kay 1969, which initiated further investigations and theories, *prototype theory*, for example). About the semantics of white colour in South Slavic oral epics, mainly in relation to the formulae *white*

Besides, a sublime life and historical experience also participate in constitution of oral formulae, which is, for example, obvious in attribution of:

(1) arms (after the origin: sabre from Damascus/Sham or Germany [Serb. “sablja dimišćija/alamanka/šamljanka”], rifle from Italy [Serb. “puška latinka/talijanka”] or from Germany [“danickinja”]),

(2) cities (as capitals [Serb. “stojni Beograd/Carigrad/Prizren”, from “prestoni” = capital]), or –

(3) typical characters (Latins are described as *wise* [Serb. “*premudri Latini*”, “*mudra Latinija*”] and as *tricksters* [Serb. “*Latini su stare varalice*”, “*Latini su mudre varalice*”], which are folk stereotypes based upon political skills and flexibility of the Venetian Republic).

Formulae can also contain information about the genre or the type of subject (plot) which follows, usually the initial ones. In such cases, they can serve as specific “switchers” too (they send information about the change of discourse, i.e. about the transition from vernacular to poetic discourse; cf. Petković 1990; Detelić 1996: 23–25). Furthermore, formulae have specific intertextual disposition, for which J. M. Foley introduces the term *traditional referentiality* (Foley 1995).

All the mentioned aspects – together or in some combination – determine the genesis and the structure of formulae. It allows us to regard each of them as the “tip of the iceberg”, whose underwater massif constitutes of traditional system as a whole (whereby that whole must include categories of thinking, genre norms and other factors that common concept of traditional system does not involve). Therefore, the survival of formulae should be linked not only (and perhaps not even primarily) to their mnemotechnic function, but also to the fact that tradition reproduces, defines and maintains itself by them:

Tradition – it is primarily semantic, evaluative category. So, we investigated the formula – a kind of overwater part of an iceberg. “Underwater” part – most substantial and probably the most significant – does not express itself directly in specific ways [...] A deep layer of tradition with its own parameters, trends and connections can be observed as comprehensive and potentially inexhaustible centre that ‘irradiates’ meanings. Tradition – it is a generating category, and formulae act as canonical fixations of certain areas of the traditional semantics.²⁹ (Mal’tsev 1989: 68–69)

town, white tower and white hall cf. Detelić & Ilić 2006 (with bibliography of linguistic provenance that covers the Slavic cultural area) and Detelić & Delić 2013.

²⁹ “Традиция – это прежде всего смысловая, ценностная категория. Так, исследуемые нами формулы – это своего рода надводная часть айсберга. А часть ‘под-

Therefore, the analogy that has been established lately between folkloristic approach to the formulae and cognitive-linguistic approach to speech (metaphor),³⁰ except at the level of creation (composition-in-performance) – and before at the level of creation – should be recognized at the level of semantic structures. Semantic structure of formulae and semantic structure of metaphor and linguistic units in general could be equally well described in terms of both scientific disciplines: *iceberg* (“iceberg” – Mal’tsev 1989: “the tip of the iceberg” – Fauconnier & Turner 2002), *hidden knowledge*, *hidden complexity*, *frame semantics*, or perhaps most accurately – *compressed meanings*. The meanings that are “compressed” and modelled originate, as we have seen, in the system of traditional culture – which has absorbed elements from extremely diverse spheres (conceptualization, rituals, life realities, historical experience, common law, ethics, etc.). Those meanings are, however, upgraded with new “income” in every new/concrete realization (i.e. poem) (cf. Detelić 1996: 106–107) and this is the area where aesthetics rivals poetics.

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водная’ – нечто наиболее содержательное и, пожалуй, зачастую наиболее существенное – непосредственно не выражается особыми путями [...] Глубинный уровень традиции со своими собственными параметрами, тенденциями и связями может рассматриваться как содержательный и потенциально неисчерпаемый центр, ‘иррадирующий’ значения. Традиция – это порождающая категория, и формулы выступают как каноническая фиксация определенных зон традиционной семантики.”

³⁰ Cf. presentations at the conference *Oral Poetics and Cognitive Science* (The School of Language and Literature at the Freiburg Institute for Advanced Studies (FRIAS), Freiburg, January 24–26, 2013; conference website: <https://sites.google.com/site/oralpoetogsci/>).

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TEMPORAL FORMULAS IN SERBIAN EPIC SONGS

Abstract: This paper seeks to present time as one of the most important parameters in epic songs, shown in the example of temporal formulas. Time also represents the principle of organising section sequences in the song (linear, successive and chronological, or discontinuous and retrospective). The paper further examines the temporal formulas in a broad and a narrow sense, with regard to whether the temporal markers refer to the narrative shifts in the development of the story, or to some archaic meanings related to expressions which mark the determinants of real time (year and its parts, days of the week, time of the day, etc.).

Keywords: formula, time, epic song, narration, time of day, days of the week, parts of the year

It is impossible to present the poetics of any artifact of oral tradition without an insight into its fund – folk tradition, and the model of magical and mythical thinking as its base.¹ Part of the tradition is the belief in the magical power of words, which in people’s everyday life resulted in a collection of taboo words (people avoided to name demonic animals and beings directly so as not to call forth evil). On the other hand, there was a belief that words can have a magic influence on certain events in life, i.e. on the course of destiny (spell casting, charm, curse/blessing), on the outcome of illness (incantation), and the like. The archaic root of this complex belief lies in the conviction of traditional man that the word has a great (even demiurgic) power.²

¹ In a way, the formula is a mediator between “text” and tradition, thus becoming a kind of hermeneutic key: “традиция в тексте ставит своего рода индексы (формулы), которые не требуют дальнейшего словесного распространения, они устремлены ‘за текст’ к ‘преданию’” (Mal’tsev 1989: 153). Of course, the formula per se functions as a separate text, i.e. a text within the text (cf. Mal’tsev 1989: 65–67).

² An example, if somewhat poetic, of this belief can be found in the famous biblical verse (John 1:1): “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.”

The creation of the world was usually the subject of archaic religious epics (*cf.* the *Enuma Elish*), and it was reactualized by the ritual performance of a poem (at the beginning of the cycle, every new year). Therefore, in their search for the origins of oral epic songs, some scholars (Braun, Schein, Lord, etc.) have found that at first they had magical and ritual purpose “before they became heroic” (Lord 1990/1: 124). Leaving aside these more or less plausible speculations, one can notice, above all, that they place the emphasis on the creative function of words (just as traditional man tried to recreate the world with words). Therefore, the most promising direction of this research is to look at how the songs were created. The structuring of the literary world inspired by the so-called objective reality is primarily based on certain similarities in terms of shaping space and time.³ These similarities led, in the mythical magical way of thinking, to replication of certain analogies from the act of cosmogony to the act of oral verse-making.⁴ Thus, the very singing of sacred texts was sacred in character. As far as the oral epic song is concerned, faint traces of these connections can be found in the actualization of the magical function of words when addressing gods, giving blessings to the living and praying for the dead in the initial and final position in the song.⁵ For this purpose, the singer’s repertoire contained some of the traditionally established “stereotyped beginnings and endings”, “patterns”, or formulas.⁶

³ This refers to the space-time continuum and, in a song, to space and time as “basic parameters of situationality” (Detelić 1996: 40).

⁴ The analogy between myth and song is not only genetic but also generic – a mythical content assumes its solid form, and the form, diachronically, assumes a different sense and “breeds” new senses (*cf.* Mal’tsev 1989: 19–20). Or, according to N. Petković (2006: 20), it becomes sense-making form.

⁵ Although too cautiously, M. Kleut (1991: 269–270) expressed a similar clue: “There predominate expressions of good wishes in the form of a blessing, praise, or prayer; there is a high frequency of such words as hale/health, merry/mirth, brother/brothers/sworn brother, group/company, glory/honour, integrity, poem, glass, and God – all of which signify positive life principles. Stating that the poem is being recited in someone’s honour, or as a blessing to the living and the dead, or as a praise, has particular implications for the poem and its performance: the poem is recited with honourable intentions. The highly formulaic nature of this poetic device indicates that it too, like others, is traditional, even in the absence of a traditional plot.” She perceives the traditionalism of the poetic means even if it is a part of a non-traditional creation. But also, it seems reasonable to argue that the frequent invocation of God, blessings to those who are present and prayers for the dead, based on the magical function of words, have very archaic origins, before these formulas ossified into routine beginnings/ends of the songs.

⁶ In this paper, the term formula is used in its broadest conceptual meaning – as “a kind of creative dynamic pattern used for oral improvisation” (NK 1984: s.v. “formula”). It

The beginnings and the endings of songs, as meeting points of “text” and context, are under greatest pressure, so oral improvisation assigned special meanings to their formulation. Commencement and completion of singing, as an act of creating a verbal world out of communication noise (analogue to chaos), and concluding/finishing of that act, had to overcome the tension involved in crossing the border between different realities, by “separation from the noise, and moving in and out of the fictional world and vice versa” (Detelić 1996: 11, c; Petković 2006: 24–25). Hence the need for “strong” boundaries between the literary world and the empirical reality of the singer and the audience.⁷ One of the proven ways of crossing the boundary was dislocation, or a time jump from the performer’s time to narrative time through general initial and final formulas.⁸ Because these (marginal) positions endure “higher pressure than normal”, over time they “tend to become ossified, to assume a fixed, unchangeable and therefore easily recognizable and highly communicative form” (Detelić 1996: 11).

represents a concrete realization of formulaity – oral improvisation of inherent quality to create formulas (NK 1984: s.v. “formulativnost”; Detelić 1996: 9), and dynamic “metrical syntactic pattern”, i.e. “firm linguistic fixations [...] which present the situations or details previously repeated in many songs” (Schmaus 1971: 155). This property is also expressed both at micro (permanent epithet, figure of speech, type character, description, action, etc.) and at macro level (plot, composition, “theme pattern” or action schema), or “covers the situations from the permanent epithets to stable plots” (Mal’tsev 1989: 11 – translation mine). In other words, the formulas from the micro level (lower level of hierarchy) are included in the formulas of higher level (cf. Mal’tsev 1989: 129–131).

⁷ Then again, this does not mean that the boundary is completely rigid. Moreover, one of the most common ways of establishing relations with the past is contrasting – forming temporal binary oppositions *then : now* (cf. Kleut 1991: 268; Detelić 1996: 170–173; Samardžija 2000: 20–21), by measuring time from a given event until the time of performance (SANU IV, 48), by dating events – *Na iljadu i osme stotine / Četrdeset i treće godine* [In eighteen hundred / And forty-three] (Vuk VIII, 60), and the like.

⁸ The definition of this type of formulas is derived on the basis of their position in the text. In addition to this criterion, the given formulas can be further distinguished on the basis of their function. Thus, M. Detelić proposed a division into two groups. *General (external)* have a metatextual function (Detelić 1996: 30). If the meaning of “code signal” is predominant (*ibid.* 13), for example: *Stan’te, braćo, da vi čudo kažem* [I will tell you a marvel, brethren] (Vuk II, 12); *Dje sjedimo da se veselimo / Da malene pjesne popjevamo...* [To sit down and be merry / To sing our small songs] (SANU II, 101), or the focus on the contact established between the performer (sender) and the audience (recipients), this function could be marked with Jacobson’s term *phatic function* (cf. Jacobson 1966: 289–296).

Regarding the character and meaning of these formulas, M. Detelić classified them as “*general formulas*, which actually form part of the oral communicative act, and so their relationship with the song is weak and formal; and as *particular ones*, which are so strongly connected to the song that they must be considered as parts of it and as elements of its internal structure” (*ibid.* 23, emphasis mine). This differentiation is understandable regarding the context of performance. On the one hand, general formulas compass the performance (i.e. the beginning and the end of singing) and, on the other hand, they demarcate two times and two worlds “striving for fabula completeness” while “setting an inner time entirely subordinated to the story” (Lešić 2010: 361).⁹

By contrasting the assumed “epic” past and the present performance (*then : now*), the oral tradition found a suitable means, through general temporal formulas,¹⁰ to cross the boundary between the time of performance and the narrative time of the “text”.¹¹ This correlation formula, therefore, is used both in older cycles (in bugarštica songs): *Ovo mi je tada bilo, a sada se spominuje* [*m*] [It happened to me then, now it is just being told] (Bogišić, 7, 24; see also 11, 64), and in decasyllabic epic poetry (*Tada bilo, sad se* [*s*] *pominjalo* [That was then, now it is just being told]), with minor or major modifications within the *variational fields* (cf. Mal'tsev 1989: 53) of the formula (cf. Pantić 2002: 200; Bogišić, 93; Vuk II, 27; Vuk III, 12; Vuk IV, 6, 25, 53; Vuk VI, 36, 55, 75; Vuk VII, 30, 55; Vuk VIII, 26, 40, 44, 70; Vuk IX, 13; SANU III, 35 SANU III, 47; SANU IV, 5 etc.). To denote the action whose consequences are still present, the final formula of temporal dislocation is used: *Kako tade tako i danaske* [As it was then, so it is today] (cf. Vuk II, 1, 89; Vuk III, 12; Vuk IV, 42 etc.), and it can be found at the beginning and at the end of the final block of formulas.

The general formula also often includes the confrontation between the first and the third person – I (Bogišić, 7, 11, 50, 77; Vuk III, 49; Vuk VI, 11, 49, 80; Vuk VII, 1, 15, 21, 35; Vuk VIII, 8, 25, 36; Vuk IX, 23; SANU II, 44, 52, 59, 62,

⁹ “As if the epic singer thus confronts the constant and unstoppable flow of historical time: he seizes the events worth remembering and gives them importance by completing them into a single story.” (Lešić 2010: 361).

¹⁰ The term used by M. Detelić (cf. Detelić 1996). This type of formulas where “the circumstances (the context of an event) are more important than the event itself (the text)”, is defined by S. Samardžija (2000: 24) as an *external comment*.

¹¹ As noted by N. Petković (2006: 24), “the role of the shifter at the beginning of a narrative text will be to move us to another level of description”. In correlation to that “when the end of a literary text should be marked, the shifter appears again. But its role is reversed: to take us back to the regular level of description” (*ibid.* 25). According to N. Petković, the “moments that are usually used in shifting include: *time, space, character and extraneous speech*” (*ibid.* 24). In this study *time* will have the main importance.

63, 102, 103, 105; SANU III, 19, 27, 35, 50, 59; SANU IV, 26, 37, 38) or *we* (Pantić 2002: 55, 58; Vuk II, 12, 95; Vuk III, 66, 71, 72; Vuk VI, 11, 36, 49, 70, 76, 80; Vuk VII, 1, 15, 57; Vuk VIII, 8, 25, 26, 44, 51; Vuk IX, 32; SANU II, 101, 104; SANU III, 9, 12, 16, 22, 24, 35, 47; SANU IV, 33, 40) and *he* or *they*: e.g. *Zdravo ošli, vesela im majka, / Njima majka, a mene družina* [In health they left, may their mother be merry, their mother for them, and my company for me] (Vuk III, 49).¹² Obviously, the first person belongs to the community in which the given variant is derived from the present, and the third person refers to the time of the narrative, to the time perspective of the participants in the event described in the song.¹³ This time confrontation between the present and the past is used also in the final general formula *the dead : the living*; e.g. *Bog mu dao u raju naselje, / Nama, braćo, zdravlje i veselje* [May God give him paradise, / to us, brothers, health and mirth] (Vuk III, 15).¹⁴

The special initial temporal formula *otkako/otkada je svijet postanuo/nastanuo (nije ljepši cvijet procvatio)* [since the world was created, (a more beautiful flower has never bloomed)] (cf. Vuk II, 40; Vuk III, 22, 71, 72, 82; Vuk IV, 5, 25, 40, 43, 64; Vuk VI, 4, 40, 43, 64; Vuk VII, 15, 17, 20, 21, 22; SANU III, 16, 67) had a similar demarcation function, by marking (only) the temporal dimension of the story.¹⁵ This formula, which can be found especially in plots dealing with a hero's marriage, usually at the beginning, accentuates the excellence of the bride's beauty. By describing and not showing it, the beauty is introduced into the fictitious world – in the “present” of the characters, and it also becomes temporally closer to the audience, as if it were there, in front of them – *što je danas, na ovu godinu* [as it is today, in this year] (Vuk III, 71, 72).¹⁶

¹² Both actions in these formulas include “intersection of two narrative levels”, where “one refers to the fictitious world (then and there, a fictional event being narrated), while the second arises from the nature of verbal communication and involves the act of verse-making (here and now, the moment when the text is created-accepted)” (Samardžija 2000: 20–21).

¹³ “Indeed, the events in the story that make the plot stand *against* the person who talks about them because they already belong to the past. Even when they are clearly presented, the fabled events reflect the spatial and temporal distance from the narrator's time and place. The fabled events enter the story with their logical connections that the narrator cannot ignore. They have their own timeline which differentiate them from the time of storytelling. They, after all, not only stand *against* the narrator, but also against his listeners, like another world worth talking about and listening about” (Lešić 2010: 353).

¹⁴ For a list of variations of this formula, cf. Detelić 1996: 173–174.

¹⁵ Cf. Detelić 1996: 147.

¹⁶ Such present tense used in the (relative) sense becomes the so-called tabular present, which makes that “things long gone and therefore with temporal and spatial dis-

General final formula has the opposite course, with a function dissociated from the presented events – *to je bilo kada se činilo* [it was then that it happened]¹⁷ (Vuk II, 27, 95; Vuk III, 81; Vuk IV, 76; Vuk VI, 76; Vuk VII, 2, 48, 50; Vuk VIII, 54; SANU II, 8, 16, 19, 23, 41, 45, 47, 69, 91, 102; SANU III, 2, 4, 8, 9, 15, 23, 28, 29, 36, 38, 39, 47, 48, 60, 61, 62, 63, 65; SANU IV, 4, 5, 14, 15, 18, 21, 23, 33, 41; Milutinović 1990: 8, 9, 30, 101, 155, 166, 170).¹⁸ Used at the end of the text, this temporal formula serves as its constituent boundary – it closes the narration and moves the listeners out of the text, returning them to the time of performance.¹⁹

These formulaic beginnings/endings actually represent “canonized frameworks” which “extract a literary text from the initial fluctuality and make it a separate textual entity” (Petković 2006: 26). However, the making of clichés and expression of formulaity does not stop there. Descriptions of characters, their actions, and plots may also become clichés, but “the imaginable constructive text boundaries at various levels are becoming clichés most easily” (*ibid.*). In the narrative structure of the plot, shifts in the development of the story are, according to the habits of performing, most easily denoted by time shifts – i.e. time clauses.

Used at the beginning of the song – the temporal formula (*Kad se ženi* [+ character’s name] [When (character’s name) married] (Detelić 1996: 149), *Kad je bila na Kosovu vojska* [When the army was in Kosovo] – Vuk VI, 15 (Detelić 1996: 148–149); *Sinoć paša pade na Grahovo* [Last night pasha appeared in Grahovo] – Pantić 2002: 203) occurs, as already noted, as a shifter (to the fictitious world) (Petković 2006: 23–26) “with separate signal when moving from the ordinary to the additionally organized text” (Petković 2006: 23).²⁰

tance, stand before the listeners’ eyes as a different, wonderful and larger world. No matter how miraculous and unusual, the event in the epic song becomes possible, because the magic of storytelling brings it before the admiring eyes of the listeners.” (Lešić 2010: 363).

¹⁷ The given list includes variant forms of this formula.

¹⁸ A more complete list of variants of this formula, including collections that have not been taken into consideration here, is given by M. Detelić (*cf.* Detelić 1996: 167–168).

¹⁹ Variants of the formula involving meanings other than temporal, such as the relation to the truth of the narrative, etc. will not be considered on this occasion (for more about this, *cf.* Detelić 1996: 28).

²⁰ Special initial temporal formulas behave differently with regard to time determination. They may be based on the historical chronology of the events described in the song – *Na hiljadu i osme stotine, / I trideset i osme godine* [In the year eighteen hundred, / and thirty-eight] (Vuk VIII, 61), or they accept the time dimension of the described event as a (default) convention – *Kad Lazaru odsekoše glavu* [When they cut off Prince

Some of these formulas have more complex meanings and functions. In special cases, the opening (temporal) formula becomes part of the formula of a higher order (cf. Mal'tsev 1989: 73–84). The formula *Rano rani* [+ ime junaka] [(character's name) *rose early*], *Uranio* [*Early rose* (character's name)],²¹ carries in its archaic semantics a rich circle of traditional concepts associated with fate, so it anticipates subsequent events, starting with the fateful encounter, as a series of cause and effect related actions (cf. Detelić 1996: 66–70). In the recorded long verse songs, the formula of dawning (*Jutrom rano išetala sestra kralja budimskoga* [Early in the morning the sister of the king of Buda walked out] – Bogišić, 21), according to the traditional semantics, “invokes a mythological content to the plot” (Suvajdžić 2010: 55). From her window in the town of Buda she sees three fairy silhouettes on deer, which appear to have been, in fact, three horsemen, so in a way she predetermines their fate with her vision.²²

Formulas of liminal time (related to the moment before dawn), such as: *Još ni zore ni bijela dan[k]a*, or *Još zorica nije zabjelila*, / *Ni Danica lice pomolila* [Neither dawn nor white day has broken yet, or Dawn has not broken yet, / Nor has the daystar shown her face] not only serve to mark out the text (which is obvious), but become functional tools indicating the beginning of narrative time, conjunction of day and night, i.e. the most critical time of the day (cf. Mal'tsev 1989: 79, 80). In the poetic semantics key, it is a moment that denotes “the shifting of a character across the border of a semantic field” (Lotman 1976: 304) – *Od Senja se otvoriše vrata*, / *I izidje jedna četa mala* / *Sa trideset i četiri druga*; / *Pred njima je Senjanin Tadija*, / *barjak nosi Komnen barjaktaru*

Lazar's head] (Vuk II, 53 – it is assumed that it took place at the Battle of Kosovo, in 1389). Time information can also be presumed – *Prošetala Djurdjeva Jerina* [Jerina, the wife of George, took a walk] (Vuk II, 80); *Kad su mi se d'jelila dva Jakšića mila brata* [When the two loving Jakšić brothers were dividing their inheritance] (Bogišić, 44) – and from the used verb form of (truncated) perfect it can be concluded that it was an event that happened in the past, and a recognizable character's name also carries a certain chronological connotation becoming one of situationality parameters and fixing the action (cf. Detelić 1996: 40–42). No matter which particular variant it is, what these formulas have in common is “that the opening block of an epic song can never end with a time formula: it can occur at the beginning of it; it may be inserted between a general and a specific formula of some other type; it can be found between two different special formulas, but never at the end of the opening block and never in direct contact with the narrative complex” (*ibid.* 42).

²¹ This formula can also appear as the second in the opening block, as the second in a line that also begins with temporal formula: *Još ni zore ni bijela dana* [Neither has dawn nor white day broken yet] (Vuk VIII, 9, 32; SANU II, 62; SANU III, 63).

²² A maiden by the window, according to the findings of O. M. Freidenberg and G. I. Mal'tsev (cf. Mal'tsev 1989: 123), belongs to ancient motifs.

[The town gate of Senj opens, / And there goes out a small unit / Of thirty-four men; / In front of them is Senjanin Tadija, / The standard is carried by Komnen the standard-bearer] (Vuk III, 39).²³ Possible semantic layering and potential activation of trans-layered mythical semantics can best be followed if the formula is observed in the context of songs in which it occurs (cf. ER, 81, 88, 89, 90, 91, 133; Vuk II, 95; Vuk III, 10, 21, 39, 47; Vuk IV, 16, 34, 38, 43, 46; Vuk VI, 50, 53, 82; Vuk VII, 82; Vuk VIII, 9, 25, 30, 32, 39, 42, 69; Vuk IX, 25; SANU II, 62; SANU III, 7, 46, 63; SM, 111, 134).²⁴ In each of these songs, the formula is at the very beginning.²⁵ It serves as a point from which the narrative time is measured (it releases the momentum of time that cannot be stopped any more). It sets an initial borderline of the text, anticipates an event (unusual action) and connects with its free end to the next one in a cluster of formulas (cf. Lord 1990/1: 112–113) usually referring to the spatial positioning of the story.

It is up to the context of the entire plot whether the mythical semantics will be activated or not. One might expect that the appearance of a fairy will “unclose” the song towards the archaic and enable the breakthrough of mythical semantics. However, the demonic time only allows the fairy to appear, although the activity of the fairy is completely consumed within the messenger’s domain (cf. Samardžija 2008: 247–251). The formula of fairy’s acclamation (cf. ER, 90, 91; Vuk IV, 38, 43, 46; Vuk VIII, 25, 39, 42),²⁶ after the introductory formula, indicates change in the existing state (cf. Samardžija 2008: 247) and becomes an exposition in the narrative which is further modulated according to the scheme of the fairy’s call (cf. Gesemann 2002: 133–137). Nothing changes significantly even if after this introductory formula appears a human being as the messenger (ER, 81, 133), or the transfer of information is done by means of books (ER, 88; Vuk VIII, 30, 69). One of the most frequent formulas replacing the discussed formula is formula for opening the door (cf. Vuk II, 21, 39, 47; IV,

²³ The tradition sees this moment as an incident (and only “incident” is an event – cf. Lotman 1976: 304). Any activity of the characters at a bad time of the day entails certain consequences or it is the intent which initiates a subsequent chain of events.

²⁴ This type of introductory formulas occurs even in early records of long verse songs: *I još ne bješe dan zora bjelo lice otvorila* [Neither dawn nor day has shown its white face yet], associated with the plot formula: *Kada mi ti kleti Turci okoliše bjele mire od Budima* [When the damned Turks besieged my town of Buda] (Bogišić, 28).

²⁵ It is not possible to know now if it was preceded by general introductory formulas in the original performance.

²⁶ Only in one example the fairy’s acclamation appears as an exposure of the ritual initiation scenario (cf. Vuk II, 95). However, even in this poem, it is nothing but an announcement of the arrival of the Turkish army, which is the moment when the previous situation changes (i.e. the beginning of the process of the young hero’s initiation).

16; Vuk VI, 53). It also lacks explicit mythical connotations. The spatial dimension is introduced (*dok s' u Skadru vrata otvoriše* [when the town gate of Skadar opens] – Vuk IV, 6), and functional value is limited to the introduction of the character(s) or the troops in the epic scene (*Iz grada je junak izlazio ... Za njim ide do tridest Turaka* [A hero walks out of the town ... Followed by about thirty Turks] – *ibid.*).²⁷

Liminal time of the day, introduced with the initial formula *Ni zorice ni bijela dan[k]a* [Neither dawn nor white day has broken yet], overlaps with social liminality of characters in the plots about the wounded/dying hero (cf. ER, 89; Vuk VII, 82; Vuk VIII, 9; SANU II, 62) and activates certain mythical-ritual semantic layers, associated with the cult of the dead. At that time something²⁸ announces impending death to Prince Marko (SANU II, 62), after which the hero destroys his epic regalia (horse and weapons).²⁹ He also performs a magic act with his mace with the meaning of irreversibility – he throws his heavy mace into the sea, saying: *Kad na suho topuz izljevnuo / Ovakvi se junak izrodio* [When that mace comes out of the sea / Then there will be such a hero upon the earth again] (*ibid.*). After that, he finishes the preparations for the burial, and he charges whoever should find him with the duty to bury him. In another song (a variant of the song *Smrt Majke Jugovića* [The Death of the Mother of the Jugovitch]), before dawn a voice brings the mother the news of the death of her nine sons (SANU III, 46).³⁰ And in a third song, a wounded hero, shortly before his death, earned himself with behest a memorial service after his death (ER, 89). This brief overview indicates that the time liminality of the discussed initial formula is not sufficient to activate the (expected) mythical

²⁷ The shaping of the liminal chronotope is achieved by merging the liminal time (*dawn*) and the liminal place (the rampart/the door).

²⁸ In Serbian language the grammatical form of the non-personal nominal pronoun which stands for things – *something* denotes a non-living entity, while at the same time it is brought into the circle of sacred or tabooed beings (demons) that can predict the future.

²⁹ By destroying his epic attributes, the hero symbolically cancels his status – “unarmed and epically unprotected, in a state identical to that prior to his epic initiation” (Suvajdžić 2005: 173); he leaves this world in an ambiguous status, the same as when he entered it.

³⁰ The mother immediately goes to the bloody battlefield and collects the helmets and horses of the heroes. One of her sons posthumously charges her with passing on to his wife to take care of his horse the way he cared about it (*ibid.*). The “speech” of the hero’s horse reveals surprise that mother does not even for a moment express any grief, and suggests her potentially non-human nature.

semantics – it will be revived only at the point of intersection between this and some “stronger” liminality mark, like the one of status.³¹

Initial temporal formulas are most similar to the *medial temporal formulas* that appear at the beginning of a digressive episode with the retrospection of a framed narrative segment, foreplot, and the like.³² Since they are located at the beginning of a “story within the story”, they are closest to special introductory formulas (and sometimes alternate with them).³³ What all medial temporal formulas have in common is that they function as “constructive text boundaries” (Petković 2006: 21) and they “break through the boundaries between narrative segments of a song” (Detelić 1996: 14). If they are placed at the beginning of an inserted episode or retrospection, their role of marking its beginning is even more significant. As a rule, they have a recognizable structure (the order of these elements, however, can vary): *when + character + action + locus*: *Kad knez Lazar pričešćiva vojsku / kraj prekrasne Samodreže crkve* [When Prince Lazar went with his army to take the sacrament / By the fair church in Samodrezha] (Vuk II, 51) or slightly revised: *Kad izgibe vojska na Kosovu* [When the army perished in Kosovo] (Vuk II, 55), *Kad je srpsko poginulo carstvo / i dva cara pala u Kosovu* [When the Serbian empire perished / and two emperors died in Kosovo] (Vuk II, 58), *Kad Jerina Smederevo gradi* [When Jerina built Smederevo] (Vuk III, 1). Nothing significantly changes if the retrospection is given in the form of homodiagetic narration – i.e. if it is delivered by a story character/witness in the first person: *Kad sam bio u gorici čarnoj / Na studencu vodi na plandištu* [When I was in the dark forest / at the cold spring near the resting place...] (Vuk VI, 22), *Kadno bjesmo na Kosovu bojnomo (teški bojak mi s Turci trpljesmo)* [When we were on the battlefield of Kosovo (and fiercely fought with the Turks)] (Vuk II, 54).

In all these cases, as in many others, there is a tendency to integrate spatial and temporal sequences and to form a *chronotope*³⁴ (in the sense of a unified space-time continuum of the narrative). This formula arrangement is

³¹ It seems that it makes no difference when spatial liminality is added to time liminality. Following this formula, there usually is the formula for opening the door, but it does not activate mythical meanings. All this confirms once again that the epic song is not created through analogy with myth, but according to the inherent formative principles.

³² Like all other formulas, they are substantially determined by three parameters: location, form and function (cf. Detelić 1996: 17 and 77).

³³ Cf. special initial formula: *Kad se sleže na Kosovu vojska* [When the army gathered at Kosovo] (Vuk II, 48) and the abovementioned medial formulas.

³⁴ Cf. Bahtin 1989: 193.

the result of “parameters setting for the story – i.e. for the space, time and character³⁵ as minimum requirements for the definition of an event” (Detelić 1996: 40), presented in retrospect. In this way, the time component, unlike the introductory formulas, is no longer optional – on the contrary: it is very important *when* the events in the story happened in relation to the moment of narration, since the time of the primary action has motivational effects on the central action (otherwise it would not be evoked in the narrative and reactualized in memory).

Special medial formulas in non-digressive narratives have somewhat looser distribution than the formulas mentioned before. They usually have a syntactic form of temporal sentences:

Kad ujutru jutro osvanulo (Pantić 2002: 256; Bogišić, 71, 72; Vuk II, 43, 53, 92, 99; Vuk III, 2, 28, 49, 61, 69; Vuk VI, 62, etc.)	When the morning has broken
Kad to čuo/začu (+ character’s name) (Bogišić, 89; ER, 120; Vuk II, 5, 49; Vuk III, 26, 47, 48, 57 etc)	When (character’s name) heard it
Kad to vidje (+ character’s name) (Vuk II, 29)	When (character’s name) saw it
Čim ga vide (tim ga i poznade) (Vuk II, 47)	When he saw him (he recognized him at once)
Pošto su se napojili vina (Vuk II, 17)	When they drank enough wine
Tek što (character’s name) sjede piti vina. (Vuk II, 29)	When (character’s name) set to drinking wine.

They can carry the semantics of the measure of time (*Ode haber od usta do usta / Dok se začu u Prilepa grada*) [The news went from mouth to mouth, / until it was heard of in Prilep town] (Vuk II, 54), *Malo vreme za tim postojalo* [Not much time passed] (Vuk II, 5, 43, etc.), *Malo stalo za dugo ne bilo, / Dok eto ti* [+ list of characters] [And within a while, behold (list of characters)] (Vuk II, 55). They are double marked – first, they serve to demarcate isolated events, to circumscribe compositional entities or smaller narrative sequences, and then to connect them (causally), i.e. to concatenate them (Schmaus 1971).

Appearing in the middle of the “text”, *open at both ends* (cf. Detelić 1996: 32–33), i.e. bivalent, these formulas connect two neighbouring compositional entities, two events or two narrative sequences in a line (what had been before

³⁵ The character itself bears certain chronotopic characteristics – cf. Bahtin 1989: 194.

with what was to come), so they act as a borderline of an entity, and at the same time have the role of a shifter (*cf.* Petković 2006: 23)³⁶ relating to the next segment of time. Since an epic song is a highly schematized creation (*cf.* Braun 1971; Gesemann 2002), and “what keeps these parts from dispersing is a structural grid of singing, its matrix” (Detelić 1996: 34), the formula is that cohesive force which at the same time connects the narrative segments belonging to different hierarchical levels, and demarcates them. A. B. Lord divides these cohesive elements into: formulas of names, formulas of the story, formulas of place and formulas of time (*cf.* Lord 1960: 74–76).³⁷ With their free ends, all these elements can link the narrative segments, and put the hierarchically lower ele-

³⁶ Thus, they are somewhat similar to the commentary which “divides, separates, and at the same time connects the sequences of the plot” (Samardžija 2000: 27). Moving temporarily to the time of performance – in the place of the singer who intervenes in the expected sequence of events – we can get the economy of the narrative (*A da ti je, družo, poslušati / kad hajdučke puške zapucaše, / po odajah biju pašajlije! / Svaki svoga pos’ječe Turčina, / I uze mu blago i oružje* [Listen here, my friend / when hajduks’ rifles fire, / killing the pasha’s men all over the rooms! / Every man kills one Turk, / And takes his wealth and weapons] – Vuk III, 66), focus of attention, and/or the knowledge about the outcome of the event described in the song ([*P*]a šta ću ti/vam duljit’ lakrdiju [Tu Ilija odvede djevojkju]) [I will speak no longer (And then Ilija takes away the girl)] (Vuk III, 33, 72; Vuk VI, 49). Additionally, the commentary is usually used: in expressions of wonder – *Ko će ovo perom opisati / Al’ u pjesmu, pobre, spomenuti* [Who will write about this / Or put it in a song, my friend] (Vuk IX, 14); when compressing and speeding up the narration – *To vam samo starješine kažem* [I mention only the chieftains] (Vuk III, 35), *Ne mogu t’ ih redom kaživati, / Jer bi pjesma podugačka bila* [I cannot mention them all, / Because the song would be too long] (Vuk IX, 16); when shifting the focus from the bloody battlefield to the appearance of the hero – *A bre bliže, da vidimo ko je* [Let us look closer, to see who it is] (Vuk VII, 19); using the cut-up technique – *A kad bilo u subotu, braco* [And when Saturday came, my brother] (Vuk VIII, 40), and the like. Unlike them, the final commentaries appear as a kind of value judgments of the events in the song or the “moral” – *Tako svakom onome junaku / koj’ ne sluša svoga starijega* [It serves him right, / If a hero does not obey his elder] (Vuk III, 65). Although they do not represent a temporal formula, since they shift the listener from the time of the story (narrative time) to the time of narration (performance time), the commentaries appear as shifting formulas, since performance time is inherent in them.

³⁷ A. Schmaus (1971: 143) notes that a formula is used to imply “the situations or particular details, repeated in many songs”. In addition to the already defined formula of the story, it seems justified to talk about *situational* formulas, which, as their name suggests, cover the whole situation, such as fights (formula), receptions, greetings, watching, etc. (*ibid.* 144–148). G. I. Mal’tsev (1989: 3, 11, and 112), however, considers a formula as various elements of the text, or different levels of the narrative – from permanent epithets and formulaic themes to stable plots.

ments – “phrases, subordinate clauses and sentences” in their positions in the model of “specialized poetic grammar” (*ibid.* 77) of the oral “text”. In addition, Lord considers temporal formulas as those that contain lexicalized means for expressing temporality, i.e. words that refer to the parts of the day.³⁸

Nevertheless, the logic of sequencing events in a song creates a certain temporal order. Therefore, the component parts of a song, narrative segments or formulas whose interaction creates the structure of the epic “text”, have their temporal extensibility (as well as melodic, rhythmic, etc.). In this uniform sequence of the same or similar metrical intonation units that form the “text” of a song and in accordance with the principles of syllabic versification of an asymmetric decasyllabic verse, a separate system of markers is established over time which indicate a shift in narrative time and demarcate and/or connect narrative segments, on the principle of separate segments of time. Therefore, they can be considered as *temporal formulas in the broad sense*. They are most often successively lined up (according to the “adding style” as M. Parry called it – *cf.* Lord 1960: 107), so succession is one of the most common principles of action presentation. Usually, one action follows immediately after another, which is demonstrated with formulas of immediate succession (for fast succession of narrative sequences), such as:

formulas of perception

Kad to čuo/začu (+ character’s name) (Bogišić, 89; ER, 120; Vuk II, 5, 49; Vuk III, 22; Vuk IV, 53)	When (character’s name) heard it
To začula (+ female character’s name) (SANU IV, 11)	(Name of a female character) heard it
Kad to vidje (+ character’s name) (Vuk II, 8)	When (character’s name) perceived it
Kad videše (+ names of actors/actants) (Vuk II, 21) ³⁹	When (names of actors/actants) perceived it

formulas of motion

Kada dodje dvoru (+ possessive dative of a noun) (Vuk II, 21; Vuk III, 22)	When he came to (+ possessive dative of a noun) dwelling place
Kad s’ u sinje more uvezoše (Vuk III, 16)	When they sailed off to the deep grey sea

³⁸ As an example of temporal formulas, Lord (1960: 76) cites formulas of dawn (morning).

³⁹ *Cf.* Bogišić, 33, 45; ER, 139; Vuk II, 78. Schmaus (1971: 154) calls this type of formulas *emulation formulas* and notes that, in bugarštica songs, they also bind to themselves a reaction to the seen, followed by an *introduction to the speech*.

Tek što (+ character's name) poljem izmaknuo (Vuk IV, 67)	No sooner had (character's name) run away from the field
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formulas of fast successive sequences (close to simultaneity)

(Tek što Vuče u riječi bješe), Al' eto ti (+ character's name) (Vuk II, 92)	(Thus Vuk was discoursing), When (character's name) came
Jošte (+ character's name) u riječi bješe (ER, 90)	(character's name) was still speaking
U riječi u koje bijahu (Ali treća sila ispanula) (Vuk IV, 41)	They were talking, (but a third force appeared)
U riječi što su govorili (No ga sitna knjiga dopanula) (Vuk VIII, 11)	They were talking, (when a letter came to him)
Taman oni u riječi b'jahu, (Dok eto ti + character's name) (Vuk VI, 6)	Thus they were discoursing, When (character's name) came
U tu riječ koju besjedjaše (Dokle puče trideset pušaka) (Vuk VII, 44)	He was in the middle of a speech, (when thirty rifles fired)
Taman oni malo posjediše (Vuk VII, 43); Taman sio, malo počinuo (Dok mu sitna knjiga dopanula) (Vuk VIII, 13)	He has just sat to rest a bit (when the letter came to him)
Istom oci u besedi bili / al' eto ti silni janičara (SANU III, 26)	The elders were discoursing, / when scores of janissaries appeared

formula for measuring short time

Malo vreme zatim postojalo (Vuk II, 5, 43)	Not much time passed
Malo bilo, ništa ne trajalo (Vuk IV, 41)	Little time passed, almost no time at all
Malo potrg za dugo ne bilo, / Dok evo ti (+ character's name) (Vuk VII, 19)	Little time passed, / When (character's name) came
Malo bilo, ništa ne stanulo, / Puče puška (+ location determinant) (Vuk VIII, 18)	Short time passed, almost no time at all, / when a rifle fires in (+ location determinant)
I to vr'jeme zadugo ne bilo, / (Dok poleće siv zelen sokole) (SANU IV, 35)	But before long, / (When flitted a falcon green and grey)

formulas of a dying man's behest

To izusti, pa dušicu pusti (Vuk II, 7, 16) To izusti, laku dušu pusti (the same) (Vuk II, 25, 33, 89) To izusti, a dušu ispusti (the same) (Vuk II, 78, 85, 86, 91); To izreče, a ispušti dušu (the same) (Vuk VII, 44), etc.	So he spoke, and breathed his last
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According to their specific position in the plot, they are implemented differently and can include: *formulas of succession* (as expressions of a linear and unilateral leading of actions – cf. Schmaus 2011: 11), and *formulas of “empty” time* (e.g. *Malo vreme zatim postojalo* [Not much time passed], after which a new character is introduced – al’ eto ti [+ character’s name] [When (character’s name) came] or *Tako stade [tri godine dana/za devet godina]* [three/nine years passed without change], and with the next verse begins a new segment of narration), *formulas of temporal quantification*, which, depending on the length of the story, can be *formulas of “short” time* (*Malo bilo, mnogo ne trajalo* [Short time passed, almost no time at all]), and *formulas of “long” time* (duration of a story, usually expressed in years + *passed*). Since epic time “does not run otherwise than as a running story” (Lešić 2010: 363), which, therefore, can be interrupted, stopped, returned, additionally narrated or forwarded, the temporal formulas in the broad sense, as modifiers of the narrative flow, and, as a rule, announcers of certain changes, have a very important role in the structuring of the epic narrative or epic song as a whole.

As for parallel actions, they also can have formulaic character and they express all three types of relations – anteriority, simultaneity and posteriority. Schmaus has already discussed *anteriority* (precedence), showing how formulas of perception attach formula of reaction – greeting upon arrival, which applies to the formula of acknowledging (cf. Schmaus 1971: 148): *Kad je Mitar r’ječi razumijo, / Uvati je za grlo bijelo* [When Mitar understood the words, / He seized her by the white throat] (Vuk II, 100).⁴⁰ The formulas of simultaneity describe two parallel actions, e.g. *Dokle Porča sedlo opremio, / Dotle sluge izvedoše djoga* [As soon as Porča fitted the saddle, / The servants brought his horse] (Vuk II, 92). Logically, posteriority is realized in the formulas of execution (of previously given commands, requests, etc.): *Odmah njega sluge poslušāše, / Te kapije hitro zatvoriše* [Immediately his servants obeyed, / And shut the gates quickly] (*ibid.*), *Bjehu Djurdja despota sluge svoje poslušale* [The servants had obeyed despot Djurdje] (Bogišić, 10) and so on. If the meaning of successiveness is prominent in these actions, it will be marked with conjunction (and): *Gleda njega Budimska kraljica, / Pa doziva Jakšića Todora* [The queen of Buda watches him, / And calls Jakšić Todor] (Vuk II, 94), *I dodjoše kumu na dvorove, / Te krstiše dvoje djece ludo* [They came to the home of their godfather, / and baptized two little children] (Vuk II, 6). As there is a clear idea of what happened before and

⁴⁰ In this circle of formulas Schmaus also includes “formulas for situations when, during a conversation about an event that lies ahead – that event happens” (Schmaus 1971: 148). In this paper these formulas are mentioned as formulas of fast successive sequences.

what afterwards, these temporal meanings are determined by the logic of the sequence of events, which at the same time form a temporal order in the narrative (cf. Abbott 2009: 27).

Temporal formulas in a narrow sense, as opposed to the mentioned ways of referring to the chronology of events, express time with special lexical means – with temporal nouns and adjectives, as well as temporal adverbs. They situate the story at a certain point of day (*Kad ujutru jutro osvanulo* [When the dawn has broken]), periods of the year (*ljetu prodje, hladna/tamna/grozna zima dodje* [summer passes, cold/dark/awful winter comes]), or associate it with certain holidays (St George's Day : St Demetrius's Day). At the points where the borderlines of narrative sequences and these time markers overlap (and they, generally, coincide), the "frozen" mythical semantics "captured" in a formula is released and activated.⁴¹

With the *formula of dawning* G. I. Mal'tsev showed how a formula "works" and what happens when, under the pressure of a constructive borderline, appears a formula petrified in archaic semantics (cf. Mal'tsev 1989: 73–80). He believes that morning is a period of beginnings, births, renewals, while also being linked to the complex of beliefs in fate (Mal'tsev 1989: 79). In the tradition, morning – while the sun is rising – is considered to be the right time, or the most appropriate moment, for initiating activities important for the community and individuals (according to the symbolism of progress, a suitable time). Therefore, the formula *Kad ujutru jutro osvanulo* [When the dawn has broken] (Pantić 2002: 256; Bogišić, 71, 72; Vuk II, 8, 43, 53, 92, 99; Vuk III, 2, 28, 49, 61, 69; Vuk VI, 62, etc.),⁴² announces a change and opens the next narrative segment.⁴³ The nature of this change is defined

⁴¹ This occurs because the space-time block in folklore is made up of elements that lose their meaning almost literally, and generate new meanings and new valencies in a new, closed and tightly organized system, established in tradition and structured according to the principle of universal semiotic oppositions (cf. Tsvian 1973: 13–14): *day : night; morning : evening; dawn : dusk; summer : winter*, etc.

⁴² These results are also valid for variations of this formula such as: *A kad sjutra dan i zora dodje* [When the dawn and day breaks tomorrow] (Vuk II, 8); *Kad bijela zora zab'jelila* [When the white dawn comes] (Vuk III, 8), and the like.

⁴³ Actually, it is not a feature exclusive to this formula. The formula of fairy's acclamation, "regardless of its position in the 'text' and shifts on the plot-climax-denouement scale [...] implies a change in the previous state" (Samarđžija 2008: 247), as well as any other formula, since the formula per se marks the borderline of the narrative, and introduces a new event that will disrupt the previous state.

by the next formula⁴⁴ and specified by the further course of events – *the departure of a wedding party* (cf. Vuk II, 92; Vuk III, 22; Vuk VI, 8, 24, 37, 38, 44; Vuk VII, 12, 14, 16, 19, 21, 22, 23, 31, 36; Vuk VIII, 1; Vuk IX, 13; SANU II, 23, 83; SANU III, 7, 35), *going hunting* (Vuk II, 8, 99; Vuk VI, 75),⁴⁵ *meeting* (Bogišić, 3; Vuk II, 47, 67; Vuk IV, 22; SANU II: br.70), *the arrival of the army* (Bogišić, 65; Vuk III, 8; Vuk IV, 18, 34, 48, 49, 53, 55, 60; Vuk VII, 53; Vuk VIII, 24, 29, 51, 52, 63, 67, 68, 73, 74; Vuk IX, 10, 11, 25, 40; SANU IV, 3, 38), and the like.

Noon is the next point of the daily cycle. It is related to the position of intense sunlight – the highest point that the sun reaches during the day. In the plot it coincides with the climax of the rite such as: the arrival of the wedding party in the forest, a completely unprotected, *alien* territory (Vuk VI, 41, 75; Vuk VII, 11; SANU III, 38, 62), the pinnacle of a duel (ER, 71; Vuk II, 44, 67; Vuk VI, 58; Vuk VII, 2, 28; SANU II, 39, 49, 54, 55), and the most critical moment of the battle (Vuk VI, 13; Vuk VII, 19, 57; Vuk VIII, 41, 62, 67, 68; Vuk IX, 14; SANU III, 24). If we take into consideration the “macro plane” i.e. the whole scheme of the story (which is the formula of the course of events – Braun 2004: 127), it can be seen that the climax overlaps with noon as a climax point of the day. At that moment, a duel in the last scene (during physical conflict),⁴⁶ takes a fateful twist, and the hero reaches the limit of his physical endurance. In the songs that sing about clashes of troops or armies (typically in the historic epic), noon decides the outcome of the battle. After midday, when the sun is on its downward path, the negative semantics prevails.

Evening and morning mark the *beginning and end* of each *day*, i.e. they act like “connectors” of its most critical moments (cf. Mal'tsev 1989: 79, 80). Unlike morning, which carries positive symbolism, evening represents its negative counterpart, or semiotic opposition.⁴⁷ In addition to a relatively stable form of the formula of evening (*Kad je bilo veče[r] [p]o večeri* [When

⁴⁴ This, again, does not rule out the possibility that the next formula also has a cohesive function (providing/sending) of the information that reveals the essence of the change, such as formulas of *fairy's acclamation* (cf. Vuk VI, 73; Vuk VIII, 17); *raven the news-bearer* (cf. Vuk II, 45; Vuk VII, 56); *telling a prophetic dream* (Vuk II, 66; Vuk III, 68 etc) or *books* (cf. Vuk III, 20, 68; Vuk IX, 1, 5, 7, 31).

⁴⁵ Cf. also Vuk III, 48, 49.

⁴⁶ This moment is introduced in the song with the formula – *Nosiše se [Ćeraju se] ljetni dan do podne* [So they fought until the noon of a *summer's day*] (cf. ER, 71; Vuk II, 44, 67; Vuk VI, 58; Vuk VII, 2, 28; SANU II, 39, 54, 55). As it can be noted, the central part of the day is also connected to the determinant of the annual cycle, to the summer as the peak time of the annual cycle.

⁴⁷ This order of the parts of the day (morning – noon – evening – night) is analogous to the phases of the annual cycle (spring – summer – fall – winter) – cf. Frye (1979:

the evening falls] – cf. ER, 141, Vuk II, 43, 96, etc.),⁴⁸ akhsham can also be found in songs (cf. Vuk III, 5, 22, 48, 52; Vuk IV, 52; Vuk VI, 62; Vuk VII, 12, 14, 30, 44; Vuk IX, 15, SANU III, 60, 67), which is the time of the fourth daily prayer of Muslims which occurs after sunset. It is usually related to the ending (final destination) of movements – *po akšamu stiže u Grahovo* [After akhsham he arrives in Grahovo] (Vuk III, 5), *po akšamu u Sokola dodje* [After akhsham he arrives in Sokol town] (Vuk III, 52), *U lijepo doba dolazio / Tek na nebo akšam i zvijezda* [In good times he comes / only akhsham and a star in the sky] (Vuk VII, 14), and others. After the sunset, the hero retreats to the safety of his home. However, if he feels threatened from within by an unfaithful wife (Bogišić, 97; Vuk II, 25; SANU III, 5) or his sister-in-law (Vuk II, 5; SANU II, 4), some malicious activities will prove fatal to the hero/heroine. Apart from this and deprived of their mythical semantics, evening hours can get realistic stylization, when presented as moments of leisure (cf. ER, 124, 141; Vuk II, 47; Vuk III, 73; Vuk VI, 23; Vuk VII, 14, 46; SANU II, 57, 68, 79; SANU III, 5, 44).

Night creates a binary opposition to the period of daylight (daytime).⁴⁹ According to traditional coding, night primarily belongs to demonic beings, and therefore the correct behaviour is codified by the set of rules and prohibitions relating to the night (cf. Tsivian 1973: 15). They are primarily related to the termination of works – not to be contaminated by the influence of the night. The formula *Kad je bilo noći u ponoći* [When it was the midnight hour] (Vuk II, 12)⁵⁰ / *Kad je tamna noćca dolazila* [When the dark night came] (Vuk VI, 4), therefore, announces something extraordinary (phenomena, processes, operations), and when it appears in a fairytale in verse about a serpent/dragon hero, it announces his transformation into an anthropomorphic form – in reverse time. By changing the genre, in the epic (heroic) song, night actions of the hero do not usually imply his demonic nature, but they could indicate it subtly – especially when it comes to the well-known dragon fighters – Prince Marko (ER, 124, 140; Vuk II, 66; Vuk VI, 18) and Zmaj Ognjeni Vuk (Bogišić, 15; ER, 59; Vuk II, 43; Vuk VI, 6; SANU II, 56; SM, 152). The activities during the night

183). Mal'tsev explains this with the fact that the daily cycle historically preceded the annual cycle (cf. Mal'tsev 1989: 79) and, presumably, was replicated on it.

⁴⁸ Cf. Vuk II, 5, 13, 30, etc.

⁴⁹ The epithets attached to the *day* and the *night* are real antonyms – *beli (bijeli) dan(ak) : tamna/mrkla noć(ca)* [white day : dark/obscure night].

⁵⁰ This formula seems to work in opposition to the formula *Kad ujutru jutro osvanulo* [When the dawn broke]. Everything desirable, as it should be, is reversed with this formula.

can also be motivated by the need for secret and unobserved actions: *setting an ambush* (Bogišić, 59, 60, 69; ER, 74), *raising troops* (Vuk III, 21, 23, 47; Vuk VI, 49, 53; SANU III, 19, 63), *surprise attack and plunder* (Bogišić, 63, 64, 77; Vuk III, 22, 58; Vuk VI, 82; Vuk VII, 38), *abducting girls* (Vuk VI, 66, Vuk VII, 6, 21; SANU III, 21), *releasing heroes from prison (usually by digging tunnels) under the cover of the night* (Bogišić, 108; ER, 72; SANU III, 8, 41, 42, 80) and the like. In that case, these actions are realistically stylized and mostly devoid of mythic potential.

As a part of the weekly cycle and its boundary, *Sunday* is the most frequently mentioned day in the songs.⁵¹ It is a day of celebration, so everyday activities are prohibited on Sundays. Its sacred character is emphasized with permanent epithet *svet[l]a* [luminous] (Sunday).⁵² If a religious holiday falls on a Sunday as well,⁵³ its character of sacred time (exceptional day) will be more strongly emphasized. Saturday is mainly characterized by negative semantics – *dangerous, last, female, “day of the dead”*. Adding to this semantic line the semantics of the evening as chiefly a bad time of the day – *Kad je večer u subotu bilo* [When it was Saturday evening] (Bogišić, 97), the singer suggests that a given action (destruction of the hero’s weapons and burning of the winged horse’s wings) will have a fatal outcome for the hero (*ibid.*; see also SANU II, 25). At the same time, the hero dreams an ominous dream, but his tragedy is augmented by the fact that he cannot change the final outcome and obliterate the prediction of the dream (*ibid.*). Other plots also imply that a dream dreamed on a Saturday night announces bad luck (Vuk III, 14; Vuk IV, 27).

In the tradition, the annual cycle, like the daily cycle,⁵⁴ has the semantics according to the principle of binary coding. St George’s Day⁵⁵ and St De-

⁵¹ Cf. Bogišić, 18, 69, 70, 73, 74, 97, 107, 109; Vuk II, 3, 42, 51, 65, 67, 74, 84, 101; Vuk III, 14, 78; Vuk IV, 27, 31, 33; Vuk VI, 7, 18, 29, 58, 59; Vuk VIII, 13, 40, 41; Vuk IX, 8, 21, 25, 26; SANU II, 22, 38, 40, 66, 95; SANU III, 11, 16, 20, 21, 28, 36, 55, 62, 67; Vuk IV, 2, 41.

⁵² Bogišić, 18, 69, 70, 97; Vuk II, 32, 42, 65, 101; Vuk III, 78; Vuk IV, 33; Vuk VI, 29; Vuk VIII, 13, Vuk IX, 26; SANU II, 66, 95; SANU III, 67; SANU IV, 2.

⁵³ Easter is the most frequently mentioned religious holiday in the songs; cf. Vuk II, 4, 30; Vuk III, 89; Vuk IV, 39; Vuk VI, 21; Vuk IX, 8. It falls on the first Sunday after the first full moon after the spring equinox.

⁵⁴ Both the daily and the annual cycle associate the symbolism of life and death with the solar path and its periodic strengthening and weakening (disappearing). Mal’tsev (1989, 81) also noted this similarity while exploring the rituals performed early in the morning on St George’s Day.

⁵⁵ Cf. ER, 12, 17, 143, 164; Vuk II, 19, 21, 68, 72; Vuk III, 35, 36, 44, 53, 75, 89; Vuk IV, 14, 25, 29, 31; Vuk VI, 3, 20; Vuk VII, 43, 47; Vuk VIII, 73; Vuk IX, 17, 33; SANU II, 5, 6, 39, 49, 78, 102; SANU III, 11, 17, 66, 79.

metrius's Day are referred to as type determinants marking the beginning and the end of an action, so they are the two most popular and, therefore, the two most frequently mentioned holidays in Serbian oral epic songs. Since these are the dates that divide the annual cycle into two periods – winter and summer – the meaning of the beginning and the end (of the vegetation cycle, fertile period, field works, activities of hajduks) is dominant in their semantics. St George's Day generally represents good time since it symbolizes the beginning (of the year), or spring (often with associated semantics of the morning).⁵⁶ They, also, demarcate the periods of activities of hajduks and use the proverbial expressions: *Djurđjev danak – hajdučki sastanak*; *Mitrov danak – hajdučki rastanak* [St George's Day – reunion of hajduks; St Demetrius's Day – parting of hajduks].⁵⁷ The fact that the collection of tolls (later taxes) was related to these holidays promoted the realistic stylization of the plots of the songs dealing with ambushing toll collectors and fetching the loot. Therefore, the singer places these formulaic holidays symmetrically – winter (parting) and summer (reunion):

Ljeto prodje, Dmitrov danak dodje, Snijeg pade, drumi zapadoše Planine se snijegom zaviše, Po gori se hoditi ne može. (Vuk III, 53)	Summer passed, St Demetrius's day came, Snow fell, roads were blocked Mountains enwrapped in snow, Forest was impassable.
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The next reunion of the hajduks is scheduled for St George's Day:

Kada dodje lijep danak Djurđjev Te se gora preodjene listom, A zemljica travom i cvijetom. (Vuk III, 53)	When the nice day of St George comes And the forest dresses in leaves, And the earth with grass and flowers.
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In this way, the whole narrative time is framed by these holidays. The narrative ends with vengeance taken against a treacherous aider and the hero's return to the forest (cf. Vuk III, 52), which completes the episode.

The need for the (formulaic/formal) ending of the text is partly motivated by the fragmentary nature of the oral poetic text (cf. Mal'tsev 1989: 124–128): "Linguistic units up to (and including) sentences are constant, and in their concrete realizations they are arranged in chains by giving descriptions of certain 'pieces of reality'. The listener receives them successively, draws the

⁵⁶ Cf. the formula of mentioning – *Kao Djurđjev danak u godini* [*Kao dobar junak u družini*] [Like St George's day in the year (Like a good hero in a company)] (SANU II, 102).

⁵⁷ The reverse time of activities (from St Demetrius's Day to St George's Day) is associated with the enemy (the Turks) – cf. Vuk IV, 25; SANU III, 79.

necessary information, and what is called ‘text’ decomposes in successive intervals” (Petković 2006: 16–17). So, the performer constructs the text just to deconstruct it by performing it. During live performance, the illusion of “text” can be abandoned when we change the time dimension – leaving the narrative time of the song ([*to je bilo*] *kada se činilo* [(it was) when it happened] – i.e. when the described event “happened”) and returning to the moment of performance (*a sada se tek pripovijeda* [and now it is only being told]).

All of this suggests the need to redefine the concept of temporal formula, to peruse the intertextual context of its use, as well as its role in other classical decasyllabic songs. The purpose of such research would be to show not only how it functions as a formula per se, but, above all, how it functions in structuring the songs, i.e. in demarcating and signalling the sequence of textual units. Thus it becomes a functional tool which creates one of the dimensions in the world of a song, marks the narrative flow and clearly segments the verbal sequence during the act of verse-making, which also makes improvisation easier. This research would be only an introduction to similar far-reaching attempts.

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ARBOR MUNDI

Visual Formula and the Poetics of Genre

Abstract: The focus of the paper is on the formulaic image of the *arbor mundi* with a bird (usually an eagle, the bird of the thunder-god) on its top which is in conflict with the chthonic snake/dragon at its root. The pattern is followed in various “simple forms”: myth, fairy tale, fable and lyric poem (cross-culturally analysed). What is revealed is the adaptation of the stable image to different patterns, i.e. the poetic features of a genre are reconfirmed through the content of the image. Thus in myth the tree with these animals has a cosmic significance and structures the model of the world. Reconstructions by Ivanov and Toporov or C. Watkins see this as a basic proto-Indo-European myth, though occurring in other cultures as well. But in the fairy tale the tree, being moved to the periphery of the world, loses its axial function, while the hero’s encounter with the animals is just one of his many adventures because everything is subordinate to the hero; in the anthropocentric fairy tale, the hero, as a representative of the human world, suppresses the cosmological function of the image. In *Pañcatantra* tales the image becomes realistic and only serves the purposes of political didactics. In lyric (love or ritual) poetry, the image is easily fitted into the context of performance and connected with other images, or is interpreted in the text as an allegory, characteristic of love poetry. While the formula is usually defined through metrical patterns, it seems that we can also speak of it as a stable image. On the other hand, its adaptability to different “simple forms” confirms the stability of genres and their poetical laws.

Keywords: formula, genres, arbor mundi, myth, fairy tale

This contribution seeks to show how the formula works in different genres. The term “formula” is understood here in a quite different sense from the one in which it is commonly used in the oral-formulaic theory. It will not be regarded as a pattern defined by metrics, as it is in the famous Parry-Lord definition. Even in genres which are defined by metrics, such as narratives, the formula is seen as essentially determined by verbal structures (initial and final formulas of fairy tales or belief legends). So we propose to take the formula as a repeatable and stable image (Radulović 2014). It exists as such both in text and in memory, but the issue of memory is out of the scope of this paper. This

concept of the formula is not altogether new, but it is not as developed as the “orthodox” one. While comparisons to visual culture or to film techniques are used in studies of Serbian or Homeric epics,¹ our attention will focus on the theoretical articulation of such views as given by Lauri Honko in his essential revision of the oral-formulaic theory. He notices that the epic song is being built by sequencing traditional images (Honko 1998: 96–97). Moreover, this view is confirmed emically, by the singer’s description: the singer verbalizes and concatenates them (*ibid.* 118). The neglect of the visual nature of formulas is perhaps more evident in genres that are not defined by metrics. Formulaic images are very often subsumed under the concept of motif, especially in prose. Nicole Belmont observes, however, that what we usually define as motifs (as their combinations form tale-types in the AaTh system) can actually be regarded as images. To speak of them as motifs is somewhat reductive insofar as it divests them of their visual character – although even the contemporary reader is not insensitive to the “hallucinatory” beauty of these images (and Belmont 1999: 84–86 here obviously implies their affective power too).² This important proposal of the French folklorist can be expanded if we take these images as formulas.³ They are not only a communicative-performative element, like the beginning and the end of a fairy tale or legend.

Formula as image transcends the usually differentiated levels within a song (verse, group of verses, song, corresponding to Lord’s distinction among formula, theme and story-pattern). Being independent of metrics, the visual formula is also of a trans-genre (or multi-genre) nature. While the Parry-Lord definition sees the formula as expressing a “given idea”, from the point of view proposed here the formula is not simply reducible to an idea (something expressible conceptually and verbally), but rather its effect is visual – sometimes (seemingly) absurd, incomprehensible, sometimes macabre, but undoubtedly powerful visually. It exists in “the pool of tradition” (Honko) and conforms to different genres. We shall try to demonstrate how it is possible that the formula stays stable on the one hand and how it depends on genre on the other.

¹ See, for example, recent studies by Elmer, Bonifazi, Minchin, Bakker.

² At the time when Structuralism dominated French academia Gilbert Durand put much effort in demonstrating that the level of images is as important as that of structure (and *irreducible* to something else). As for fairy tales, following his lead, albeit not quite flawless from the folklorist’s point of view, Antoine Faivre observes that images, as a qualitative part of the text, are more important for its understanding than structure (Faivre 1978: 114).

³ Once again, their stability and repeatability as motifs in AaTh (ATU) types confirms that they can be viewed as formulas.

The image (formula) that will be discussed here is *a tree with a bird in its crown and a snake in its roots; the two animals are in conflict*. As it has already been said, what we are speaking of here is a formulaic image (or a visual formula) rather than a motif. It can be found in fairy tales, myths,⁴ animal tales and lyric poetry. We shall provide examples from different traditions,⁵ thus taking a cross-cultural perspective along with a trans-generic one. The only criteria here are the presence of the image and the stability of genre.

In the tale-types AaTh 301, 301A, 301B the hero finds himself in the underworld and, after various adventures, tries to get back to the surface. To do so, he needs, as he commonly does in fairy tales, a magical helper; he usually comes across a tree with a nest and saves the nestlings from a snake. The mother bird returns and takes him to the earth as a token of gratitude. This episode can be considered as the stable part of these tale-types. Such a tree, with a bird (often a gigantic one or an eagle) on its top and a snake in its roots, is similar to the mythical concept of the *arbor mundi* (which, in turn, is a variant of the *axis mundi*). Bulgarian folklore scholar L. Parpulova contends that such a tree in fairy tales has its prototype in the Euro-Asian mythical concept of the cosmic tree (Parpulova 1980: 12–24). Its function is to connect three levels of the universe: the underworld, the earth and the skies. Apart from Central Asian (Ivanov & Toporov 1988; Eliade 1990: 206) myths (especially shamanic), it can be found elsewhere too. Its widespread distribution has even led Ivanov and Toporov to propose a reconstruction of a “basic” Proto-Indo-European myth with the following image as its core (Ivanov & Toporov 1974; Gamkrelidze & Ivanov 1995: 446–447): the thunder-god fighting his snakelike adversary (which dwells in the roots of a tree). C. Watkins, insisting on a philological instead of a thematic approach, concludes that the “basic formula” of Proto-Indo-European origin may be summarized as follows: the hero killing the enemy (snake, with a weapon) (Watkins 2001: 297–517; for Serbian material cf. Loma 2002: 54, 74–81, 84). Eagle is a bird close to the thunder-god (and sometimes his incarnation too). A good example of such a mythical image is Germanic Yggdrasil, as described in the *Edda*: in its crown dwells an eagle, in its roots lies the monster Nidhogg which chews on the roots. The two are enemies and a squirrel runs between them as a messenger delivering the insults they are sending to one another (*Edda*, Grimnismál 31–35). This variant of the *arbor mundi* can be found in Egyptian mythology (Ra and a demonic snake fighting at a sycamore tree) and in Pre-Columbian Mexico (image of a cactus where an

⁴ Myth is taken here as a narrative form, genre, or, in Jolles’s terms, “simple form”.

⁵ Although the focus will be mostly on Serbian and other South-Slavic material.

eagle devours a snake).⁶ (Mentioning once again the mental aspect of image and memory issues, we assume that in archaic cultures the *arbor mundi* of this kind obviously has the role of a *mental cosmogram*.)

When it comes to the South Slavic area, Ivanov and Toporov's influence on folklorists has given rise to a neo-mythologizing (and sometimes hyper-mythologizing) approach to native folklore in comparative context (at times relying on primary sources and vast cross-cultural material – as in the work of R. Katičić, at times on the ideas of Russian semioticians). While applying the concept of core myth reconstruction, these studies amplify the idea with new material: lyric songs, narratives and beliefs (Ajdačić 2004: 226–243; Stoinev 1988: 62–72; Popov 1994: 321–322; Benovska-Sübkova 1995: 131–137).⁷ Finally, the mythical enmity between eagle and snake can also be found independently of any tree; in Indian tradition, both Hindu and Buddhist, Garuda (Vishnu's *vahana*) is traditionally the enemy of snakes; the Iranian mythical bird Simorg fights with the dragon. In Serbian epic poetry about the 1448 Battle of Kosovo, the enemies, sultan and hero Sekula, transform into a falcon and a winged snake respectively and fight in the air, which some interpret as a relic of shamanism (Bowra 1966: 504–505; Burkhart 1968: 476–477; Loma 2002: 129; Radulović 2005).

It is obvious that the imagery of fairy tales and myths shows many parallels both in the concept itself and in its functions. In both genres the world tree unites different spheres and thus constitutes the only point of transition where one can safely pass from one level to another (Parpulova). That is also why a fairy-tale hero can use the tree to go from one world to another. The bird, though, is an eagle (in Serbian material: Kanović 2°; Čajkanović 1927: 10°; Djordjević 23°; Zlatanović 2007: 1°; Nikolić 9°).

This relationship can be approached diachronically, presupposing that fairy tales originated from myths through the process of desacralization, a theory that powerfully influenced the history of folklore scholarship, from Max Müller to Meletinskii or Greimas. The two genres can also be viewed synchronically: myth and folktale can exist simultaneously in the same community fulfilling different functions; they can be told in different contexts and be differently viewed upon, as either sacral or non-sacral (Meletinski 1972);

⁶ Other variants of the cosmic tree, such as the tree of life (see Geo Widengren's classical work) or the inverse tree (*Katha Upanisad* II, 3, 1; *Bhagavad Gita* 15, 1), left aside, let it be mentioned that there is in the Genesis a link between the tree in paradise and the snake as an adversary.

⁷ Earlier approaches tended to refute the mythological character of this image, ascribing it instead to the influence of ecclesiastical literature (Franko 1907: 97–105).

they can change form and function when passing from one community to another (Bascom 1965). But sometimes the theory of the origin of the fairy tale in secularized myth can imply a negative evaluation. As Max Lüthi (1943: 112–113) observed long ago, the fairy tale is not degenerated myth, but a phenomenon in its own right, subject to its own laws. The two genres – two “simple forms” (that is to say, elementary) in Jolles’s terms – can be compared on the level of poetics, with respect to the images they use, and that is what we are now mostly interested in.

By comparing the same formulaic image of the tree in fairy tales and myths, we gain an insight into what is essential in their poetics and what is different in their worldviews. It is true that sacral space allows passage from one level of the world to another (Eliade 2004: 131). But in fairy tales this sacrality becomes marginalized, its nature is more of a formulaic one. Passing through the world levels becomes just one adventure among others. Happenings around the world tree become a formulaic fairy-tale image. The killing of the snake is redolent of dragon slaying, a well-known part of the mythical hero’s biography; in one fairy tale (Čajkanović 1927: 10°) the hero even kills the snake with a bludgeon, an attribute of the thunder-god.⁸ Yet, the cosmic tree is relocated to the periphery of the world; it retains its axial function but loses the central position (it does not “synthetize the coordinates” [MS])⁹ both in the world and in narration.¹⁰ While in myths it structures the world picture, in fairy tales – due to the genre’s abstract style (Lüthi), anthropocentrism and “herocentrism” (Novik) – it is subordinate to the hero and his exploits which lead to the wedding as the final goal. “Core myth” becomes just one among Proppian functions.

Emptied of its primary semantics, the image occurs in various places in the fairy tale. It makes use of the traditionally inherited complex (bird–snake–hero’s exploit), but it is just one “brick”, one “building-block”¹¹ in the fairy tale,

⁸ As a general rule, in the heroic fairy tale the human hero “solves a conflict within the marvelous world, between the marvelous society and the marvelous villain” (Jason 1988: 85).

⁹ On the other hand, there are in Central-Asian shamanism examples of the whole tree being in the underworld or of every level having its own tree (Eliade 1990: 205). Leaving the question of the sources used and the possible secondary origin of such concepts aside, they still do not contradict the difference between the two genres.

¹⁰ In a Turkish fairy tale, a bird makes shade with its wings to protect the sleeping hero from the sun (Giese 1925: 84, 8°) even though the story takes place in the underworld! The pattern functions formulaically and “illogically”, independently of the spatial setting. Of course, there are archaic myths about the sun travelling under the earth, but what we are dealing with here is simply the genre’s one-dimensionality.

¹¹ To use W. Radloff’s old term for what will subsequently be termed “formula”.

not a central one that can determine the whole plot. That is why some variants show an inclination towards concretization: the tree becomes a poplar, a bird, an ostrich (Kojanov 12°). Sometimes there are only a bird and a snake and no tree (Djordjević 23°; Trebješanić 28°).

Of course, this is a variability common in folklore – but the very possibility of deforming the archaic image speaks of the transformation (mythologists would say “loss”) of mythical meaning. In the fairy tale, myth (or better, *the mythical*) is present as “passive” (Ranke 1978: 15) or “latent” (Belmont 1999: 212). This can be said for religious phenomena in fairy tales in general.

Another genre and another set of examples come from Classical Indian (Sanskrit) tale collections, unavoidable in the study of fables and animal tales. In the *Pañcatantra* and *Hitopadeśa* tales there is also the image of a bird on the top of a tree and the snake eating its chicks on the ground. Following the advice of a wise animal, the bird steals the king’s golden necklace and drops it into the snake’s hole. The king’s men follow a lead that takes them to the snake and they kill it. So the bird gets rid of the enemy by trickery – quite in tune with the general Machiavellian atmosphere of the *Pañcatantra* (*Tantrākhyāyika* 1, 4; *Hitopadeśa* 2, 5). In some variants (*Tantrākhyāyika* 1, 16; *Hitopadeśa* 4, 4) the outcome for the bird is not as good: it leads a mongoose to the snake, the mongoose kills the snake but it also kills the chicks: one enemy is replaced by another.¹²

Of course, neither the *Pañcatantra* nor the *Hitopadeśa* are collections of folktales. They belong to written literature (which is especially noticeable in the first chapter of the *Tantrākhyāyika* which reflects the *kāvya* style). Still, it may be accepted that many tales in these books are adaptations of folklore material (Grincer 1963: 71–72). The purpose of the collections is didactical – to teach the political craft in particular and worldly wisdom in general. This involves some specifically Indian notions and social relations, which in turn affects the fable genre. Johannes Hertel observed long ago that the classification of European oral genres cannot be applied to Indian material (Hertel 1921: 4). In Indian tales there is no strict differentiation between human and animal characters (most likely because of the belief in reincarnation), and animals are not reduced to a single trait. In Grintser’s view, the key difference between Indian tales and European fables (the Aesopic most of all) is in that the former lack full allegory, which arises precisely from not distinguishing among the hu-

¹² The motif of a stolen object in literature serves the function of framing an innocent person and making false accusations (Joseph puts a goblet among his brothers’ belongings and accuses them of theft; in Serbian etiological legends monks do the same thing to St. Sava with a rooster and the saint curses them).

man, animal and supernatural worlds (Grincer 1963: 45–50). Still, there are didacticism and exemplarity which are in agreement with the poetics of the fable (even if they come from later adaptations in written culture). Compositionally, characters are presented through contrasted situations, just as they are in the animal tale or in the fable (in its developed form). The praise of cunningness also reminds of the animal tale (even if it results from the author's intention). Subtle distinctions between Indian tales and European oral fables and animal tales left aside, even Sanskrit tales provide exemplary narration of human nature and social relations, the animal world being used as an analogon. The aim of the narrative is to encourage the adoption and application of the experience learned from the event described.

This digression on the cultural context of tales helps us to better understand the adaptation of the formulaic image. The image of bird and snake is so elementary that it may well be thought of as being taken from life. Yet, parallels in other genres remind us of its formulaic character. In place of the solar eagle we find the crow, as negative for the Indians among birds as the jackal is among quadrupeds (Ruben 1959: 43).¹³

When compared to fairy tale and myth, the Indian examples show that differences can be traced in the representation of time, space and man. The snake eats chicks over and over again. European fairy tales can contain a mention that this action lasts a long time or a few years (Čajkanović 2001: 28°; Šaulić 7°). In the fairy tale the original cosmic fight where mythical beasts are adversaries by their very nature is transformed and it is mentioned only in passing because it does not concern the hero directly. In the Indian examples the snake's aggressiveness incites the bird to action (and develops the main plot).

In myth, man is either absent or of secondary importance. Myth tells of great cosmic conflicts between supernatural creatures which affect the human world. In the fairy tale, quite the opposite, it is man who is in the centre. The cosmic bird is only the hero's helper. The tree, nestlings, snake – they all are there just to enable the hero to show the compassion necessary for acquiring a helper. The giant bird is no different from any other animal helper or supernatural being. In accordance with the anthropocentrism of the fairy tale, the hero ("accidental passer-by")¹⁴ defeats the snake, while the mythical eagle, who is a true god, is able to overpower the snake/dragon by himself, without human help.

¹³ That perhaps relativizes the opposition between two animals.

¹⁴ But, because of the aforementioned herocentrism of the genre, he is also the only passer-by.

In the Indian variants of fable man is not depicted directly. We can see the king's men, but they are only instrumentalized by a clever animal, just as the mongoose is in another tale. At the same time, the bird, snake, mongoose are actually analogons of the human world (if not disguised people, as in the classical fable). The story relates to human conflicts and gives a moral that concerns human society. The archaic nature of the image is completely marginalized in the *Pañcatantra*; it serves only as an impetus of the plot. The tree is just a part of the scenery, and the conflict between two animals introduces the educated Indian upper-class reader, familiar with Sanskrit, to a coldblooded, politically realistic ethics. What happens with the world picture? Myth narrates about the whole world. The fairy-tale conflict between two animals touches upon the hero indirectly; he is the representative of the human world, but there is no universality. The Indian fable tells of a personal conflict; if there is a need to speak of generality, then it is of a political nature (there the state is seen as the affair of the king and ministers).

That is why mythical narrative is being presented as truth. The Avesta – which is not of a sacred nature only but a liturgical book too – also contains some elements of the old myth about the bird.¹⁵ In fairy tales the only perspective is the hero's. We do not know anything about the bird or the snake beyond their relation to the hero. Whether any being exists independently or not is simply of no importance (Lüthi 1961: 15). The fable gives an objective, impartial story, but that is the objectivity of the laws of political action. We should not forget that the *Pañcatantra* and its avatars are based on the frame-story technique. All tales about animals actually serve other characters' purposes, on a higher level of the frame, as an illustration of some political concept or as a ploy.

Ivanov and Toporov point out that inversion can be found even in mythological texts. In a Georgian legend, the eagle is a negative figure, and the gryphon, whose progeny it eats, a positive one. The myth of Gilgamesh casts a negative light both on the bird Anzu (Anzud) in the tree and on the snake in its roots (Ivanov & Toporov 1988). In Bulgarian beliefs the dragon can be depicted as an eagle, which means that it is marked as positive (Vlčeva 2003: 23). The positive evaluation of the dragon is characteristic of this being's image

¹⁵ Besides the Avesta (Rashn yasht 17), we can take examples from the Bundahishn (a later compilation) (Bundahishn 27, 1–6). In the middle of the sea there is the "eagle's tree", a healing tree of all seeds where the mythical bird (Kamros, Simorgh) lands. In other passages the tree of life is mentioned and its enemy is a demonic lizard from the depths, a creature of Ahriman. All elements are there, albeit not organized into one compact image.

in the Balkan folk beliefs and epic songs. As a result, the dragon can be placed on the top of the tree in the bird's stead (Benovska-Sübkova 1995: 134). In the *Vetālapañcaviṃśati* (24°) the hero even stops Garuda from eating the snake. This comes from the principle of non-violence that strongly marks Indian culture.¹⁶

Role inversions usually affect the plot or the positive/negative nature of a being. From the point of view presented here, the changing of place is just a variant of the formula, restructuration, within the same picture. Moreover, they are important for us as long as they reveal the poetics of genre (like the image of the dragon in the bird's stead in Balkan folk lyrics, cf. below).

The formulaic image can also be found in South-Slavic lyric songs: wedding songs, love songs, toast songs, etc. Vuk Karadžić's collection provides a good example of the tree image:

<p>Na vrh soko gn'jezdo vije, Na kor'jen mi zmaje sjedi, Zmaj sokolu poručuje: "Ako puštih živa ognja, Gn'jezdo ću ti opaliti, Tiće ću ti pofitati." (Karadžić 664°)</p>	<p>On the top [of a tree] a falcon nests, In its roots a dragon sits, Dragon warns the falcon: "If I breathe out fire, I'll burn down your nest, I'll catch your chicks."</p>
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Variants can also be found in Croatian collections (Murat 70°; HNP V 14°). We shall single out a Serbian variant from Božidar Petranović's collection because it illustrates specific possibilities of the formula:

<p>O, javore zelen bore, Blago tebi nasred gore, U zimu ti zime nije, A u ljeto lada dosta, U dnu ti se zmaji legu, A na vrhu sokolovi, Zmaj sokolu govorio: 'Ajd' otale, siv sokole, Pisče ću ti udaviti Tebi pera oblomiti. (Petranović 305°)</p>	<p>O maple tree, you green tree, Lucky you in the midst of the mountain, Not cold in the winter, Enough shade in the summer, Dragons are hatching at your bottom, And falcons on your top, Dragon's saying to the falcon: Go away, grey falcon, I'll smother your chicks I'll break your feathers.</p>
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Once again, it is clear that the lyrical image corresponds to the cosmic tree (Ajdačić 2004; Belaj 1998: 270–274; Katičić 2008: 39–84). While in prose genres the cosmic tree becomes one of the concatenated images, here the

¹⁶ Here we can mention Aesop's fable featuring the eagle as treacherous and the fox as his adversary (Perry's edition 1; Chambry 3; Phaedrus I, 28).

whole song *is* a visual formula. The song is in fact equal to that one image or, even better – the whole song is based on that one image. Once again it points to Honko's notion that multiforms¹⁷ can “shrink” and “stretch” in the process he describes as “the breathing of the text” (Honko 1998: 100ff). As in myth, here the image fills all the coordinates of the world within the text. But the differences are great and determined by genre.

Taking a neo-mythological approach, the Croatian indologist and linguist R. Katičić remarks that the image of the tree in the variants of the song contains a remnant of ancient sacral, mythical and ritual poetry, most probably of Indo-European origin. He bases his conclusion on comparisons, starting from a similar image in the *Iliad* (II, 305–320):

It was but as yesterday or the day before, when the ships of the Achaeans were gathering in Aulis, laden with woes for Priam and the Trojans; [305] and we round about a spring were offering to the immortals upon the holy altars hecatombs that bring fulfilment, beneath a fair plane-tree from whence flowed the bright water; then appeared a great portent: a serpent, blood-red on the back, terrible, whom the Olympian himself had sent forth to the light, [310] glided from beneath the altar and darted to the plane-tree. Now upon this were the younglings of a sparrow, tender little ones, on the topmost bough, cowering beneath the leaves, eight in all, and the mother that bare them was the ninth, Then the serpent devoured them as they twittered piteously, [315] and the mother fluttered around them, wailing for her dear little ones; howbeit he coiled himself and caught her by the wing as she screamed about him. But when he had devoured the sparrow's little ones and the mother with them, the god, who had brought him to the light, made him to be unseen; for the son of crooked-counselling Cronos turned him to stone; [320] and we stood there and marveled at what was wrought.¹⁸

This visual formula is described by Katičić as a “foreign body” in the epic text containing “original numinosity” (Katičić 2008: 82), *mysterium tremendum* as R. Otto calls it. Consequently, he concludes that the verses:

¹⁷ Multiforms can also consist of formulas, but for Honko multiforms function on a macrolevel (though he means formulas in Lord's sense, while we refer here to images).

¹⁸ <http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/hopper/text?doc=Perseus%3Atext%3A11999.01.0134%3Abook%3D2%3Acard%3D301>.

Tići su mi poletari;	My little birds are fledglings;
brzo će mi polećeti	Soon will they fly off
baš put grada Dubrovnika;	And to the town of Dubrovnik;
donijet će mi dobre glase	They'll bring me good news
od gospode dubrovaške	From the noble folk of Dubrovnik
(HNP V: 14°)	

must be a later addition (*ibid.* 77). But even Vuk Karadžić, as a collector, paid attention to the last verses of the version he published, observing: “One would say that the last three verses are added by the singer just for the sake of keeping company”.

Katičić’s idea of “foreign body” revives the Grimm brothers’ famous description of mythical elements in folklore as fragments of broken myth, particles of diamonds covered by grass. But, while the diachronic approach is certainly not to be rejected, it is also important to remember that lyrical texts matter not only because they preserve ancient mythical concepts. They are not just treasuries of ossified gems; they have their function in the community (particularly in the nineteenth-century rural community) that used to sing them. We should remember Bengt Holbek’s efforts to demonstrate what fairy tales could mean to the men and women who were telling them, through symbolizing their life conflicts. In other words, the traditional community is not a passive transmitter of mythical treasures, just as none of the genres are valued as places of buried treasure devoid of poetics. On the contrary, even the concluding verses themselves, addressing the listeners and expressing good wishes, are as important as the mythical image, although they may be a “younger layer”. From the poetical point of view, this image cannot be taken in isolation, but within the genre. The way a genre transforms the formulaic image is as rewarding a subject for research as an attempt, undoubtedly important, at mythopoeitic archaeology. Extratextual elements (practical function, which involves the participants in the rite and the rite itself) are equally necessary for understanding the genre of lyric (especially ritual) songs.

This becomes clear when these songs are compared to other lyric genres in South Slavic and Balkan folklore. (The elements of culture are of interest here only if they have some significance for the poetics of genre within a given culture.) The image of the cosmic tree is actually not very different from other images usually used in lyrics, most often in the initial position. Eagle or falcon is usually interpreted allegorically as a young suitor or bridegroom, or the falcon belongs to a young man as an aristocratic attribute. In this area, an elaborate imagery (very similar to the aforementioned image) is also characteristic of lyric genres: the hero and his girlfriend each plant a tree in order to climb it and be able to see each other from afar, etc. The important difference is that,

although the tree is at the central point of a given space, it is not the middle of the world but of an inhabited and named place, village or town (*cf.* Peukert 1961: 36–37). The image of the tree with bird and snake is little different from comparable images typical of lyric. The planting of a tree and its growth as a vegetative analogy corresponds to the symbolism of coming of age, youth and fertility in wedding and love songs.

In this sense, a Macedonian harvest song proves to be a good illustration: on the top of the tree is the sun, in the middle a peacock sings, and in the root is a snake, which is interpreted as an allegory at the end of the song – the girl's beloved ones, her brother and father (Celakoski 1978). This is far from any myth and quite corresponds to the usual allegory of lyric songs. In some other songs the tree with a falcon can be interpreted as a church, liturgical books, etc. or as a house, guests, master of the house. The image is set in a ritual context (*koledari*) (Lovretić 1897: 320)¹⁹ and fused with the images of wealth typical of this subgenre of ritual songs.

In another group of songs the image still exists, but only some parts of it are recognizable. The fir tree wails about the snake breaking its root (Dimitrijević 39°). Mountain forest (and the mountain is an obvious *axis mundi*) is asked if snakes have been biting away its roots (Zlatanović 1994: 508°). While mythical correspondence is easily recognizable, within the broader pool of tradition and ethnographical context even such a variation is possible in which, for example, a marigold is asked if its root is being bitten away by a snake.

In a Bulgarian variant (Miladinovci 167°) the tree crown is adorned with a nightingale instead of an eagle, and this change is typical of lyric poetry. There is a dragon in the root of the cypress but there are no negative connotations attached to it; on the contrary, a girl, running away from the emperor, finds refuge under the dragon's wings. This change is quite understandable in the context of Balkan folklore where the dragon has a protective function; moreover, he has a reputation as a lover. Even a peacock may appear in the role of a protector of girls (Šapkarev 181°).

As an excursion, it may be mentioned that the tripartite tree – seen as the cosmogram of three world levels in mythography – occurs in lyric songs too. It has pearls on the top, bees in the middle, and from its root the Danube rises (Stanković 98°; BV 1892, after Andrić 85°; HNP V: 14°) (two elements – bees on the top and water from the root – Vukašinović 22; HNP VI: 94°; Murat 71°). Examples with the transformation of the dragon, completely in accord-

¹⁹ Rite of *koleda* (masked young men, *koledari*, circumambulating the village at the end of December – beginning of January).

ance with the living belief of Balkan peoples, show that the universal image, as it is defined by mythical approaches, is adapted both to the genre and to the local/regional context (Aarne's acclimatization). This should not necessarily lead to universalistic vs. culturalistic interpretation because both have good pros in folkloristics. It simply reminds us that instead of "loss" and "distortion" we should rather speak of adaptation. In this case cultural context determines the song's imagery, so it is not the subject of ethnography only.

To conclude: the "motif" examined here is very stable and occurs in different genres, cultures and epochs. While its presence and stability can be explained by claiming its universal (mythological or psychological) nature (such as, for example, a Jungian or Eliadean claim would be), we have focused on its poetical aspect without challenging other interpretations. Its stability and cross-cultural character allow us to call it a formula. Since it obviously is not based on a metrical pattern (or any syntactic pattern at all), the foundation of its formulaic character is its visual nature; therefore we may speak of visual formula or formulaic image.

On the other hand, this formula cannot be looked at independently of context. Different genres – fairy tale, myth, lyric song (ritual, wedding, love songs), political fable – retain the image but conform it to the general poetical laws of the genre. These laws express the worldviews particular to different genres, which becomes clear when representations of man, space or time are compared. It seems that this brings us back to Jolles's "spiritual occupation" or Ranke's "anthropological needs" of different simple forms or, as Linda Degh puts it, "view of the world" as "fundamental in genre identification" (Degh 1994: 246). This can demonstrate the importance of genre. Comparative analysis of the same image in several different genres shows that genres are not imposed onto the material by philologists, they come from within the material.

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II BALKAN CONTEXT

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TWO BLACK RAVENS

Corvus Corax in Slavic Epics – a Comparative Outlook

Abstract: A worldwide species of songbirds, the raven inhabits all the continents except the Antarctic. In the myths and beliefs of many peoples all over the Earth it takes a prominent place determined by its two features: the diet – it is a scavenger – and a relatively high intelligence. A wise raven is the central mythological figure among the natives of northern Asia and North America. In their tales and epics it plays the role of the totemic animal, the cultural hero-trickster, the great shaman, even the demiurge. In the traditions of Indo-European peoples there are traces of similar shamanistic conceptions, but the prevailing idea is that of raven as a symbol of death, bloodshed and war. For the Slavs too, it is an ill-omened bird, but sometimes it proves helpful to epic heroes, as in a variant of the poem about the death of Prince Marko. With Marko is connected, in Serbian folklore, the theme of the Sleeping Hero, with close parallels in the German story of Frederic Barbarossa asleep in the Kyffhäuser mountain with ravens flying round it, and especially in the Armenian epos of “David of Sassoun”, where the enchanted hero Mher, i.e. Mithra, dwells inside the “Raven’s Rock”, waiting to return to this world. Unlike several poetic formulae, such as Russ. *černyj voron*, SCr. *crni vran*, and motifs, such as the raven speaking to the hero or informing the hero’s family of his death, which are common to both Russian and Serbian epics and thus traceable back to Common Slavic times, the initial formula of “raven the newsbearer” which regularly features two ravens, *dva vrana gavrana*, seems to be confined to the South Slavic domain. On the other hand, there are instances of two ravens appearing as a tandem in the mythology of other Indo-European peoples, such as Odin’s spies Hugin and Munin, or two mantic birds in a Celtic legend told by Strabo IV 4, 6. A puzzling passage in Pindar Ol. II 87f where he speaks of two ravens “singing against the god-like bird of Zeus” is also taken into consideration. In view of the eschatological note of this poem, it is proposed here to identify them with Aristeas of Proconessus and Abaris the Hyperborean, the sixth-century legendary figures connected with North-European shamanism and devoted to the “Hyperborean” Apollo who seems to be, in their case, a Greek interpretation of Iranian Mithra. Thus we face once again, after the case of the Sleeping Hero mentioned above, the same current of religious ideas centred on the great Iranian deity, a kind of Pre-Roman Mithraism, which over the centuries streamed from Central Asian steppes and across Scythia towards Europe, exerting influence on the religions of the Greeks, the Slavs and the Germans. It was

imbued with shamanistic elements, one of them being the fabulous raven. Eventually the etymology of two Slavic names of the raven is reconsidered, **vornǫ* and **gavornǫ*; the latter is claimed to go back to **garvornǫ* which would have nothing to do with the former, but rather could be analysed as **garv-ornǫ*, with the first element being I.-E. *gāru-* ‘voice (of singing birds)’ and the second one I.-E. **orn-* ‘(a big, eagle-like) bird’.

Keywords: raven, mythology, oral poetry, formulas, Slavic, Indo-European

Widespread in every corner of the planet, in all climatic zones and continents excluding the Antarctic, the *Corvus corax*, raven, is amongst the birds that have always drawn the attention of people and encouraged their mythic imagination. The underlying reason for this is not to be looked for in the economic significance the raven has for man, which is negligible, but rather in its two other properties: its eating habits and comparatively high intelligence. The raven is a scavenger that even feeds on unburied human corpses. This trait, in addition to its black colour, is what makes the raven an omen and symbol of death and misfortune. On the other hand, combined with the empirical fact that the raven is the most intelligent of all birds, capable of mimicking human speech and similar to humans in terms of lifespan, it offers grounds for developing more complex mythological representations. In a way, the devouring of an unburied corpse by a scavenger is a substitution for the funeral rite, be it by interment, cremation or cannibalism (in some regions, exposing the body to scavenger birds has assumed the status of standard funeral practice). Therefore, the undertaker-raven could have been perceived as the reincarnation of a prominent member of the tribe (warriors fallen in their full strength as a rule became vultures’ prey), which paved the way for its promotion to a totemic animal or a mythical progenitor, whereas in more developed eschatological notions it would assume the role of transferring the soul of the deceased to the other world (thereby geminating the deity of fire where cremation was practised). Since the transfer of souls is one of crucial shamanic functions, the raven easily assumed features of a mythical shaman. Thus a general perception of birds capable of mediating between the world of humans and the world of deities, and of transferring divine gifts to people, became particularly prominent in the instance of the raven so that it has developed as a widespread cultural hero (frequently having characteristics of a trickster), occasionally geminating the demiurge or assuming his role itself.

The raven has a particularly prominent place in the myths and beliefs of **palaeo-Asian peoples and American Indians**, which reflects the common cultural heritage shared by peoples living on both sides of the Bering Strait. It is in North Asia and North America that the raven most commonly appears in

the aforementioned roles of a totemic animal, supreme shaman, cultural hero and demiurge who, inter alia, secures fire to people or creates light, the Sun and other celestial luminaries. Some of these motifs are also found in other corners of the world (the raven as a totem among the Australian Aborigines, or as a solar symbol in ancient China). The ancient East is characterised by the role of the raven in the legend of the deluge in which the protagonist sends a raven from the ark to find land, but it does not return, which is interpreted as a favourable sign in the oldest version incorporated into the epic of Gilgamesh, i.e. it is construed as if the raven had managed to find dry land (which may be a reflection of the demiurgic role of a bird creating the Earth by ascending it from the sea bed attested elsewhere). In the later Judeo-Christian and Muslim interpretation, however, that motif assumed a negative connotation relating to the etiological legend of an originally white bird that became black because of a curse that fell on it. Legends of this kind are also widespread, but in some instances it is unclear whether they are self-originating or originated under the influence of either the Christian or Muslim legend wherein the curse of the raven appears to be based on the Judaic division of animals into pure and impure, the raven being classified into the latter category (as opposed to the dove, which for this reason was given a positive role in the Biblical story of the deluge) (E. M. Meletinskij, MNM 1: 245–247).

Negative designation of the raven as an impure bird is also found in the contemporary folklore of European peoples, where it perhaps comes down, at least in part, to the said influence of Christianity (or of Islam). In pre-Christian **Indo-European** representations, the raven is associated with deities with pronounced shamanic features: Odin (Wodan) among the Germans, Lugh among the Celts, Apollo and his son Asclepius among the Greeks.¹ In this respect, the Indo-European areal builds on the mentioned Siberian-North American areal. It is conspicuous that the motif of the raven as a reincarnation of Apollo's priest is linked to the legendary character of Abaris the Hyperborean who came from the mythical North (see below). Archaic Indo-European traditions are characterised by the raven being linked to war deities, amongst whom are, in a way, the aforementioned "shaman-like" Odin and Lugh,² as well as the Celtic goddess *Catubodua* (in later Irish tradition referred to as *Cathbadhbh* or *Badhbh Cha-*

¹ Already Hesiod makes a reference to the raven as Apollo's spy (schol. Pind Pyth. III 14). Ovid (*Met.* II 61ff.) associates with this story the mentioned motif of how Apollo cursed the raven which brought the tidings (about the infidelity of the nymph he was in love with) and made it black.

² Both accompanied by two ravens which supplied them with foreign "intelligence" (EIEC 142).

tha), whose name means “battle crow, i.e. female-raven”. The raven was considered a symbol of war among the Celts; hence it figures as an emblem on the helmets of Celtic warriors. Similarly the helmet of Greek Athena, another war goddess, had the form of a raven. The Celtic source is also assumed for the Roman legend, recounted by Titus Livius, about the single combat between the tribune Marcus Valerius and his Gallic challenger during the Gallic invasion in 349 B.C. in which the Roman defeated the Gaul owing to the raven that settled on his helmet and began pecking and scratching his opponent with its claws.³ A panegyric to German King Ludwig from the quill of an early-ninth-century Irish scholar, the Pagan Vikings are described as devastating ravens with iron jaws and claws, which converted into doves through christening. It was the raven and the wolf that were dedicated to Odin, God of War, as animals which devour corpses on the battlefield. Therefore, a typically conventional description of any great warrior in old Nordic poetry was “ravens’ feed”. This implies that those fallen in battle were sacrificed to God, whilst the ravens were seen as his heralds, rushing to the battlefield to appease their hunger, such as those described in the verses quoted in Ragnar Lodbrok Saga (*Ragnars Saga Loðbrókar*, cap. 16): “The heath-falcon⁴ flies here each morning over these hearty towns; with lack of luck he might die of hunger. He should fare south o’er the sand where we let the dew from great blows flow from wounds, there where is the flowing of men’s deaths” (Ellis Davidson 1978: 101f). Raven is an omen *par excellence*: as per the legend told by Plutarch, a flock of ravens gathered around Apollo’s sanctuary in the port foreboded the death of Cicero (Plut. Vita Ciceronis 47, 8), and in a poem in the Edda, a raven perched on a tree presages to Siegfried’s assassins who are passing by on their way to Attila, that revenge will come upon them.⁵ Gamkrelidze & Ivanov (1984: 540) have noticed that in some Indo-European traditions, particularly Germanic, cultural significance of the raven is closer to that of the eagle, especially as a sacred bird of Valhalla, and that the name of this bird appears in a number of titles belonging to the language of cult and sublime poetry. A reflection of that ancient cult symbolism

³ Ó hÓgáin 2002: 41–43, *cf.* illustrations on p. 150ff showing a third-century-B.C. helmet with an emblem of the raven found in Romania; *cf.* also part of the relief on the Gundestrup cauldron depicting a row of horsemen, one of whom has a bird on his helmet.

⁴ In the original *heiðirvals*, a kenning, conventional metaphoric name, for raven in Old Icelandic poetry.

⁵ Brot (af Sigurðarkviðu), Neckel 194 (verse 5 placed behind 11). *Hrafnsmál*, “the raven song” generally attributed to eighth-century Norwegian skald Þorbjörn Hornklofi, largely consists of a conversation between a raven and Valkyrie about the life and martial deeds of Harald Fairhair.

is observable in English and German Romanticism, such as in Poe's famous ballad "The Raven".

The character of raven in **Slavic** folk culture is also ambivalent, which may in part be due to amalgamation between Christian and pre-Christian representations. It is a "shadowy" bird, belonging to the group of "impure, i.e. demonic" animals (Gura 1997: 530ff puts it at the top of this list), related to the wolf (*ibid.* 531, 535) and the devil (*ibid.* 531), whilst at the same time being "clairvoyant" (Rus. *veščaja*), therefore a prophet bird, mainly ominous though. The negative characterisation of the raven is not necessarily of Biblical origin. Djordjević (1958: 53) recorded a Herzegovinian belief that ravens mainly feed on human flesh, and there is a tradition in the Kolašin area that ravens and jack-daws are not to be hunted "since they are black and deplorable birds". Hence it seems that the "impurity" of the raven was derived from its "shadowiness" or, in other words, it was tabooed for human consumption so as to avoid indirect cannibalism. On the other hand, the raven is deemed to be the wisest of all birds,⁶ and poems and short stories attribute to it the gifts of speech and prophecy, a lifespan of a hundred or three hundred years, and magical powers: it keeps hidden treasure in its nest, procures and supplies live and dead water, and golden apples (Afanas'ev 1995: 252–255; Gura 1997: 532f; Vaseva 1998: 89). A Russian fairy tale depicts Voron Voronovich taking a hero out of the underworld. Older shaman features sometimes survive in Christian interpretation, such as the belief that the raven helps the soul of a dying sorcerer to leave his body, that demons in the figure of ravens and similar birds take the souls of sinners condemned to eternal torments (Gura 1997: 532f), or that the raven itself can be the embodiment of a sorcerer or a lecherous priest (*ibid.* 533).⁷ Amalgamation of Christian and older motifs might be found in Slavic versions of the deluge, according to which the raven was at first as meek as a dove and as white as snow, and then was cursed by Noah or God himself to become black

⁶ In folk understanding, this enables a clear distinction between the raven and the crow, which stands for a stupid bird; further distinctions include the notion that the raven, as a scavenger, carries the symbolism of bloodshed and war, whilst the crow is perceived as a pest for crops; crows usually appear in groups (flocks), whilst the raven appears alone or in a couple (which will be addressed below); finally, in the Slavic, Greek and German languages raven is a masculine noun, and crow is a feminine noun. Therefore, regardless of the similarities and intertwining between the notions of these two birds, it has seemed methodologically more correct to leave the crow out of this consideration.

⁷ The Danish folklore representation of the "deathly raven" (*valravn*) is based on the belief that the raven that eats the heart of a king or chieftain who died in battle gains human knowledge and superhuman powers.

and sanguivorous, and to feed on carrions (*ibid.* 533; Djordjević 1958: 53).⁸ The punishment is even worse in the version from Dalmatian Poljice: it shall not drink water during the three dry summer months (Gura 1997: 533), which is a motif found in Greek mythology.⁹

The link between the raven and death, bloodshed and war is also emphasised in Slavic culture (*ibid.* 533). All Slavic peoples believe that its flyover or croaking foretells death or some other misfortune (*ibid.* 536f; Djordjević 1958: 53ff). Vrčević says about the Serbs that “wherever they live, our people see ravens as an ill-omened symbol and as a cursed bearer of evil tidings” (*ibid.* 53). This is reflected, inter alia, in “safeguarding words”, apotropaic formulae uttered upon hearing a raven croak: “Your voice be here, your treat be far away”; “Mayst thou eat as white as thou art, mayst thou live as grey as thou art!”; “Shoo off to a mongrel’s flesh, raven” (*ibid.* 54f); as well as in local traditional stories in which a raven brings a sign that Turks are going to attack and kill a gathering of people by a church.¹⁰ In traditional Slavic poetry, the raven is a harbinger of evil tidings *par excellence* (see below), and in North-Russian dirges, death itself will come in the form of a black raven (Gura 1997: 536).

With regard to the raven, Krstić singles out the following motifs from the **South-Slavic traditional poems**: 1) raven attacking badly wounded and fallen people so as to feed on their flesh and their blood [48 examples]; 2) raven-messenger, bringing news from the battlefield and notifying about someone’s death [109]; 3) talking raven [14]; 4) raven-letter carrier [5]; 5) raven tending a sick man [5];¹¹ 6) raven as man’s friend [6].¹²

⁸ This or a similar tradition is referred to by an epic poem formula, not mentioned by Djordjević: “since the raven had become black” (*cf.* Višnjić’s “The Battle of Salaš”, Vuk IV 28^o, 445), that is, from the earliest times; the ultimate opposite in the course of time is reflected by the formula “as long as there’s the Sun and the Moon” (in this poem: “the Sun and Salaš”, verse 451).

⁹ Once Apollo sent a raven to fetch water, and the raven flew to immature crops and remained there waiting for them to ripen and did not accomplish the task, so the god punished it to suffer from thirst during the summer (Ael. *Hist. anim.* I 47). Lévi-Strauss finds an analogy for this story among the South American Indians in the area of Mato Grosso (Lévi-Strauss 1966: 58). As a reminder, in Greece, the raven is associated with Apollo, and with the story that Apollo turned the raven black for having brought him bad news.

¹⁰ Widespread in eastern Serbia, they have analogies in Romanian traditional poetry, see below.

¹¹ For the motif of the raven (or eagle) treating wounded Marko with water and wine, *cf.* Ivanova 1995: 34; *cf.* also the biblical motif of Prophet Elijah fed by a raven (Kings I 17, 4–6).

¹² Krstić 1984: 151. With five examples neutral in terms of motif, there are 192 places in total. This figure in Krstić is relative, because there are inconsistencies and imprecisions.

A good example of the extent to which all these motifs are entwined may be the poem “The Death of Prince Marko”, in Vuk VI 27°, which will be separately addressed here. The poem begins when a wolf and a raven team up to “vanquish their hunger with some meat”.¹³ The wolf smells blood, and the raven finds a wounded hero in a large stony cave: it is Prince Marko.¹⁴ The raven starts pecking Marko, but Marko warns it off; then the wolf comes and starts biting him, but he threatens the wolf too, and then he entreats the “black raven bird” for God’s sake to take a “small letter to Kosovo, to the whitest church”. The raven agrees to do so (*Black it was, but of God took heed*, 88), Marko feeds him with meat, and writes a letter to monk Savo to come as quickly as he can so as to find him still alive and give him the last communion. The raven arrives in Kosovo the next day, and finds a convocation of people by the church; the assembled Serbs start to shoot at it, but it manages to drop the letter to Savo and to fly away. Savo immediately sets off with twelve Serbian notables and even though it takes them three days to get to Marko, they find him still alive. Savo gives him the last communion, and Marko passes away. They bury him in the churchyard next to the sanctuary in Kosovo; Šarac, his horse, dies soon afterwards, so they bury it and put a “memorial stone” at the grave too. The poem ends with a statement: “Then the Turks fell on the [Serbian] empire” (214).

Marko’s letter carried by the raven and his burial next to the church are obviously Christian additions, secondary by comparison to the motif of the cave where the raven and wolf find him, and so is the hero’s death there, since Marko is immortal, a “**sleeping hero**”. Namely, there is a widespread story that he did not die, but is merely sleeping in a hidden cave and will return to this

sions, which is understandable given that this is an unfinished, posthumously published paper. E.g., poem Vuk VI 54°, where the wounded *sirdar* Cmiljanić tells two ravens who flew down to peck him to fly further instead of waiting for his death, and not to eat at a first, second, or even at a third battlefield, where all the corpses are Turkish, but to find two corpses of *sirdars* and to feed on flesh there, and then to fly to Kotare to tell that the *sirdars* have died; and the ravens do so. For a good reason this poem is classified into the second and third groups of motifs, instead of the first to which it may also belong, whereas on the other hand its classification under the fourth group of motifs is quite unfounded given that the raven does not carry a letter, but transmits the news orally. On the other hand, the motif of a raven-letter carrier is found in the poem from the same collection about the death of Prince Marko, which will be addressed below.

¹³ A similar beginning as in Mat. hrv. V 70°.

¹⁴ There is only one verse, near the end of the poem, indicating how Marko got there (199): *Ubi njega sa grada djevojka* [He was killed by a maiden from the town wall], for interpretation cf. Loma 2002: 140.

world sometime in the future.¹⁵ Čajkanović compared this Serbian belief to a German legend about Frederick Barbarossa who is asleep in the Kyffhäuser mountain (1941, XV, 416, cf. esp. fn. 9 and 11 on p. 516f).¹⁶ In the Kyffhäuser legend there are also ravens. In the poem of Fridrich Rückert, Barbarossa sits at a marble table, his red beard growing through it; he is waiting for the time to return to this world, and occasionally calls for his servant:

Er spricht im Schlaf zum Knaben:
Geh hin vors Schloß, o Zwerg,
Und sieh, ob noch die Raben
herfliegen um den Berg.
Und wenn die alten Raben
Noch fliegen immerdar,
So muß ich auch noch schlafen,
Verzaubert hundert Jahr.¹⁷

An even closer and hitherto unnoticed parallel to the Serbian tradition about sleeping Marko is found in the Armenian poem “The Daredevils of Sassoun”, where we also find the motif of the raven. A brave warrior, Mher of Sassoun, fights with his own father, David of Sassoun, unaware of who he is; he throws him onto the ground and the father, disgraced, throws a curse on his son never to have offspring and not to die until the Judgment Day, and the curse works. Desperate, Mher goes to his parents’ graves, who both died in the meantime, to ask them what he is to do. He hears their voices saying that he has roamed the world long enough, and that he is destined for the “Raven’s Rock” (*Agrawu-K^car*): when his horse sinks into the solid ground, he will know that the time has come to withdraw there. God sends seven angels who fight with him and shoot arrows at him, but he cannot reach them with his “Glittering Sword”, the ancestral weapon of all four heroes of this poem. Mher entreats God to let him get to the “Carved Rock” (an Urartu period megalith inscribed in cuneiform in the mountains east of Lake Van). The horse takes him to the field of Tushpa and he sees a raven (according to one version a “talking flaming-red raven”), shoots an arrow and injures it, but the raven continues to fly, and Mher follows it on his horse. They finally arrive at the “Carved Rock”, which opens at that very moment; the raven flies inside and Mher’s horse sinks into

¹⁵ A most recent review of the beliefs about Marko is provided by Lj. Radenković in SM: 293–297.

¹⁶ There is a similar belief about Charlemagne sleeping in the Untersberg Mountain.

¹⁷ “In his dream, he speaks to a boy: Go out, boy, and see if ravens are still circling around the hill; if the old ravens are still there, then I have to sleep spellbound for one hundred years more.”

the ground up to its knees. Understanding the sign, he enters the rock together with his horse, and the rock closes behind him. He has been presaged that he will remain there until the ground is again solid enough to sustain him and his horse. Then Mher will leave the rock and traverse the world from one end to another destroying the wrong; the old world will collapse and a new rightful world will rise, where wheat grains will be bigger than walnuts, and barley grains bigger than rosehips (in a version: barley will grow as high as a man's thigh). Once or twice a year (in one version every Saturday, in others in the night of the Ascension when the sky opens and manna falls down to earth) Mher gets out of the rock and tries if the ground is solid enough. Seeing that it cannot yet bear his weight, he goes back inside. Similarly to Barbarossa and Prince Marko, there are also stories in which passers-by chance upon Mher on such occasions and talk to him.¹⁸

Parallelism between the legendary characters of Mher and Prince Marko is particularly striking. Marko was also cursed by his father never to have offspring and not to die before the "end of time";¹⁹ Marko is also bound to the motif of the weight that the ground cannot sustain; Marko's horse also sinks into the ground, and at the moment of despair, Marko also entreats God to take him and his horse Šarac to a cave, where he is believed to be still dwelling and waiting for the time for his return. Therefore, the assumption seems justified that the motif of the raven in our poem, although differently devised, is somehow related to the raven that led Mher to his hidden rock dwelling.

Just as the very character of Mher who, like his name, is in essence Persian **Mithra**, this sujet, as well as many other elements of Armenian culture, is

¹⁸ The epic legend about Mher presented here is the one according to Boyle 1978 and S. B. Arutjunjan, MNM 2: 160 s.v. Mihr, who lists the following sources and literature: M. DikranTchitouny, *Sassounacan, épopée populaire arménienne* (Paris 1942), 1083–1097; *David de Sassoun*, transl. Fr. Feydit (Paris 1964); *The Daredevils of Sasouns*, transl. L. Surmelian (London 1966); Orbeli 1956; Abegjan 1975.

¹⁹ In poem Vuk II 34° ("Urosh and the Sons of Marnyava"), 247ff, enraged King Vukashin curses his son Marko: *Ti nemaō roda ni poroda / i da bi ti duša ne ispala / dok turskoga cara ne dvorio* "Mayst thou have nor sepulcher nor son / May the soul go not from thee till thou servest the Turk in war!" [English translation by George Rapall Noyes & Leonard Bacon: *Heroic Ballads of Serbia* (Boston: Sherman, French & Company, 1913)]. In the mythical vision of history, the fall of the Serbian land into the hands of the Turks is perceived as *posljednje vrijeme* "the end of time", collapse of the old world, cf. Loma 2002: 212. There is another motif in the final part of this poem which has an analogy in Armenian epic legend. Vukashin is attempting to slay his son Marko, but he actually slays an angel who has stood in between them (243), and in one Armenian version, Mher and his father David are separated by Gabriel Hrestak, i.e. Archangel Gabriel.

probably of Iranian origin. At least this is indicated by a New Persian version of the fairy tale “The Wishing Table” mentioned by Boyle, in which a “black crow” gives its feather to a peasant called Muhrak (also from Old Iranian *Miθra-*!), which, floating in the air, leads him to a cave where he finds magical objects. *Mher* or *Meher* reflects a Pehlevian form of Mithra’s name *Mihr*, taken over from Parthians by Armenians together with the cult of this god. The same as his Iranian prototype, Armenian Mihr was the deity of heavenly light and the Sun, and had shrines dedicated to him in Bagaharich and Garni (Arutjunjan l.c.). The “Raven’s Rock” contains elements of Mithraic iconography. Mher is depicted as sitting on a horse in his cave, the same as Mithra is depicted. A candle burning on either side can be compared to the images of torchbearers *Cautes* and *Cautopates* in Mithraic reliefs. *Çarkifelek*, the Wheel of Fortune rotating in front of Mher, would be equivalent to the representation of Zodiac signs that border the icons of Mithra. While pointing to all these similarities, Boyle is still of the opinion that they may be accidental and that Mher of Sassoun may have nothing in common with either Roman or Iranian Mithra, but may merely be one of countless varieties of the Indo-European theme of the “sleeping hero” (Boyle 1978: 73). Reinhold Merkelbach does not share Boyle’s reservations, but adds to his arguments in favour of the Mithraic origin of the “Raven’s Rock” scenery by, inter alia, comparing it to Roman Mithraea which were built as caves with starry skies painted in the dome and hidden entrances that could be opened only by those who beckoned in an agreed fashion. He also deems that the motif of shooting an arrow at the raven is a secondary one, emerging from a combination of two different iconographic elements: Mithra firing an arrow into the (stony) skies and the raven coming down from the Sun towards Mithra (Merkelbach 1984: 258f). It should be added that the first (lowest)-grade initiates of the Mithraic mysteries, the grade protected by the planet of Mercury, were called *coraces*; they wore raven masks, imitated the bird’s croaking and wing flapping, and their duty in ceremonies was to serve at the table (*ibid.* 86f).²⁰

²⁰ Boyle compares the raven from the Armenian story to the bird sent by Noah from the ark; Wodan’s escort Hugin and Munin; three ravens of Bügü Khan, legendary Uyghur ruler, that could speak all the languages so he sent them everywhere as spies; ravens that according to a legend [conveyed by Plutarch, *Vita Alexandri* 27, 3] led the army of Alexander the Great to an oasis in the Libyan Desert, and then he specifically points to a link between this bird and the “sleeping hero” motif expressed in the mentioned tradition about ravens that fly above the Kyffhäuser Mountain at the heart of which Frederick Barbarossa sits asleep, and in the British belief that King Arthur, turned into a raven by a charm, still lives until the day when he will rise again to regain his throne (Boyle 1978: 71–73).

Rather than by an influence of Roman Mithraism on Armenian epic tradition, these similarities can be explained by a common Iranian base they both sprouted from.²¹ Yet, Armenian Mher provides a convincing proof that a “sleeping hero” hides a Pagan deity behind. Referring to the prevailing opinion that sleeping Barbarossa is a substitute for Wodan, Čajkanović assumes that, behind the Messianic characters of sleeping Prince Marko and the “saviour on a white horse” is the Serbian supreme deity Dabog (1941: 410ff, cf. ns. on p. 515f), whom he deems closely related to Wodan (cf. Loma 2003: 192). I have presumed a Wodan-type deity in Al-Masudi’s description (Meyer 96f.) of the Slavic Pagan idol depicted as pulling the dead out of their graves with a stick and followed by negroid people, ants, ravens and other black birds (Loma 2002: 192). One should keep in mind that ravens are Wodan’s sacred birds and that their presence in the Kyffhäuser legend is related to this. All that has been stated above seems to be in favour of Čajkanović’s tracing back Marko asleep in the cave to a Wodan-type deity. However, if we seek for a mythological substrate to this character, the parallelism with Armenian Mithra expressed herein points into the opposite direction. Iranian Mithra, just as Armenian Mihr, was the god of the Sun (*mīhr* means ‘the Sun’ in New Persian), and Serbian *Dabog* is associated in terms of his name with Old Russian *Dažbog*, equated to the deified Sun in a gloss added to the Slavic translation of Malalas’ Chronicle. In the epic figure of Marko the solar aspect is particularly emphasised, and not only in the theme of his race with the Sun but also in the framework motif of the greatest warrior who, similarly to Mher, goes to the extreme ends of the world in east and west, accomplishing various feats; even in Filip Višnjić’s version of the poem about the death of Marko, his ascent to the top of the hill where he will die has a clear solar symbolism (Loma 2002: 245). I deem that there must be some genetic relationship between the three abovementioned variants of the legend about the “Sleeping Hero”, German, Armenian and Serbian, rather than only a typological similarity. Like in some other similar instances, we may think of a common Pre-Indo-European heritage or, rather, of the result of some later mutual influences ultimately originating in the area of Iran. With such obvious similarities between Marko and Mher, one could even be tempted to allow for a relatively late intermediation of the Armenians settled in areas of Macedonia and Bulgaria by Byzantine authorities. Consequently, it is possible that at least a part of the epic legend of Marko did not originate in the Common Slavic epoch, i.e. in the period before the South Slavs settled in the Balkans; this especially goes for the analogy for his sinking into the ground

²¹ A reflection of Iranian eschatology in the Armenian legend is assumed by Widengren 1965: 209f., 239.

found in Russian bylinas, where it is applied to the hero Svyatogor. It should be stressed here that Svyatogor largely reminds of the “sleeping hero” in respect to his name (‘he of the Holy Mountain’) and certain motifs (he usually lies on the ground or in a mountain and sleeps, and sometimes is even identified with the mountain). There is in ancient sources a mention of a “Holy Mountain” somewhere in Scythia (i.e. present-day Southern Russia and Ukraine), a part of which bore the name meaning “(hill of) holy fire” in the local Iranian (Sarmatian) dialect.²² Perhaps it is there, in the then Slavic-Iranian contact zone of the second half of the first millennium B.C. and first centuries A.D. that we should look for the cradle of the sujet and motif we have dealt with here. As for the Germans, let us remember Vikander’s assumption that in their religion and mythology Wodan represents a younger shamanistic layer originating from the Iranian East (cf. Loma 2003: 63).

Be that as it may, there is no doubt that the motif of raven in this mythological set is very old; the only question is what its original meaning was. In Iranian mythology there is a winged speech-endowed creature named *karšiptar*, ‘the one that flies fast’, which, as an embodiment of the water element or perhaps of divine fire, is assumed to have originated from the Euro-Asian cosmogony myth of the demiurge bird (Lelekov, MNM 1: 625). Elsewhere in that context the raven appears, and Ilya Gershevitch identifies *karšiptar* itself as a raven,²³ although such identification seems uncertain.

Two cornerstones in reconstructing **Common Slavic epic poetry**, its sujets, motifs and formulae are, as is well-known, Russian and South Slavic traditions. Based on Serbo-Russian similarities, it is possible to identify certain motifs with the raven as Common Slavic ones, which is also the case with the formulaic denomination for the raven *čьrnъ voronъ > SCr. *crni vran* ‘black raven’, Russ. *černyj voron*. A standard description of the raven with fire-red legs and beak: *na dubu sidit tut černyj voron, A i nogi, nos – čtó ogon’ gorjat*²⁴ could be related to that occurring in Serbian decasyllabic poems: “with their beaks bloody to the eyes / and their legs bloody to the knees” (e.g. Vuk IV 30°, 4 f.). In bylinas, a hero riding down the field comes across a raven (*černyj voron*) perched on an oak tree; he wants to shoot it, but the raven speaks in human voice and tells him about a beautiful maiden who has been taken captive by three Tatars

²² Steph. Byz. s.v. Ψευδαρτάκη (should be: Ψευδαρτάκη, OArm. *fsəndartaka*, cf. Abaev I 210 to lit. Cf. also Loma 2008: 69–95.

²³ I. Gershevitch, *Mithraic Studies I. Proceedings of the First International Congress of Mithraic Studies* (Manchester 1975), 81, cited after Boyle 1978.

²⁴ Kirša Danilov 201; Kireevskij III 107, Rybnik. I, 200; Saharov. I 26 [spell], cf. Afanas’ev I 252–255.

(Kirša Danilov, “Mikhajla Kazarinov”, 99ff, 112); in the poem Kireevskij 15°, 12ff, *černyj vran*, *ptica veščaja* warns the hero about the enemies who are conspiring against him. Quite close to the role of the raven in the poem about the death of Marko considered above is a Russian ballad in Kireevskij 149°, where the hero, lying fatally wounded (or even already dead) in the steppe, utters the following:

priletali ko mne	There flew to me
troje černy vorona	Three or four ravens
hotjat klevat'	To peck
telo beloje moje.	My white body.
Vy ne kljujte, černy vorony,	Do not peck, you black ravens,
telo beloje moje	My white body
... poletite, vorony,	... fly, ravens,
na rodimu storonu,	To the land of my birth,
skažite mojemu batjuške...	Tell my father...

The message contains the motif of a fallen hero's wedding to a *čisto pole* (= open field; SCr. *crna zemlja* = black earth). In two variants (Kireevskij 142°, 143°), a falcon or an eagle perched on a purple willow holds in one claw a “black raven” (*černa vorona*) who tells him about the fallen hero in the steppe being mourned by three larks: his mother, sister and wife. In other variants (144–147°), the falcon holds or carries a hero's ring-fingered hand, a motif known from South Slavic epic poetry (classic example: “The Death of the Jugović' Mother”, Vuk II 48°, 59ff).²⁵ In Ukrainian poems as well it is the raven that brings to a mother the news about her son's death (Gura 1997: 532).

In the “Slavic Antithesis” (a tropic figure) the raven may, just as it is the case with the Serbs, signify an enemy:

ne jasen sokol tut vylětival,	it was neither a bright falcon flying out,
Ne černoj voron tut vyporhival,	nor a black raven darting out,
vyjezžajet tut zloj tatárčenok	but an evil Tatar riding out
(Kireevskij 4°, 39–41)	

as well as a positive character:

Ne černoj voron vysokó letal,	It was not a black raven flying high,
vysokó letal, žalobnó kričal,	Flying high, sadly screeching,
Dobryj molodec po Moskve guljal.	But a good youth walking in Moscow.
(Kireevskij 27°, 1–3)	

²⁵ The motif of a raven bringing the hand of a fallen hero from the battlefield and dropping it among the people dancing a round-dance, thereby informing them about his death is also found in Romanian traditional poems (Vaseva 1998: 105), where the abovementioned sujet of a raven predicting the death of the people gathered at church convocation also occurs (Vaseva 1998: 103).

Whilst studying the origin and original meaning of the formulae *great wonder*, *wonderful wonder*, etc., I have drawn attention to the Proto-Slavic antiquity of the speaking bird motif, usually a raven or a falcon, and assumed that it might reflect the practice of reading omens from the actions of birds (ornithomancy) [Loma 2002: 29f, 32, cf. the ominous ravens in the song about the burning of the relics of St. Sava (*ibid.* 33), as well as the prophetic dream of Princess Milica wherein Turks appear in the form of wolves and their pashas and viziers in the form of ravens (Petranović II 250, cf. Loma 2002: 223)]. In another sense, in view of the significant and widespread motif of shamanic flight in the form of a bird, often the raven itself, the raven through which the singer recounts faraway and concealed things may have originally been identical to the “clairvoyant” shaman-poet.

What has no analogy in Russian folk poetry is the Serbian motif of **two ravens** as harbingers of bad news and as narrators in general. This motif is quite typical of decasyllabic epics,²⁶ and even Vuk, in the second edition of his Dictionary (s.v. *gavran*), observed the following: “In folk songs ravens mainly bring bad news about battles, thus many a song begin with: *Two black ravens flew off*” [*Polećela dva vrana gavrana*].²⁷ The number of ravens is irrelevant for the plot. In functional terms, in all instances where there are two of them, even one would suffice; either both are speaking at the same time²⁸ or only one takes active part in the action by speaking in human voice, whereas the other acts like a regular bird, e.g.:

Polećela dva galića vrana	Two black ravens flew off
Jedan grače, drugi progovara.	One is croaking, the other sets out to speak. ²⁹

On the face of it, this appears to be a secondary gemination, possibly determined by metrical requirements. In long-verse songs there is only one raven, as is usually the case also in Russian bylinas and ballads:

²⁶ It may appear in other types of folklore wording, as is the case in an incantation used against eye diseases, which begins with: *Two ravens are flying therefrom...* (Radenković 1996: 147).

²⁷ For the function of this motif cf. Šmaus 1937, who uses Gesemann’s term “compositional scheme”, and Detelić 1996: 62f.

²⁸ Erlangen Manuscript 86°, 36; 179°, 1–4, 19; Vuk III 88°, 1, 58; IV 2°, 1, 29; 26°, 1, 47; 30°, 1, 47; Mat. hr. V 64°, 1, 27 (Perast, script dating from 1654), 670, 1, 28; 68°, 1–2, 12, etc. Sim. in “The Death of the Jugović’ Mother”, two ravens carry and drop the hero’s arm Vuk II 48°, 59 ff.

²⁹ Sarajlija 24°, 1, 25 (from Plješivci). Cf. further Vuk IV 45°, 1, 55–56; 52°, 1, 41–43; 59°, 1–2, 27; Sarajlija 46°, 1, 14; Mat. hr. V 65°, 1, 14, etc.

Al' otuda izletje crni vrane ptica mala Ali vrane crna ptica djevojci odgovara (Bogišić 32°, 57; 65)		But a black raven, a small bird, flew out of there But the raven, a black bird, replies to the girl
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whereas in decasyllabic songs the occurrence of one raven is only exceptional³⁰ (as, after all, is the occurrence of more than two ravens).³¹ The origin of gemination could be looked for also in the original association of the raven with some other animal. In song 86°, 4–9, in the Erlangen Manuscript, at first a raven and an eagle fly together:

Nad njim s' viju orle i gavrane Ali veli orle i gavrane,		An eagle and raven are flying over him But the eagle and raven are saying,
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but then all of a sudden, in verse 36, they become *two black ravens*. This inconsistency is explained by the composite character of the song itself: it begins with the motif of birds grateful to the hero (wherein eagle and raven normally alternate with one another, whereas in this case they are joined together), and then develops into the motif of birds-harbingers of bad news to the mother of the hero (where an eagle most certainly does not belong). The appearance of the raven paired with a wolf is more original; e.g. in the afore-considered motif of the wolf and raven who follow the trail of blood to lead them to a wounded hero, or in descriptions of ghoulish settings where “wolves are howling and ravens are croaking” (e.g. Šaulić I 1, 320).

Whatever the case may be, the instances of ravens appearing in *twos* in the mythology and traditional poetry of other Indo-European peoples suggest that the plausibility of the Serbian formula with two black ravens being ancient is not to be easily discarded despite the lack of Russian counterparts.³²

By far the best known pair of ravens is Wodan's Hugin and Munin. Snorri Sturluson recounts about them in the “Prose Edda”: Two ravens sit on his shoulders and bring to his ears all that they hear and see; their names are “The Thinking One” (Hugin) and “The Memorising One” (Munin). At dawn he sends them out to fly over the whole world, and at breakfast time they come back to him; thus he gets information about many things; and hence he is called “raven-god” (Hrafnaguð).³³ As it is said:

³⁰ Cf. a song from Šipan, Mat. hrv. V 196°, 114: *A crow is shouting from a fir bough* (informing a sister of her brother's death).

³¹ *A flock of ravens flew off* (Vuk IX 28°, 1).

³² There are examples of trebling there: *troje černy vorona* in the previously mentioned song in Kireevskij 149°.

³³ This complex denomination might also be translated as the “raven-god” if presumed that Odin/Wodan originally had a theriomorphic form of a shaman-raven. What is

Hugin and Munin
 Fly every day
 Over the great earth.
 I fear for Hugin
 That he may not return,
 Yet more am I anxious for Munin.³⁴

It is unclear if there is a functional distinction behind this description and the names of the two ravens (one of them passively passing on information, the other “processing” it actively; or one of them recounting what it has heard, the other what it has seen?). The bronze plate from Vendel (kept in the Historical Museum of Stockholm and reproduced in MNM 2: 241) depicts a warrior on a horse (obviously Odin) accompanied by two birds, but only one of them is a raven, the other is an eagle. On the other hand, in addition to the abovementioned pair of ravens, Odin’s retinue includes a pair of wolves, Gere and Freke, which mirrors the mentioned connection between raven and wolf, typical of warrior mythology and cults.

The first-century-B.C. Greek geographer Strabo, quoting Artemidorus of Ephesus who flourished around 100 B.C., informs us about a specific kind of divination by birds observed among the Celts settled on the Atlantic coast:

But the following story which Artemidorus has told about the case of the crows is still more fabulous: there is a certain harbour on the ocean-coast, his story goes, which is surnamed “Two Crows” and in this harbour are to be seen two crows, with their right wings somewhat white; so the men who have disputes about certain things come here, put a plank on an elevated place, and then throw on barley cakes, each man separately; the birds fly up, eat some of the barley cakes, scatter the others; and the man whose barley cakes are scattered wins his dispute.³⁵

interesting is that it is identified with Roman Mercury, and the raven was under protection of the planet Mercury, as the first degree of Mithraic initiation.

³⁴ From the “Tricking of Gylfi” (Gylfaginning), Chap. 38, according to the *Snorra Edda*, eds. A. Holtsmark & J. Helgason, 2nd (Copenhagen 1968), 42; the cited verse of the Poetic Edda is from “Grimner’s Lay” (Grimnismál) 20, translated into English by R. B. Anderson.

³⁵ Strabo IV 4, 6: τούτου δ’ ἔτι μυθωδέστερον εἶρηκεν Ἀρτεμίδωρος τὸ περὶ τοὺς κόρακας συμβαῖνον. λιμένα γάρ τινα τῆς παρωκεανίτιδος ἱστορεῖ δύο κοράκων ἐπονομαζόμενον. φαίνεσθαι δ’ ἐν τούτῳ δύο κόρακας τὴν δεξιὰν πτέρυγα παράλευκον ἔχοντας τοὺς οὖν περὶ τινων ἀμφισβητοῦντας ἀφικομένους δεῦρο ἐφ’ ὑψηλοῦ τόπου σανίδα θέντας ἐπιβάλλειν ψαιστά. ἑκάτερον χωρὶς τοὺς δ’ ὄρνεις ἐπιπάντας τὰ μὲν ἐσθίειν τὰ δὲ σκορπίζειν. οὐ δ’ ἂν σκορπισθῆ τὰ ψαιστά, ἐκείνον νικᾶν. English translation by H. L. Jones, Loeb Library (Harvard University Press, 1917).

The roles the two ravens play have not been clearly distinguished in this instance; it may be assumed, but not necessarily, that each of them lands on each of the heaps of barley cakes (the Greek term signifies cakes offered to deities). There is not even a slightest indication that the pair is composed of a male and a female; in any case, the Hugin/Munin pair is not structured in this manner, and neither is the one that follows.

In Pindar's Olympian Ode II, composed in the spring of 476, there is something that has been bothering his commentators ever since ancient times:

πολλά μοι ὑπ' ἀγκῶνος ὠκέα βέλη
 ἔνδον ἐντι φαρέτρας
 φωνάεντα συνετοῖσιν ἔς δὲ τὸ πᾶν ἔρμανέων
 χατίζει. σοφὸς ὁ πολλὰ εἰδῶς φυᾶ. μαθόντες δὲ λάβροι
 παγγλωσίᾳ κόρακες ὡς ἄκραντα γαρυέτον
 Διὸς πρὸς ὄρνιχα θεῖον (Pind. Ol. II 86ff)

Translated:

Under my elbow I have many swift arrows in the quiver: they speak intelligibly to the sagacious, but for the crowd they need interpreters; he is wise who knows much by nature, whereas the impudent ones, learned by what is commonly talked about,³⁶ chatter in vain like a pair of ravens competing³⁷ with the divine bird of Zeus.

It is not unusual for Pindar to speak about his poetic gift in such a self-assured manner, nor to use metaphors such as arrows and birds in this regard. The issue lies in the form of the verb γηρύειν 'to sound, to resound, to sing':³⁸ γαρυέτον is a dual form, collocated with the plural form κόρακες 'ravens' here. Such (in)congruence is possible in Greek, but it implies that Pindar referred to two specific 'ravens'. Even ancient scholiasts thought of his rivals, Simonides of Ceos and his nephew Bacchylides, whilst modern scholars propose other identifications if not (forcedly) correcting the verb form to plural.³⁹ Olympian Ode II being specific in that Pindar develops an eschatological teaching about the

³⁶ The hapax legomenon παγγλωσίᾳ I have translated in this manner assuming that it was used in combination with the participle μαθόντες, as it was the case with φυᾶ with εἰδῶς in the previous verse; another option would be to translate it adverbially to γαρυέτον, perhaps as "from the top of one's lungs".

³⁷ For the idea of competition in singing cf. Theocr. I 136: κῆξ ὄρέων τοῖ σκῶπες ἀηδόσι γαρύσαιντο (owls competing with nightingales).

³⁸ Based on ἄκρααντα in Homer Od. XIX 565, which designates dreams that do not come true, I am now inclined to regard Pindar's metaphor in a mantic context: the voices of the two ravens are worthless by comparison to the prophetic appearance of Zeus's divine bird (eagle).

³⁹ Cf. Farnell II 222f.; Bowra 1964: 7.

migration of souls, similar to the Pythagorean, it is all the more peculiar that, to my knowledge, no one has taken into consideration a poet who is associated with Pythagoras in the legendary tradition and whom Pindar could rightfully call a raven, Aristaeus. According to a legend reported by Herodotus in his fourth book (chap. 13–15), Aristaeus was from Proconnesus on Propontis; one day he suddenly drops dead in a fuller's shop there, but his body disappears without a trace; at the same time, however, he is seen in another distant place; seven years later he reappears and writes the "Poem of Arimaspians" (Arimaspea), in which he reports on his travels beyond Scythia, i.e. to the north-east of the Black Sea towards the Ural mountains and depths of Asia, while being possessed by Phoebus (φοῖβόλαμπτος). Then he disappears for a second time, only to reappear as Apollo's travelling companion in the form of a raven two hundred and forty years⁴⁰ later in the town of Metapontum in Magna Graecia, i.e. South Italy. Metapontum was one of the centres of Pythagoreanism and it is no wonder that the Pythagorean ideas of reincarnation can be recognised in this tale, but its deeper foundation most certainly lies in the shamanism of the far north of Europe and Asia, allegedly visited by Aristaeus during his ecstatic journey and described in his poem. As shrouded in legend as Aristaeus was, the now lost poem he wrote did exist and was widely read in the fifth century; therefore Pindar must have been familiar with it as well; and we can learn from Origen's *Contra Celsum* (Orig. Cels. III 26; Pind. frg. 284) that he mentioned Aristaeus in a poem that had not survived. In his well-known "Criticism of Most Ancient News about the Scythic North", Wilhelm Tomaschek (1888: 732f) made the assumption that Aristaeus' seven-year long absence after he had disappeared from his hometown and the fact that he accompanied Apollo to the land of Hyperboreans in the figure of a raven are undisputedly reflections of passages of this poem much read in the past; the ascent of the poet's soul in the form of a raven from his homeland would represent an original and true poetic expression of a sudden possession by Apollonic enthusiasm and journey to the Hyperborean country. After pointing out the aforementioned fact that the raven was Mithra's sacred bird among the Iranians, omniscient Wodan's advisor among the ancient Germans and companion to the god of light Apollo among the Greeks, Tomaschek boldly attempts to reconstruct the introduction to the "Poem of Arimaspes" in the following manner: "Ascend, the soul of the poet, up to the brighter ether! Having abandoned the homeland and town of Proconnessians, boldly fly to the blissful blessed land of Hyperboreans, like an all-seeing raven, Foebus' companion; for God has possessed

⁴⁰ This figure does not tally with the record that Aristaeus lived in the mid-sixth century B.C.

me mightily, and I am overwhelmed by longing to see his sacred seat, the place of light, beyond Pontus and farther on, to visit lands and peoples, hills and rivers, and celestial paths of stars”.

As resourceful as they may be, such reconstructions must be taken with great caution. Yet, there are many other things that support the assumption that in the context of Olympian Ode II Pindar referred to the legendary author of the “Poem of Arimaspians” as a raven. It is not difficult to guess who a second raven could have been in that case. There is in Greek tradition a figure contemporary with and largely similar to Aristaeus: Abaris the Hyperborean, priest of the Hyperborean Apollo, himself associated with Pythagoras in legend. I have recently attempted to identify an Iranian basis of the legend of Abaris, starting from recognising in his Greek nickname “the ether-walker” *aithrobátēs* a reinterpretation of an Ancient Iranian term denominating a priest, Avest. *aēprapaitiš*, and eventually coming to the conclusion that behind Abaris’ Apollo hides the Iranian Mithra (Loma 2001). We have no indications that Abaris took on the figure of a raven, but legend has it that he travelled around the world in a most unusual fashion, which has analogies in the shamanic techniques of ecstasy: flying on a golden arrow he was given by Apollo himself. As mentioned above, immediately before the metaphor of the raven, Pindar uses the metaphor of the arrow, and it is worth mentioning that he refers to Abaris in one of his fragments (Harpocrat s.v. Ἀβάρης; Pind. frg. 283). Aristaeus and Abaris lived about one hundred years before Pindar and he could not have perceived them as his rivals, but there could have been in the Magna Graecia of his time a rivalry between the eschatological concepts elaborated by him in Olympian Ode II and the teachings spread under the name of those two, which would justify his polemical reaction.

If the proposed interpretation is correct, Pindar’s two ravens are not a reflection of the traditional mythological connection that can be found in the ancient Celtic and Germanic religions, nor of a poetic formula such as the one that appears in Serbian epic songs; but rather they corroborate the assumption made above with regard to the “sleeping hero” that the motif of the “prophetic raven” found in European traditions originates from the far north of Eurasia, the birthplace of the mentioned shamanism, in which the raven plays a prominent role of the proto-shaman, cultural hero and demiurge. It must have developed in the Palaeolithic age, most certainly while ancestors of Indian tribes who shared it with palaeo-Asian peoples had still lived in Siberia, i.e. more than ten thousand years ago,⁴¹ long before the period about five thousand years B.C.

⁴¹ *Terminus ante quem* for settlement of America from north-east Asia is the end of the last ice age nine to ten thousand years ago; that is when some of the icecap melted,

in which the reconstructed PIE language is placed. One can merely speculate whether even further pre-ancestors of Indo-Europeans had been encompassed by or connected in any way with this religious-mythological complex from the beginning, or whether they had got in touch with it only when they expanded to the north-east. The fact remains that in the first millennium B.C. the vast expanses of Eurasian steppes from the mouth of the Danube to the Altai and Siberia were dominated by racially Caucasian population which linguistically predominantly belonged to the Iranian branch of the Indo-European family of languages. As it is argued here, this area was partially an intermediary and partially the source of spiritual fluctuations by means of which the shamanic concepts, including the mythology of the raven, reached Europe.

The formula *two black/ebony ravens* (Srb. *dva vrana gavrana*) seemingly combines two denominations under which this bird appears in epic poetry.⁴² Admittedly, the term *vrana* in it is perceived as the adjective “black”, hence the version *two black ravens*; but originally this could have simply been variation common to folklore wording, or “binary extension containing a reply composed by prefixation” as Biljana Sikimić refers to it, typical of riddles, e.g. *liješće paliješće, leska praleska, leska troleska*, etc. (Sikimić 1996: 144ff).⁴³ This would again point to the secondarity of this formula. However, before drawing any definitive conclusions in this regard, we should tackle the **etymology** of the ornithonyms *vrana* and *gavrana*.

Let us commence this final etymological excursus with a summarised statement by Meletinskij (MNM 1: 245) that in an overwhelming majority of languages the denomination for the ‘raven’ is based either on this bird’s sharp voice (Roman-Germanic, Celtic, palaeo-Siberian, Hungarian, Aztec) or on its colour (Balto-Slavic, Arabian, Chinese). Both of the aforementioned Serbian denominations are also Proto-Slavic, and the shorter of them, *vrana*, is etymologised in the latter context, as denominating the colour, while the majority of etymologists trace the term *gavrana* back to an onomatopoeia. However, at a closer look many a doubt remains unresolved not only with regard to the latter

which resulted in the rise of the level of the world ocean thus creating the Bering Strait that separates the two continents; the Bering Strait replaced a land bridge that could be used to cross from one continent to another.

⁴² Most commonly rather than exclusively as stated in Djordjević 1958: 53, since some of other Serbo-Croatian denominations referred to therein are also sporadically found in folk songs: *galić, galovran, golovran, garvan, gravran*.

⁴³ Translator’s note: the riddles in question are construed with *l(ij)eska* ‘hazel tree’ as fast-paced rhymes, where rhyming within a single verse is achieved by repeating a word and adding a (random) prefix to it, thus creating repetitive word strings of rhyming words.

term, but also to the former.⁴⁴ OCS *vranъ* is both the noun meaning “raven” and the adjective meaning “black”, also SCr. *vrân*, Russ. *vóron*, adj. *voronój*. Comparison between these and other Slavic forms (Slo. *vrân*, Cz. *vran*, Pol. and Upp.Sorb. *wron*, etc.) results in OCS **vornъ*, further to be equated to the Lith. term for the raven *var̃nas*, Old Pruss. *warnis*.

Common to both the Balts and Slavs is also the name for ‘crow’ **vārnā* > Lith. *várna*, Rus. *voróna*, SCr. *vrāna*, Slo. and Cz. *vrána*, etc. being a secondary derivative formed by lengthening the root syllable (*vrddhi*) from **varnas* ‘raven’, meaning “a raven-like bird”. It is assumed that **varnas* originally meant “black, raven”, whereas a more in-depth IE etymology of the adjective remains disputable; it has been compared to the OI *várna-*, Av. *varənah-* ‘colour, type’; it has been derived from the root of **variti* ‘to boil, to burn’ whilst presuming the development of the meaning **‘burnt’* > ‘black’; it has been associated with PIE **uernā* ‘alder’, owing to the fact that alder bark is used for preparing a black dye. However, the trouble is that this lexeme is attested as an adjective only in Slavic languages, whereas as a bird-name it exists also in Baltic languages and has parallels over a broader area: it is compared with the West Tocharic (“Tocharic B”) *wrauñā* ‘crow’, as well as with the name for the same bird in Uralic languages: Fin. *vares*, gen. *vareksen*, Nenets *varŋa*, etc. Under such circumstances it is to be assumed that the adjective **vornъ* was abstracted on Slavic soil from the nouns **vornъ* and **vorna* in their original meaning “raven-like”, thence “black”.⁴⁵ If this is the case, the issue of the original semasiology of the Balto-Slavic denomination for the raven and crow remains open.

The term *gavran* (Eng. raven) is even more disputable for the reconstruction of its protoform is ambiguous already on the Common-Slavic level. Fortunately, unlike **vornъ*, it has already been treated by both the Moscow and Krakow dictionaries, thus enabling us to use the evidence and overview of the literature given therein. The two dictionaries have adopted different etymological explanations. In *ĖSSJa* 6/1979 Trubačev offers as the headword the following reconstruction: **ga(jb)vornъ/*gavorna* interpreting it as variant with voiced anlaut of the synonymous form **kavornъ* (cf. below).⁴⁶ On the other hand, in SP 7/1995, M. Wojtyła-Świerzowska and Fr. Sławski 75 s.v. recognise in **ga-vornъ* the same second element *-vorn-* as in the other three compound ornithonyms **ka-vornъ*, **ža-vornъ-kъ* and **sko-vornъ*; with the first element being

⁴⁴ Cf. Fasmer I 353, Skok III 617f., Snoj 833, and further reading.

⁴⁵ A somewhat similar problem is posed by the Proto-Slavic **rysъ*, which is at the same time the name of the animal ‘bobcat, lynx’ and the adjective ‘erubescens’.

⁴⁶ With the alternatively reconstructed form **gajbvornъ* Trubačev seems to consider the possibility of a nominal compound with **gajb* ‘a cry’, as assumed in Fasmer I 183.

unclear, as is the case in these other names, perhaps onomatopoeic ('croak'). One of the subsequent volumes of the Moscow dictionary (ĚSSJa 9/1983) reconstructs the lexeme **kavorna/kavornǔ* on the basis of Čak., Kaj. *kǎvrǎn*, Sln. *kavrána* 'crow', *kǎvrǎn* 'raven' (raven), LSorb. *karwona* 'crow', and interprets it as a prefixal compound **ka-vorna/-vornǔ*.⁴⁷ Whilst arguing the form **gavornǔ* as secondary in comparison to **kavornǔ*, Trubačev previously referred to Lith. *kóvarnis* 'rook', Latv. *kuōvārna* 'jackdaw', whereas in this instance he is rather doubtful about the relationship between the Slavic and Baltic forms because of the obvious connection between the latter and the Lith. synonym *kóvas*, which allows for only the analysis *kóv-arnis* or, perhaps, with haplology, **kóva-varnis*, and not *kó-varnis*.⁴⁸ Thus, within a four-year period the dictionary published in Moscow was back to where it started with regard to the lexeme **ga(jv)vornǔ*. More than two decades later the authors of the Krakow dictionary included the synonymous forms of **gavornǔ* and **kavornǔ* alongside each other as compounds consisting of the same latter part and unclear former parts, but the inclusion in the same string of compounds ending in *-vornǔ* of the denominations for the starling, skylark and other birds that neither look like the crow nor are black is rather disputable.

When undertaking an etymological reconsideration of denominations containing the initial *g-* it is necessary to begin by establishing its Proto-Slavic form. Let us first take a look at the forms attested in individual Slavic languages and vernaculars thereof: Bulg. *gǎvrǎn*, dial. and obs. *gǎrvan*, Maced. *gavran/garvan*, SCr. *gǎvrǎn*, fourteenth-century SerbCS. *gavranǔ*, dial. also *gǎrvǎn*, *gǎrvan* (Kosovo), *grǎvrǎn* (Čak., from the sixteenth century), *grǎvǎn*, *grǎvon*, *grǎvjon* (Vrgada), *gravljan* (Murter),⁴⁹ Sln. *gǎvrǎn*, *gavrán*, *gǎvrǎn*, Cz. Slk. *havran*, USorb. *hawron* 'rook', LSorb. *gawron* 'id., raven', *garona* 'crow, rook', Pol. *gawron* 'rook', dial. (Spisz) *garwon* 'crow', Russ. dial., Ukr. *gǎjvoron*, dial. *gajvoron* 'skylark', Russ. dial. (South) also *grǎjvoron*, ORuss., OUkr. also *gavranǔ*, Ukr. dial. (and in folk songs) *gavrán*. The variance of the forms appearing in this list

⁴⁷ This prefix expresses proximity in comparison, therefore the mentioned denomination would mean 'a crow-like bird' if applied to the raven and, vice versa, 'a raven-like bird' if applied to the crow.

⁴⁸ Cf. Proto-Slavic **kavǔka* as a non-pallatal variant of *čavǔka* (ĚSSJa 9: 166). Most recently Snoj 169 assumes, following Bezlaj (and Machek), BSl. **kǎvovorn* with the secondary voicing of the anlaut; already Berneker I 298 derived **gavornǔ* by haplology from **gavovornǔ*, with **gava* 'crow' in the initial part (only Russ. and Ukr. dial., cf. ĚSSJa 6: 110).

⁴⁹ The list included in the two dictionaries of Proto-Slavic s.v. is herein supplemented by certain SCr. forms given in RSA, Skok I: 556 and B. Jurišić, *Rječnik govora otoka Vrgade II*, Zagreb, 1973.

allows for the reconstructions of the forms **gavornъ* or **gajъvornъ* as proposed in ĚSSJa and SP s.v. only if a large degree of arbitrary onomatopoeic composition and paretymological deformation is assumed. The aforementioned has occurred in certain instances (e.g. *grájvoron* is undoubtedly the result of intertwining with *voronograj* ‘raven’s croak’), but the reconstruction of the Proto-Slavic form in the case of this lexeme may also keep much more to the safe path of phonetic regularities rather than taking risky shortcuts of paretymology too frequently. As the starting point closest to the proto-form the variant with two *r*’s is to be taken, Čak. *grävvrān* reflecting **garvornъ*, wherefrom the majority of other forms may be derived by means of various dissimilatory processes: $r - r > \emptyset - r$, $r - \emptyset$, $j - r$, $r - j$, without resorting to non-phonetic explanations. The SCr. forms with *-l-* *galòvran*, *galòvrana* ‘rook’, *golòvran* ‘id.’ (or rather: ‘raven’?)⁵⁰ might be included in the group where the $r - r > l - r$ dissimilation occurred, although they assumed the form of compounds with *galo-* (to *gal-ica* ‘jackdaw’?), *golo-* (*go(l)* ‘nude’) as their initial element.

The thus deduced proto-form **garvornъ* may now be compared to the Russ. *žar-ptica* in the same manner in which *gavoron* was juxtaposed to *žavoronok* (i.e. whilst presuming the occurrence of the vowel alternation \bar{a} / \bar{e} in the first syllable).⁵¹ It is easier inasmuch as for Proto-Slavic the nouns **žarъ* and *garъ* (**garъ*) in the same meaning ‘char; burnt place’, also used adjectivally ‘sooty, swarthy’, may be reconstructed, both derived from the root of **gorěti* ‘to burn’. These two related words apparently have opposed meanings. The mythical firebird is imagined as if with lighting golden feathers and construed as an epitome of fire (cf. Ivanov & Toporov, MNM 1: 439), whereas the raven is also associated with fire in mythology, but it is a bird charred, *raven* in colour. In addition, the analysis of **gar-vornъ* entails two issues. One of them is of a formal nature: the presence of the athematic stem in the first part of the compound **gar-*, which appears as unlikely, whilst the other is of a semantic nature: the compound would be tautological because both of its elements would have the same meaning: ‘black’.⁵² Since, judging by the Russ. locative case *v žarú* and the

⁵⁰ RSA gives only examples from epic songs: *a flock of doves flew by / and before them the carrion bird* (Vuk III 12), *wolves will howl in Kosovo, / Black carrions will howl* (Šaulić 4, 182), *a black pigtail covered the white neck / as if covered by a carrion crow* (*ibid.* 1, 169) (RSA).

⁵¹ According to Fasmer II 32, in *žavoronok*, Ukr. *žájvoronok*, etc., Polab. *zevórnak*, also Russ. *skovorónok*, *ščevorónok* ‘lark’ the second part would be from *vóron*, and the first one an onomatopoeia apophonically related to *gavran*.

⁵² At least on the Slavic level, thus leaving aside the aforementioned reservations as regards the original meaning of the adjective **vornъ*.

adjective **žarъ-kъ*, the lexeme **žarъ* was originally an *u*-stem **gēru-*, *žar-ptica*, although hyphenated, may go back to a closed compound containing the connective vowel *ǔ* > *ъ* **žarъpъtica* 'glowing/ember bird'.⁵³ In this way, we arrive at the possibility of different parsing of **garvornъ* where *-v-* would be part of the frontal element of the compound reflecting its final *ǔ* of the stem before the initial vowel of the latter element, as is the case in **medvědbъ* 'bear' from **medhu-ēd-*, therefore: **garv-ornъ*. In this kind of analysis we are no longer to presume **vornъ* 'raven', but rather an independently unattested Proto-Slavic reflex of the PIE word **orn-* reflected in Gr. ὄρνις, ὄρν-εον 'bird', Got. *ara*, gen. **arin-s* 'eagle', OIcl. *are/orn* id., OEng. *earn* id., Hitt *haraš*, gen. *haran-aš* id. (Frisk II 421f.; Pokorny 325f.). Thus, a complete structural parallelism with *žar-ptica* is obtained, as well as with ornithonyms of the type German *Pu-vogel* 'owl' (to which the denomination **ga-vornъ* is usually compared, thereby presuming the presence of onomatopoeia contained in its initial part). An analogous assumption may also be made for *-(v)ornъ* in **žavornъ(-kъ)* and **skovornъ*, and even in **kavornъ*, Lith. *kón-arnis*.

According to the meanings in Hittite and Germanic, the PIE **orn-* did not originally refer to all the birds, but to large birds of prey such as the eagle. The raven certainly belongs among them and we have seen that its mythological representations largely interweave with those of the eagle. Such an archaism in the second part of the compound word implies its rather great antiquity; hence we ought to ask ourselves whether the afore-offered interpretation of its initial part associated with Common Slavic **garъ* 'char', **gorěti* 'to burn', **žarъ* 'ember' is valid only in the context of a secondary contamination. When projecting onto the PIE plane, the first element in **gāru-orn-* is more convincingly etymologised in relation to Gr. γῆρυς < γᾶρυς 'sound, voice', γαρύω 'to utter, to sing'. Let us recall the aforementioned use of the verb γαρύετον in Pindar combined with the subject κόρακες 'ravens', whereas the indirect object Διὸς πρὸς ὄρνιχα θεῖον, the eagle dedicated to Zeus, is denominated with the word ὄρνις, Dor. ὄρνιξ, in an application close to its original meaning.⁵⁴ Related words in

⁵³ Strictly speaking, the first semivowel would have a strong position and its vocalisation would be expected, but in compound words one should take into consideration the effect of morphological boundaries between their elements.

⁵⁴ Due to reasons of a formal nature (short vowel of undefined quality *o* or *a*; unclear cerebral *ǰ*) it is uncertain as to whether it is possible to compare the Old Indian name of the mythological bird *garudá*, which is probably associated with the adjective denominating birds in the Vedas *garútmant*; it was traditionally construed as 'winged', but this interpretation is based on the word *garut* 'wing', which has been only lexicographically attested and it is now considered that it was abstracted from the adjective, therefore its meaning and etymology remain an unresolved issue, cf. Mayrhofer I 471.

Latin, such as *garrus* ‘to blabber, to chat’, *garrulus* ‘chatty’, also apply to birds, including crows.⁵⁵

If this etymology is correct, the formula *two black ravens* might not contain a tautological repetition or expressive gemination, but a reflection of the old collocation **vornǔ garv-ornǔ* literally translated as a ‘large black songbird’, which defines its denotation quite clearly.

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⁵⁵ Cf. Frisk I 305, Pokorný 352, who assumes a palatalal *ǵ due to Iron Ossetian *zaryn*, Digor Ossetian *zarun* ‘to sing’ (wherefrom, inter alia, Iron *zærvatykk*, Digor *zærbatukkæ* ‘swallow’, whereas the second part of the compound word means ‘bird’). Abaev, however, points to the variance of both palatal and non-palatal anlauts in this stem within Ossetian itself and other Iranian languages (Abaev IV 288 f.; cf. now Rastorgueva & Edel’man 3/2007: 169).

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THE NAME ARGOS: ETYMOLOGY, SIGNIFICATION AND HOMERIC USAGES

Abstract: A toponym does not only *designate* a territory, it can also have a *sense*. The name Argos has an Indo-European etymology (**h₂erǵ-*) which makes it “the land of fast radiating white light”. Such a sense best explains Homeric usages, in particular those formulaic, where a precise and stable geographical or historical reference would be vainly looked for. The name Argos signifies the *sovereign land, the land of Return*, associated with the horse race and with the sovereign goddess, Hera.

Keywords: toponymy, Argos, Indo-European etymology, white light, Homer, formulaic usage, *nostos*

Of all the problems posed by Greek toponymy, the problem of the name Argos causes particular difficulties, which have implications for the Homeric usages, be they formulaic or not. We believe that we may contribute to resolving those problems by determining the *sense* of the name Argos. Such an approach itself poses a number of underlying problems.

Does a proper name have a signification? The notion that it functions as a mere “label” devoid of *sense* goes back to Aristotle; it was taken over by Saussurean linguistics,¹ but is no longer tenable. Not only does the majority of toponyms derive from common names that had a signification (descriptive, of ethnic, symbolic, religious, etc. affiliation) at some point in the linguistic history of a land, but one may argue that a proper name relates back to “an indefinite series of interpretants, which appear to us to be richer [...] than the interpretants evoked by common names” (Molino 1982: 14; cf. also Griffe 1988). Besides, the distinction between a proper and common name in the Greek language is not so easy to make.²

¹ “These isolated words, such as proper names, and especially place-names, which do not allow any analysis” (Saussure 1964: 237; cf. Sauzeau 2012: 691).

² The use neither of an article, nor of any graphic sign in the written language enabled the ancient Greeks to stress this distinction which the tone of voice could permit in

To the ancient Greeks the proper name is a name par excellence, even though grammarians later distinguished between the common and proper noun (προσηγορία). The latter does not only designate: it also signifies.³ *Ónoma epónymon*: a proper name expresses the truth of a being or a thing; hence the passion of the Greeks for “etymology” and for other *wordplays*, a passion that is baffling to us, and at once ludic and sacred to them (McCarthy 1919; Fordyce 1932; Somville 1989; and finally, cf. Casevitz 1992b). As a result, the interpretation of many texts, to begin with Homer’s, comes to be refreshed.

A recurring toponym

“There is a Pylos in front of Pylos, and then there is yet another Pylos”.⁴ The same may be said of Argos. The frequency of the toponym *Argos* intrigued the ancients as much as it does the contemporary scholars. Is its recurrence to be explained, as the ancients believed and as we tend to expect, by the transformation of a common into a proper name? If it is, did it signify a “plain”, as has been argued? If it does not, where should we place it etymologically and semantically in the Greek vocabulary? What would be the result of the study of its Homeric usage if we disregard – at least initially – an exhaustive search for a geographic or political *referent*?

The list of Stephanus Byzantinus

Stephanus Byzantinus left us a compiled list of these toponyms, which is often cited without sufficient review:⁵

some cases in the spoken language; cf. also our reflections on deified abstractions, Sauzeau 2004a.

³ Cf. Moreau 1988: 105–124; esp. 107: “If there is a people for whom proper names are significant, it is certainly the Greek people.” However, the same may also be said of the ancient Hebrews and other ancient cultures.

⁴ Strabo VIII, 3, 7. A long discussion about the location of Pylos (VIII, 3, 7; 3, 13–29) is the counterpart of the one that concerns Argos: two favourite topics of *Homeric geography* and, perhaps, two symbolic poles – the light of life and the gate of death... Cf. also Aristophanes, *Cav.*, 1059. Ventris & Chadwick 1973²: 139. Cf. also Chadwick 1973.

⁵ Stephen of Byzantium, s.v. Ἄργος. A list undoubtedly inspired by Dionysius Periegetes. Cf. Eustathius, *ad Il.* II, 681: “The work of the Periegetes [= Dionysius] shows that there is not just one but many Argos.”

Argos: the most famous is the city-state of the Peloponnese, which is also called “the city of Phorōneus”, and *Aigiáleia*, and “the pastureland of horses” because Poseidon gave it the grazing land for horses; it is also called “Iasson”, after Iasus, father of Iō according to some; and “thirsty” because of dryness. Then there is Argos of Amfilochia; a third one is in Thessaly; a fourth one in Sicily: its actual name is *Argeiopolis*; a fifth one is in the island of Nisyros, one of the Cyclades; a sixth is near Troezen; a seventh is in Macedonia; an eighth is Argos *Orestikón* or “in Scythia”; a ninth is in Caria; a tenth is Argolis; and an eleventh Phaeacian *Hypéreia*...

This account should be taken with much caution: it is quite vague and not lacking in errors. Homeric usage and geography interferes with the list of historic *poleis*. Hence a general confusion: thus number three undoubtedly refers to *Argos Pelasgikón* from the *Catalogue of Ships* (*Il.* II, 681), which, for the ancients, designated Thessaly; more uncertain is the location of *Hypéreia*, according to the *Odyssey*, the land of origin of the Phaeacians (VI, 4).⁶ Moreover, the list is certainly far from being complete:⁷ but then again, exhaustiveness was no doubt impossible. So numerous and serious uncertainties diminish the reliability of information provided by the Byzantine scholar.⁸ It is obviously warranted to question the general theory which follows the list: “almost all plains by the sea are called Argos”, a theory accepted by most linguists, historians and specialists in Homer.⁹

⁶ It is not Corcyra, generally assimilated to Scheria of the Phaeacians. This piece of information tallies with a very confused note of Eustathius’ (*Comm. Dionysius Periegetes*, 492) who assimilates Corcyra to *Hyperetiē*, Scheria and Argos. In the *Odyssey*, the name *Hyperetiē* evokes an imaginary land, “beyond the horizon”, near the land of the Cyclopes; it is the land of Helios, cf. *Il.* VIII, 480; *Od.* XII, 133. Cf. Bremer 1976: 118. In the *Iliad*, *Hypéreia* designates a fountain in Thessaly (II, 734; VI, 457). As a historically attested toponym, *Hypéreia* designates Kalauria (Plut. *Mor.* P 295 d) and one of the cities the synoecism of which will form Troezen (according to Paus. II, 30, 8). Cf. Heubeck, West & Hainsworth 1988, I: 293.

⁷ Cf. e.g. Papazoglou 1978: 291–292; 299; 303, who points to an Argos near Stobi, in the Vardar valley, as well as to the city of *Argedava* (wherein *-dava* = city) in Dacia (p. 334); Georgiev 1966: 189 and 370. There was also *Argos Ippatum* (Ampelius, *Lib. Mem.* 8, 540) on the coast of Epirus; cf. Hammond 1967: 540. For Asia Minor, cf. Ramsay 1890–1962²: 353; and more generally *RE*, s.v. Argos.

⁸ These doubts reflect on the theory of Marchetti 1998: 208.

⁹ According to both ancient and modern historians, in a certain number of cases the toponym *Argos* would be secondary and borrowed from the famous city of Peloponnese: such would be the origin of Argos *Orestikón*, Argos of Amphilochia and several cities called *Argos* in Rhodes or in its vicinity. No solid historical tradition has confirmed this theory, which may well be merely a received idea.

Does Argos signify a “plain”?

While the multiplicity of the name *Argos* is not particularly exceptional in Greek toponymy, its inanimate gender is.¹⁰ In appellative lexis, a noun ending in *-es/-os* such as **tò árgos* would easily find its place among a number of topographic appellatives (Chantraine 1933: 419). It happens that Strabo, in a learned and quite comprehensive discussion about the Homeric usage of the name Argos, proposes the following explanation (VIII, 6, 9):

The word *tò árgos* used in the sense of a “plain” (*pédion*) is encountered in modern authors, but not even once in Homer; it is attributed in particular to the speakers of Macedonian and Thessalian. (after the French translation by Baladié)

This piece of information is taken over by the best of authors, usually without discussion. Thus, É. Benveniste remarked in reference to the Ionian tribe of Ἀργαδῆς (Hdt. V, 66) that its name “evokes the name *Argos*, the meaning of which we know: in the language of the Macedonians and Thessalians¹¹ *Argos* signifies *tò pédion*, or ‘soil, plain...’” However, one should take notice of Strabo’s precautions: did he not emphasise the absence of any trace of such use in Homer? – and in his eyes the Poet is the main point of reference. As for the real usage of the common name **tò árgos* in the sense of a “plain” in the Thessalian and Macedonian dialects (if we take it that Macedonian was a Greek dialect or, more likely, a closely related Indo-European language) (Katičić 1976: 115), it is not formally attested by the geographer who, taking care to keep a reasonable distance, contents himself with conveying an opinion, a *theory* favoured by some of his predecessors.

Does the abovementioned specification provided by Stephen of Byzantium (“all plains by the sea are called Argos”) add weight to the theory it is supposed to wrap up? Homer’s account, as emphasised already by Strabo, does not point in that direction. The case of Argos *Pelasgikón* and especially that of Argos *Orestikón* clearly contradict it. The latter city, situated in Macedonia, is more than a hundred kilometres away from both the Aegean and the Ionian Sea as the crow flies. As a matter of fact, the only attested examples of the use of the word *Argos* in the sense of a “plain”, coming from the pen of the

¹⁰ Chantraine, *DELG*, s.v. τὸ Ἄργος.

¹¹ Benveniste 1969, I: 290. In fact, Chantraine, *DELG*, s.v., thinks of the “assimilation of the initial syllable of the root **ergad-* (cf. ἐργάζομαι); therefore, nothing to do with Argos.

neōteroi, i.e. the Hellenistic poets,¹² are questionable and will not be examined here. After all, what serious conclusion can be drawn from fragments whose syntax and meaning remain obscure? The erudition of the Alexandrian poets is only matched by their ingenuity. In the game of allusions, of interpretations concealed among quotations, of stunning wordplays, the language undergoes distortions that may be justified on a literary plane, but to search there for unambiguous evidence for the *history of words* is futile.

What, then, would be the worth of the theory echoed by Strabo? Let us first note that, if we examine the text closely, the theory is founded neither on the contemporary usage of the word as a common name, nor, as we have just shown, on an ancient literary usage: it is a *theory* he borrows from his predecessors without quite accepting it himself. Where could this theory have come from? From the facts considered to be proofs of an ancient usage, remnants of a primitive Greek language. Strabo himself, despite his respect for Homer, gives up looking for confirmation of the theory in question in Homeric poems; but the latter could well have contributed to its birth.

Árgos Pelasgikón, for instance, which Strabo and the ancients generally identified with Thessaly, could have inspired the idea of a “Pelagic plain”. If the plain of Argos (in the Peloponnese) is not as vast as the Thessalian plain, it is still one of the most beautiful in the region. On the other hand, the *Argead* kings, from whom Alexander the Great descended, and *Árgos Orestikón* were situated in Macedonia. Since **tò árgos* in the sense of a plain did not exist in Dorian, one might have inferred that it was used in that sense in Thessaly or in Macedonia, etc. A thesis could thus have arisen which, by the way, was not any sillier than others, but which modern scholars were wrong to accept without critical examination.

The weakness of some arguments in favour of the “**tò árgos = plain*” thesis is quite surprising sometimes (Allen 1924: 114). T. W. Allen refers in a quite unexpected fashion to the *ārgós pedíon* that Pausanias situates on the border of Arcadia and Argolis: in his view, it is “a usage which combines a rare word and its gloss...” However, the explanations offered by Pausanias (VIII, 7, 1–2) leave no doubt as to the meaning of the expression:

Rainwater coming down into the plain from the mountains causes it to remain uncultivated, and nothing would prevent this plain from becoming a swamp were it not that the water disappears into a chasm.

¹² Callimachus, *Hecale*, frag. 299 (Pfeiffer); Apollonius of Rh. I, 1115–1116; Dionysius Periegetes, in Stephen of Byzantium, s.v. Δωρίων.

The adjective *ārgós* (< **awergós*), to be translated here as “fallow land”, provided the opportunity for a wordplay to which we shall return, but it can only be a tardy phenomenon, being subsequent to the drop of digamma (late fifth century BC in Argos).

Even if the transition of a common noun to a proper noun poses no difficulty, the disappearance should nonetheless be explained of **tò árgos* with the sense of a “plain”, a word which has not been clearly attested anywhere. If that word with that sense really existed, it was isolated from any important word family which could provide it with a satisfactory etymology. At any rate, the root *arg-* can be found in association with a *river* or a *mountain*.¹³

The terms signification, denotation, reference or designation should be handled with prudence; a common noun becomes a proper noun through a process which is more complex than we tend to imagine: it may very well be that most *Argos* were situated in a plain, that the proper noun usually *designated* plains without the word actually *signifying* a “plain”. The “plain” is simply a space where the aristocratic and royal values will be displayed, which remains to be analysed.

“Fast-luminous-white radiance”

The epithet *ἀργός* is a key to the etymology of the toponym τὸ Ἄργος. The term belongs to a large etymological family in use in Greek for a long time and attested since the Mycenaean period. Thus *argós* is derived by dissimilation from **argrós*,¹⁴ exactly analogous to Sanskrit *rij-rá-* “brilliant”, “bright”, and going back to the Indo-European base **h₂erǵ-*, together with *ārki*, *arkwi* “white” in Tocharian, *harkiš* “white, clear” in Hittite, **argio-* “bright, brilliant white, snow” in Celtic; and also with *arganton* in Celtic, *argentum* in Latin, *árguros* in Greek, all of which signify “silver” (cf. Pokorny 1959: 64–65; Delamarre 2003: 51–52).

In Greek, most terms deriving from this base are difficult to understand from the semantic standpoint because of semantic *quartering*: “white-bright-luminous/fast”. An example of “semantic problems of reconstruction”.¹⁵ The translation of the epithet *argós* in Homer is illustrative of this difficulty.

¹³ Let us mention, among others, the mountain *Arganthōn* (undoubtedly a toponym of Celtic origin) and the spring *Arganthōneia*. Cf. Tischler 1977: 32.

¹⁴ Chantraine, *DELG*, s.v. Ἄργος and ἀργός.

¹⁵ Benveniste 1966: 289–307. On the unity of the signifieds of ἀργός, cf. Cotton 1950: 436–441.

– *Iliad* XXIII, 30–31: “Many white (*argoi*) oxen bellow about the knife entering their throats ...” The oxen that are being slaughtered are not too fast, as proved well enough by their bovine nature in general, and by the fate of these oxen in particular. These oxen are *white*, just like the goose in *Odyssey* (XV, 161).

– The *argoi* dogs in *Iliad* XVIII, 283 are animals characterised by their speed. They are *argoi* just like those in verse 578, *argipodes* like those in XXIV, 211. We shall return to these uses in connection with the proper masculine name ὁ Ἄργος which designates Odysseus’ faithful dog.¹⁶

This at least obvious polysemy frequently troubles the translator who has to choose between two signifieds, because in the modern Indo-European languages they do not belong to the same lexical field. Note, however, that “brilliant” would be used in French or English to describe a *lively and quick* mind which sees things *clearly* and *dazzles* the audience. When it comes to *argós* and the words deriving from the same base, the question is to what extent Homer and his audience felt the signifieds “luminous white” and “fast” as being distinct or, by contrast, as close enough to merge eventually.

Commentators of antiquity or of the Byzantine period face greatest difficulties to explain the signification of the root **arg-*. A recent commentary by J. Russo, pertaining to the dog Argos (Russo 1985: 176), posits a complete divergence of the signifieds since the age of Homer. An undoubtedly rash conclusion, as we shall try to show in the course of a large if not exhaustive overview of the compounds or derivatives from the root **arg-* (base **h₂erǵ-*).

1) The compounds with *argi-* as the first element, such as *argikéraunos* “sparkling/fast lightning”, go back to Indo-European.¹⁷ The scholium to *Il.* XIX, 121 poses the question: “‘white’ or ‘fast’ lighting?” P. Mazon chose to translate it as “white lightning” – which at first glance seems debatable, but may actually be supported by a remarkable verse in which Athena addresses Zeus as follows:

Father of the bright lightning (*argikéraune*), and of the dark cloud (*kelainephés*), what are your words? (*Il.* XXII, 178)

a verse that succinctly expresses the ambivalence of Zeus, the lord not only of the luminous skies but also of the storm, where the glare of the lightning opposes the gloomy clouds.¹⁸ The lightning, white, luminous, extremely fast,

¹⁶ We shall return to Odysseus’ dog in conclusion.

¹⁷ According to the law of Caland and Wackernagel (Bader 1975: 19–32, esp. 22).

¹⁸ On the ambivalence of Zeus, cf. Cook 1914–1940, who distinguished between “Zeus of the bright sky” and “Zeus of the dark sky” (Bremer 1976: 94).

combines the signifieds that Indo-European associates with the base **h₂erǵ-*; the different significations of *éclair* in French, of *flash* in English, continue, in their own way, associations of the same kind. By the way, there is, in Homer, the epithet *argēs* defining the noun *kerounós*, for example in *Il. VIII*, 133:

“[Zeus] thunders frighteningly and hurls a white bolt (*argēta keraunón*).”

In Hesiod’s *Theogony* (v. 140), it is the fast flash of the lightning, and its swift force, that seems to be embodied in the Cyclops *Árgēs*, alongside *Thunder* (*Brontēs*) and *Lightning* (*Steropēs*), an association repeated in verses 504–505 in the form of common names. All these links show that the signifieds “white, luminous/fast” should not be disassociated.

The epithet *argípodes* attributed to dogs (*Il. XXIV*, 211) is a compound of the same type as *argikéraunos*; the translator would find the signified “swift-footed” to be preferable. What can be said of these *argiódotes* dogs or boars (*Il. IX*, 539, etc.)? The scholiasts explain: “having pointed teeth”, or “having white teeth”. A curious use is the one in *Il. X*, 264 relating to the famous “Mycenaean” helmet: “the white (*leukoí*) teeth of a boar with flashing tusks (*argiódotos*).”¹⁹

2) As the second element of compounds, *-argos* is attested already in Mycenaean (Chadwick & Baumbach 1963: 151–271, esp. 175; Ventris & Chadwick 1973: 427; cf. Chantraine 1963: 12–22; Gallavotti 1957: 5f). There it poses the same problem of semantic ambiguity. Thus, *Πόδαργος* (*po-da-ko* in Mycenaean) is the name of several horses in the *Iliad*: Hector’s horse in *VIII*, 185, standing side by side with *Aíthōn* and *Lámpos*. Menelaus, for his part, “yoked two fleet horses: Agamemnon’s mare *Aíthē*, and his own horse *Pódargos*” (*Il. XXIII*, 294–295). One would be tempted to translate this *-argos* as “fast”. However, the other names express the colour of the animals or their shine. Thus, Achilles’ horses are *Xánthos* “the Blond” and *Balíos* “the Dappled”: they are the offspring of the harpy *Podarge* and the wind *Zephyr* (*Il. XVI*, 148–152; cf. also *XIX*, 400–401). To return to the Mycenaean use, which concerns the bovines, we may accept (unless we are to consider it a humorous, derisive designation) that it should rather suggest “white-legged”.²⁰ The fixed epithet for a horse in

¹⁹ French translation by Mazon: “les dents luisantes d’un sanglier aux vives défenses”; on *ἀργός* and *λευκός*, cf. Handschur 1970: 25, who comments *Il. X*, 264 as follows: “eine Doppelung, die auf ein allmähliches Verblässen des Farbadjektivs in der stehenden Wendung schließen läßt” (a duplicating, which suggests a gradual fading of the colour adjective in the traditional formula).

²⁰ For *to-ma-ko*, cf. Blanc 1991. There is also *tu-ma-ko* (*θύμαργος*, *στύμαργος*?). Note also a *πύγαργος* eagle as opposed to a black eagle, and a *πελαργός* stork, “grey-white bird” (Chantraine, *DELG*, s.v.); or also “fast-wandering” (Bader 1999) – animal sacred

the *Rg Veda* is *rijrā-*, which corresponds exactly to *argós* (Durante 1976: 94). Note, by the way, the ancient and persistent association of this epithet with a horse or a dog.

The adjective ἀργής “bright white”, associated in Homer with thunder (e.g. *Il.* VIII, 133), should be linked to the compound ἀργικέραυτος and the name of the Cyclops *Árgēs*; or, also, to animal fat, and even to the fat of heroes (*Il.* XXI, 127). A more isolated use (*Il.* III, 419) concerns Helen (herself *Argeíē* “Argive”):

She wrapped herself in her bright shining mantle (ἀργῆτι φαεινῶ) and went...

where the association of two terms belonging to the whiteness-brightness²¹ lexical field is observable. Perhaps an echo of this semantic pair can be found in the epithet-name of Hermes *Argeiphontes*. On the other hand, in one of Sophocles’ justly celebrated choruses (*Oedipus at Colonus*, 670) the same word, ἀργής, is associated with *height* (κολωνός “hill”): the *summit* is shining white by nature (Nagy 1992: 230).

Argē- was expanded into ἀργηστής “shining”, which is not Homeric, and into ἀργήεις (suffix *-*went-*): the Doric form is ἀργᾶς, which can designate a serpent (shining, lively). A special place is held by derivatives from an *u*-stem, attested in Sanskrit (*arjuna-* = “white, clear”) and possibly in Latin (*argūtus*, *arguo*).²² Thus, we find in Homer Ἄργυφος/ἀργύφειος (used to describe white sheep or garments) and, particularly, the name for silver, ἄργυρος, already present in Mycenaean: “There is no Indo-European name for silver”, P. Chantraine explains, “but it was called a shining white metal in different languages”.²³ It is likely that the term for silver was quite close to epithets signifying “bright white” in order for the ancients to be able to feel an etymological connection: Thetis is ἀργυρόπεζα “silver-footed” (*Il.* I, 538), a poetic expression which may be commented “white- and swift-footed”.²⁴ A connection is imaginable

to the goddess Hera (*Argeíē* herself). One of Actaeon’s dogs in Hesiod is called Ὠμαργός or “white-shouldered” [...] or “fast-pawed (literally shouldered)”!

²¹ Clader 1976: 58. Quite curiously, here the topic of invisibility is associated with that of shining (v. 420). This also reminds us of *Argeiphontes*.

²² *Arjuna* is one of the main characters of *Mahābhārata*. In the *Rg Veda*, it is the mystical name of the god Indra: cf. Dumézil 1968: 249–250, 635 (note supp.). For *argūtus* and *arguo*, cf. Meillet & Ernout, 1951³, and Chantraine, *DELG*, s.v. ἄργυρος. Perpillou 1969: 461, proposes to separate *arguo* from *argūtus*.

²³ Chantraine, *DELG*, s.v. ἄργυρος.

²⁴ There is a city called Ἄργυφῆ in Elis (*Hom. hymn to Ap.* V, 422), and another one called Ἄργυρίππα (Lycophron, 592), and a people called Ἄργύρινοι in Epirus (Lycophron, 592).

between the name Argos and the palace of Helen and Menelaus (in Argos), where silver is abundant (Clader 1976: 57). The potter's white clay is ἄργιλ(λ)ος. It was claimed that its use had been discovered in Argos! A curious example of this Argive "imperialism", etymological, mythological, cultural and historical.²⁵

Three adjectives depend on the stem in *-s-* **tò árgos* expected according to Caland and Wackernagel's system (Chantraine 1933: 249; Chantraine 1967):

– ἐναργής "which becomes visible, bright, manifest" is of particular interest. P. Chantraine explained this type of adjective as a form corresponding to nouns in *s*, and related it to τὸ Ἄργος as ἐριθηλής to θάλας. The term carries a quite strong religious overtone, expressing divine "epiphany": φαίνεσθαι ἐναργής stands in opposition to the lexical family of "conceal", "recover (from obscurity)" (κρύπτω, καλύπτω, κεύθω, etc.). A characteristic example can be found in the *Odyssey* XVI, 161:

The gods do not show themselves in their brightness to everyone.²⁶

– ἀργεστής "the one who purifies the sky", formed analogously to κηδεστής from κῆδος, designates certain winds: *Nótos* and Zephyr in Homer, and Zephyr and Boreas in Hesiod. The sense seems to be closely associated with the notions of light and speed.²⁷

– ἀργεννός "of a brilliant white", is an Aeolian derivative (**arges-nos*). It qualifies sheep, or the shining garment worn by Helen (*Il.* III, 141). The type of garment that has a regal or divine edge to it.

Let us emphasise the analysis of these three words, which constitutes *irrefutable* linguistic proof of the existence of the common name **tò árgos*, "*fast*

phron, 1017). With regard to the compounds with ἄργυρος, one should distinguish between those – often of a later date – in which this word has the sense of *coinage*, and those in which it still has its proper sense of *metal*; and then, between the *metal* and its *brilliant shine*. We are interested in the latter compounds:

= ἀργυροδίνης for a river (*Il.* II, 753; 21, 8; Hes. *Theog.*, 340).

= ἀργυροειδής (Eur. *I. A.*, 752).

= ἀργυρόπεζα, epithet of Thetis (*Il.* I, 538).

= ἀργυρότοξος, epithet of Apollo (*Il.* I, 37).

²⁵ Isid. *Or.* 16, 1: "argilla ab Argis vocata, apud quos primum ex ea vasa confecta sunt."

²⁶ Bremer 1976: 162–163. *Enárgeia* will subsequently be a rhetoric term signifying *vividness, clarity, evidence* of literary evocation. Cf. Lévy & Pernot 1997.

²⁷ The *scholium T* to *Il.* XXI, 334 explains: "because the wind blows from Argos towards Troy"!

luminous white radiance”, which had fallen in disuse as such before the first historical records of Greek.

As we return to the signified of *tò Árgos*, we should immediately remark that it is quite unlikely that the epithets with the sense of “bright”, etc. derive from a proper name, from a particular, even if widespread, toponym, or from a common noun signifying a “plain”. The simple concept of *whiteness* may explain a certain number of toponyms, e.g. Ἀργινοῦσ(σ)αί “White Islands”,²⁸ or the epithet ἀργινώεις attributed to the cities of Lycastos and Camiros (*Il. II*, 647, 656). Such an interpretation has long been proposed for Argos²⁹ and it would be acceptable, at a pinch, if Argos had unfailingly been a precisely defined toponym, a town name, but it was not. On the other hand, the signified of the root *arg-* is far from denoting only a colour, and the symbolism of colours, notably of the bright white, is widely attested in Greece.³⁰ We may consider as likely the symbolic, ideological, religious and political function of the name Argos.

A signifying toponym

The etymological family of *argós* makes it possible to demonstrate the existence of a common noun, **tò árgos*, which signified “radiance, fast flash of whiteness”. Through a functional evolution, which probably began quite early, the term in question tended to become fixed in the role of a proper name, of a toponym, “land radiant with light”; a phenomenon that seems to have been widespread in the Indo-European substrates and in the languages of the region; hence the frequency of this toponym in Greece itself, but also in the Balkans and Anatolia. These toponyms, or the others containing the same root, designate not only cities but also rivers or mountains. This phenomenon can also be found on Celtic soil, where there are rivers called Ariège (**Argiā*), Argens or Arget.

²⁸ Cf. e.g. Robert 1980: 281–286. Many Celtic or Thracian toponyms (Argens, Ariège; Delamarre 2003: 53–54) designating rivers.

²⁹ Boisacq 1923², s.v. Ἄργος. The descriptive accuracy of the toponyms derived from the root *arg* is emphasised by Robert 1980: 281–286.

³⁰ The island of Leucadia is named after the white cliffs of the famous promontory, but, from the *Odyssey* on, we find them associated with the symbolism of the journey of the Sun towards the underworld (XXIV, 1–2): this should be added to the dossier of Argeiphontes. Cf. Ballabriga 1986: 53f; Nagy 1992²: 234: “The White Rock is the boundary delimiting the conscious and the unconscious – be it a trance, stupor, sleep, or even death.”

It remains to demonstrate the essential: Much as Argos functions as a toponym, the signified “land radiant with whiteness, with light”, with all connotations that it implies, is attached to it in Homer, much before and doubtlessly much after him. To be surprised that a toponym could signify “land radiant with light” would mean to forget the general tendency of “archaic” peoples to consider themselves as being at the centre of the real world and of the real life, etc. (Lévi-Strauss 1973: 384). Just as, to the Chinese, sons of Heaven, their land is the “Middle Kingdom”, to the Greeks, their region, their homeland could have been the land of light and life par excellence, and the “udder of the earth” (*cf. Il. IX, 141 and 283*).³¹

Argos, “the luminous land”, is the land of Ἀργεῖοι, the Argives, that is to say “the bright white people”.³² This notion is certainly inherited from the Indo-Europeans. The white colour, the radiant luminosity emanates from heroes, from kings, from the royal capital, from the seat of the gods. This can be found in Slavic languages – for example, in the name Belgrade (*Beograd*, the white city),³³ and much farther from us, among the pseudo-Tocharians – in present-day Chinese Turkestan – who referred to themselves as “the Whites” or the “the Brights”: *Ārsi* or *Kuci*, two words similar in meaning, of which the former has *the same etymology* as Argos. This semantic parallelism is all the more important, and carries all the more weight, because it concerns, apart from the self-designation of the people, its fundamental *ideology*, and, on the other hand, because the Greeks and the pseudo-Tocharians lived in mutually very distant areas, given the data attested at very different times (seventh or eighth century AD for Tocharian texts) (Pinault 1989: 22–23; *cf. also* Mawet 1982: 283–299); however, the two peoples were, at a very early time, in close contact (Sergent 1995: 113). The *Argive* ideology should be included in the so very enigmatic dossier of Indo-European dispersion.

The derivatives of the toponym **tò Árgos* confirm these views: according to P. Chantraine, *Argeios* features “the form expected of a derivative of stems in s. However, derivatives in l predominate.” He cites the examples

³¹ On the fundamental ethnocentrism of the archaic Greeks: “overall, the epic would favour a vague centring coextensive with the Aegean area” (Ballabriga 1986: 64). On the meaning of ἄρουρα, *cf. Hofinger* 1981: 27–42, esp. 31. According to Ruijgh 1961: 122–123, it is an Achaean element.

³² OIr *arg* “warrior, hero, champion” (from Gallic **argos*) could be included hereto, with a more credible etymology than the one in Delamarre 2003: 54 (linked to Gr. *arkhós*).

³³ Detailed documentation and analyses resulting in a different explanation in Detelić & Ilić 2006.

Argólās (m.) “Argive”; *Argolís* (f.: s-e. *gê*), “Argolis”, *Argolikós*. The two former forms are certainly quite old. In fact, “Greek does not have a single athematic suffix in -l.”³⁴ What we have here is a new linguistic proof for what we seek to demonstrate: *Argólās*³⁵ and *Argolís* do not derive from the toponym **tò Árgos*, but from a verb stem. In fact, “a few archaic forms betray the participial character of the suffix. There is a group of adjectives formed from present stems” (Chantraine 1933: 237). The examples include *μαινόλης* “furious”, which would be similar to *μαίνομαι*, *φαινόλης* (kind of a shiny cape?), and the feminine form *φαινολίς* “light-bringing”, Aurora’s epithet.³⁶ Note the semantic proximity of *φαινολίς* to the words deriving from **h₂erǵ-*. P. Chantraine believed he noticed a certain religious connotation attached to this suffix, -*olēs*.³⁷ At any rate, Hera can be *Argolis*.³⁸ These forms are not a proof or even an indication of a pre-Hellenic origin of *tò Árgos*, since these “aberrant” derivatives are not completely isolated; but they certainly indicate a great antiquity and will get to support our hypothesis. From a historical point of view, it should be emphasised that the name *Argolis* does not derive directly from the toponym *tò Árgos*, but that it conveys a signified: “the luminous land – radiant”. Moreover, it designates a geographical entity which is larger than the land dominated by the city-state of Argos. The radiance of Argos is unconcerned with the borders of the city-state. All of this is highly consequential: the possibility that the word *Argive* may have a *sense* beyond a simple geographic reference, and that this reference may be broad, going far beyond the borders of the city-state, allows us to look at some problems of political or religious history in a new light.³⁹

Argos in Homer: formulaic uses

The question of the signification of Argos in epic, and of its geographic referents, has figured among the main *Homeric problems* since antiquity. An echo of ancient scholars’ discussions of the name Argos can be found in Strabo’s

³⁴ Chantraine *DELG*, s.v. ἀργός. Chantraine 1933: 237.

³⁵ In its capacity as a common noun, this word designates a serpent (Hesychius), like ἀργᾶς.

³⁶ *Hymn H to Dem.*, 51. Richardson 1974: 169.

³⁷ Chantraine 1933: 238. Socio-linguistic analyses of this kind are hardly appropriate today. On Argolis, cf. Hoenigswald 1980: 105–107. The author fails to see the possible contribution of the morphological parallel of *μαινόλης* and *φαινολίς*.

³⁸ Plut. frag. 158 (Sandbach).

³⁹ E.g. the role of the “king” of Syracuse, Pollis of Argos (Van Compernelle 1966).

Geography (esp. VIII, 6, 5–10), but also in Stephanus Byzantinus, in Eustathius' *Commentaries* or in the scholia.

The question has been revisited more than once by modern scholars, authors of commentaries on the Homeric text or of works on the relationship between epic and history (cf. e.g. Wilcox 1970: 99; Kirk 1985, I: 128; Cauer 1923⁴: 284–290; Allen 1924: 110–125; Page 1959: 127–132; Wathélet 1975; Wathélet 1992; Sauzeau 1997). Despite the immense erudition of our predecessors, and despite the important advances made, the question has never received a completely satisfactory answer. This type of questions can no longer be considered without being aware of the traditional and formulaic nature of epic, so splendidly demonstrated by M. Parry. The distinction between formulaic and non-formulaic uses will give us an opportunity to look into the concepts of *signified* and *reference* in concrete terms. The *sense* of the name Argos might well serve, here as much as elsewhere, as a crucial key.

The fact that should be our starting point is the formulaic link between the verbs signifying the *Return* (νόστος) – namely, νέεσθαι, ἀπονέεσθαι – and the name Argos. (*Il.* II, 112–115 = IX, 20–23; II, 286–288; III, 74–75; 257–258). From the study of the vast formulaic system encompassed by the *nóstos* Argos emerges as equivalent to “Fatherland”.⁴⁰ Now, if we accept the signification “return to life and light” for the stem **nes*, as proposed by D. Frame after others, the signified of **tò árgos* suggested by the etymology will find its first and important confirmation: the land where all the Greek heroes, whatever their exact homeland, wish to return to, is Argos; *Argos* (regardless of its location) is *the land of life and light*. All this does not mean that the Argos referred to in epic formulas is an “imaginary” or “fantasy” land.

Another important finding of the formulaic analysis: the epithet most frequently associated with the name Argos is *ἰππόβοτον* “pastureland of horses”. In Book III of the *Iliad* (75 = 258), Paris proposes to Hector that he should fight a duel with Menelaus: the stronger will win and take Helen as a prize; as for the other Greeks, they should return to “Argos, the pastureland of horses, and to Achaea, the land of beautiful women”. What one tended to see in this line, still following the logic focused primarily on locating and dating, at the expense of a proper semantic examination, was a trace of a Thessalian stratum of the epic,⁴¹ or to explain it by the plain of Argos (Bonfante 1969: 187). However, the formula never seems to specifically designate a clearly defined part of

⁴⁰ Οἶκονδε φίλην εἰς πατρίδα γαῖαν, etc.: Frame 1978; we do not support the author's line of argument entirely. Clader 1976: 56–57.

⁴¹ Cauer 1923⁴: 290. Thesis re-launched by Drews 1979: 111–135.

Greece. To locate “Argos, the pastureland of horses” in Thessaly, in the Peloponnese or in Argolis with precision seems to us to be a vain endeavour, where the synchronic and diachronic perspectives intertwine confusedly. What matters here is the formulaic and semantic link Argos–horse.

The idea that *Argos the pastureland of horses* is geographically opposed to *Achaea the land of beautiful women* as Southern Greece to Northern Greece would also need to be proved. It seems utterly impossible to find a precise and stable geographic reference for Homeric Αχαι(ρ)ίς, which can refer to a region in Thessaly⁴² as much as it can designate the Peloponnese,⁴³ no doubt as a result of a migration (Aitchison 1964): an opposition between *Achaea* and *Argos*, then, is not clearly set out here; moreover, it is even less so because both Thessaly and Argolis can be designated by the name *Argos*.⁴⁴ Besides, Argos can be Αχαιϊκόν; and, the names of the *Argives*, *Achaeans* and *Danaens*, even if they may not be true *synonyms*, seem to point to the same *reference*. Argos is inhabited by the *Achaeans*. The search for a location seems hopelessly convoluted, except if indispensable methodological precautions are taken: the search for a particular historical referent is legitimate only within a meticulous diachronic study of Homeric formulas and of the “strata” in the creation of the epic – if the whole undertaking is not utopian in itself. Be that as it may, if the text is looked at from a synchronic perspective, it is better to start from words, notions, phraseology, context. It is not irrelevant that, for instance, the heroes are thinking of the land of return as a land “of beautiful women” (*kalligúnaika*), even though what matters is how to end the war sparked by Helen’s beauty.

It has been frequently remarked that the formulaic usage of *ἰππόβοτον* caused the epithet to generally appear to be off the point. M. Parry was of the opinion that the signification of an “ornamental” epithet was secondary or null; nowadays, most specialists question this aspect of his work.⁴⁵ We have already seen that the root **arg-* in Greek is particularly associated with the fast and regular movement of a horse. The neutral “abstract”, for its part, is suitable for evoking an open and illuminated space where noble herds can play about.

⁴² If we put aside the formulaic verse in *Il.* III 75 = 258, our evidence becomes limited to an indirect indication: in IX, 295 the Achaeans inhabit “Hellas and Phthia”; as for XI, 770, the epithet *πυλυβότειραν* proves nothing, pace Aitchison 1964: 28.

⁴³ In *Od.* XXI, 107–109 it includes the cities of Pylos, Mycenae... and Argos.

⁴⁴ Cauer 1923⁴: 285 interpreted the opposition between “Argos, the pastureland of horses” and “Achaea, the land of beautiful women” as the one between Thessalian Achaea and Pelasgic Argos; cf. Aitchinson 1964.

⁴⁵ Parry 1928, chap. IV. Cf. e.g. Paraskevaides 1984: 8.

The rich and glorious land, the place known as the “pastureland of horses”: such is the land of Return (Sauzeau 2004b). The name Argos in fact symbolises the noble and illuminated life that the heroic warrior (and certainly the bard’s audience) dreams of. The formula occurs in the accusative and genitive cases (*Il.* II, 287; VI, 152; IX, 246; XIX, 329), expressing the *remoteness of the native land*. There the name Argos has neither a precise nor a stable referent; it may bring to mind the land of Odysseus as much as that of Achilles. The sense is the same in a formulaic verse where Argos figures without an epithet (*Il.* XII, 70; XIII, 227; XIV, 70), or in the verses of the *Odyssey* relating to the characters exiled from Argos (XV, 224; 274). In contrast, to the Trojans, Argos is the land of exile (*Il.* VI, 456).⁴⁶

The epithet traditionally associated with Argos occurs in the dative case only once, in the *Odyssey* (IV, 562),⁴⁷ uttered by the Old Man of the Sea:

As for you, Menelaus, Zeus’ favourite, it is not ordained by the gods 561
that you should die and meet your fate in Argos, pastureland of horses;
but to the Elysian Fields, at the very end of the world,
the Immortals will take you... (after the author’s French translation)

The one interested in the signification and connotations of the word more than in its possible reference – in the *Telemachy* Argos evokes “fair (δία) Lacedaemon” and the kingdom of Menelaus – will be struck by the context. The destiny of Menelaus is not to “die in Argos”: here the name Argos evokes the land of Return, but in opposition to Ἡλύσιον πεδίου. The link of the verb *to die* with the name Argos, the land of light and life, would be a striking example of paronomasia.

The name Argos is also accompanied by a formulaic epithet of a different nature, *Akhaiikón*. The “ktetic” suffix *-ikos* signifies particularly the belonging of a land to a given people.⁴⁸ So, it is the “Argos of the Achaeans”, an expression which in terms of form reminds of Argos *Pelasgikón*, the “Argos of the Pelasgians” (*Il.* II, 681). Undoubtedly, it is not at all impossible that the formula

⁴⁶ The case of verse VI, 152 in the *Iliad* is an exception as far as *locating* the city of Ephyra is concerned; a location, by the way, vaguely defined and placed in a context where the formula retains its emotional and symbolic signification (the concept of exile, etc.). The same formula occurs in *Od.* III, 263 for locating Aegisthus, who takes advantage of the peaceful situation at home to divert Clytemnestra from her duties.

⁴⁷ On the problem posed by the formula in the dative case, cf. Wathelet 1992: 102.

⁴⁸ Chantraine 1933: 385. On the formation of this word cf. Chantraine, *DELG*, s.v. Ἀχαιοί; cf. Wathelet 1992: 104.

Akhaiikòn Árgos originated in the Mycenaean period,⁴⁹ and it may even be accepted that it was forged to designate a second-millennium ethnic or political entity: *the (fair) Kingdom of the Achaeans*, and that it constitutes a doublet of the name *Akhaía*. Yet, seeking to draw a map of it or to understand its institutions is no doubt illusory.⁵⁰ Using formulaic and traditional poetry as a direct historical source leads to regrettable confusion. Oral poetry was not prone to preserving a coherent picture of a political system. One would have to accept that the epic tradition became fixed in the Mycenaean period and deny the poets from the subsequent centuries any creation or any new interpretation, which is absurd. On the other hand, it is unclear at what point in time following the fall of the Mycenaean kingdoms a real political entity corresponding to the one evoked by the formula *Achaean Argos* could have been established.

In our opinion, therefore, formulaic usage fixed the expression of Mycenaean origin, which the bard does not see as pointing to any precise and coherent geographic or political reference, but rather to *a rich and royal land in its symbolic dimension, which constitutes the centre of the heroic Greek world* (cf. *Il. VI, 224*). A formula particular to the *Odyssey* (*I, 344*, etc.) puts Argos in the *centre of the heroic world*:⁵¹

καθ' Ἑλλάδα καὶ μέσον Ἄργος.
(through Hellas and mid-Argos)

Here, once again, the idea of a geographic opposition between Hellas and Argos hardly seems proved, since the two terms can be inclusive of one another. The repetition of the expression could just as well be due to a traditional poetic phraseology. A formulaic verse (*Il. IX 141 = 283*) refers to Achaean Argos as “the udder of the earth” (οὐθαρ ἀρούρης). This signification, and the idea of fertility, may be based on the non-formulaic expression “wheat-bearing

⁴⁹ Ruijgh 1985: the author shows (pp. 159–160) that the formula *πότνια Ἥρη* goes back to the Mycenaean period. Some aspects of the Homeric language may even be dated to the proto-Mycenaean period.

⁵⁰ Loptson 1986: 42–65; cf. p. 43 n. 2: “Argos was, in the Homeric picture of Greece, far and away the largest, most populous, and most powerful Achaean state”, with no clear explanation of what might have been the relationship between the “Homeric picture” and Mycenaean political organisation.

⁵¹ The Indo-Europeans conceived their space according to a tri- or quadri-functional structure; the clearest example is provided by the provinces of Ireland (Rees & Rees 1961; Sauzeau & Sauzeau 2012: 34; 63–68). This kind of division appears in the Greek legend of the partition of the Peloponnese between the Heraclids (Sergent 1977–78, to be discussed). It is as if Argos was at once a province of First function and of the “Middle”.

Argos” (*Il.* XV, 372). The *fair and sovereign land* must, of course, provide wealth to its kings⁵² and abundant nourishment to its heroes.

Ithaca and Argos

Generally speaking, in the *Odyssey*, to Odysseus, the *land of return* is the island of Ithaca. The expressions signifying “towards Ithaca” correspond to “towards the homeland” or are associated with it (XII, 345) as well as with the words evoking the Return (I, 163, XI, 361, etc.). Yet, the toponym Ἰθάκη points to a specific geographic referent. But this *real* island is vested with symbolic values. The island is εὐδείελος “luminous” (II, 167, etc.) just like Δήλος,⁵³ but also, again just like it, unsuitable for horse breeding. It is a paradoxical Argos, a peripheral Argos, poor and modest, an anti-Argos even. In Book XIII (v. 242, etc.), Athena presents Ithaca... to Odysseus:

this island is rugged and little suitable for horses [...] A land for grazing
goats and cattle (αἰγίβοτος [...] καὶ βούβοτος)
(after the French translation by Jaccottet)

A passage in the *Telemachy* (*Od.* IV, 601–608) seems to be a consciously developed definition of the concept of Argos; there one can see quite clearly how the signification of this word could come closer to a “plain”. Menelaus suggests that Telemachus take three horses with him. The young hero explains his refusal as follows:

But I will not take the horses to Ithaca; I will leave them here	601
to you, these superb animals; you reign over an immense plain,	
where clover grows in abundance, and sedge,	
and wheat, and rye, and broad-eared white barley in vast fields.	604
In Ithaca there are no large tracks or pastures.	605
There is not a single island suitable for horses, furnished with vast pastures,	607
among those that slope to the sea; Ithaca least of all:	608
pastureland of goats, but I like it more than pastureland of horses. ⁵⁴	606

⁵² But the idea of *fertility* functions as a connotation and should not be used to explain Helen’s *Argive* character (idea defended by Wathelet 1992: 105).

⁵³ The “luminous island” (idea already in Usener 1948³: 202), whose ancient name is *Asteria* (Pindar, *Paean* V), which myth interprets as “visible”; unsuitable for horse breeding: Callimachus, *Hymn to Delos*, 11f, who implicitly likens it to Argos.

⁵⁴ After the author’s French translation.

Ithaca is to him, just as is to Odysseus, the land of Return, but it is not a true Argos, it is good only for raising goats. With an irony quite typical of the *Odyssey*, Telemachus contrasts his small rocky homeland to Menelaus' royal domain, defined precisely as *Argos*: vast plain rich in crops, suitable for horse breeding. That is how the name Argos “the land radiant with light” could denote “the plain” without, however, *signifying* a “plain”.

Non-formulaic uses

Does the proper name in non-formulaic uses⁵⁵ only designate or it signifies, and if it does, what exactly? To begin with, let us refer to the *Árgos Pelasgikón*, that is to say the already mentioned *Pelasgic Argos* from the *Catalogue*. The expression seems to designate a geographic referent situated in Thessaly in any case, even Thessaly in general.⁵⁶ The case of *Íason Árgos* (*Od.* XVIII, 246) has been posing all sorts of unsolvable problems since ancient times: the context apparently points to the whole or a part of the Peloponnese and the epithet could have signified, for instance, “(Argos) of the Ionians” (Wathelet 1992: 104); but in this enigmatic passage everything remains obscure. Scholarly traditions would set out to build aetiological interpretations around these epithets with the main purpose of tying them artificially to the city-state of the Argives.

In some cases the question of reference does not arise in the same circumstances. *Κλυτόν Ἄργος* in Book XXIV (v. 437) cannot reasonably designate any particular region of Greece: it signifies the land of Return to the Achaeans, or a land at the end of the world to Priam. Why *κλυτόν*? Let us reflect on the proximity of the name of Hermes Argeiphontes, omnipresent in this funerary lament: the god escorts the old man to the enemy camp, allows him to cross the border between his realm and that of Death's, in one direction and then in the other. His voyage is a metaphoric catabasis (Wathelet 1988; Sauzeau 2005: 40–41). The name *Ἀργεϊφόντης* poses morphological and semantic problems that P. Chantraine considered unsolvable (Chantraine 1935; Heubeck 1954; Koller 1976). In addition to its fabled explanation as the “slayer of Argos”, which does not work for the Homeric text, and to the one that presumes “the one who blinds the vision-eyesight” (Bader 1986), we shall consider the expla-

⁵⁵ However, some of these uses, where a non-traditional epithet occurs, form part of a broader formulaic system. On the adaptation of formulas cf. Hainsworth 1968.

⁵⁶ Loiptson 1981: 136–138, who resumes Strabo's analyses (VIII 6, 5; IX, 5, 5–8).

nations that call in “the one who appears quickly/in full light” (and disappears, also quickly, into the darkness!).

In Book IV of the *Iliad*, Agamemnon, in despair because of the injuries of his brother Menelaus, recalls his dismal return to “thirsty Argos” (πολυδίψιον Ἄργος; IV, 171).⁵⁷ This expression is typical of Homeric problems. Argos is the land of Return, and the land of Agamemnon and Menelaus: but why “thirsty”? If we do not go beyond the contextual sense, we have to conclude that it has nothing to do with the climate of Argolis. Ancient scholars, whose sometimes too bold hypotheses are summed up by Strabo (VIII, 6, 7), were undoubtedly right when they proposed to construe πολυδίψιον as πολυπόθητον “much desired”: thirst constitutes a virtually universal “metaphorical matrix” (Taillardat 1977) for evoking desire or regret. One may also think that Agamemnon is fearful of returning to “Argos (which will be) greatly altered (by grief)”.

The epithet in question reoccurs in association with the name Argos in the first verse of the *Thebaid* (frag. 1 Bernabé):

Ἄργος ἄειδε θέα πολυδίψιον ἔνθεν ἄνακτες
(Sing, goddess of thirsty Argos, whence the chieftains)

where it perhaps preserves a metaphorical sense (“thirsty for victories”). However, the proper sense of “thirsty” finds its context in the Argive traditions where drought is the starting point of a vast mythical complex centred on the legend of the Danaïdes (cf. esp. Sauzeau 2005).

In some non-formulaic uses, the name Argos figures without an epithet. That series includes three examples where Argos almost certainly designates a city.

The first of them (*Il.* II, 559) depicts “Argos and Tiryns surrounded by walls”. It occurs in the *Catalogue of Ships*, which is considered by some to be a “Mycenaean document” or of “Mycenaean origin”,⁵⁸ and by some as a text “reflecting” the Greece of the early archaic period.⁵⁹ In fact, the *Catalogue* – initially no doubt independent of the *Iliad* – is the result of an analogous poetic tradition created during the Dark Ages.⁶⁰ The very nature of this text leads to

⁵⁷ Cf. Sauzeau 1998, where this problem is examined in detail.

⁵⁸ Burr 1944; after the deciphering of Mycenaean, Page 1959: 134; Hope-Simpson & Lazenby 1970. Wathelet 1992: 116, shows that the Mycenaean origin of the *Catalogue* should not lead to “drawing too many conclusions about the history and institutions of the Mycenaean period”.

⁵⁹ Giovannini 1969. There would be much to say about the use of the concept of *reflection* in the context of epic, or of archaic Greek literature!

⁶⁰ We agree on this point with Marcozzi & Sinatra 1984: 303–316 (with bibliography).

a usage of the name Argos in which, *this time, geographic reference prevails over signification*, and that reference corresponds to the *polis* of the Argives.

The second example – outside the *Catalogue* – mentions “Argos, Sparta and broad-wayed Mycenae” (*Il.* IV, 52). The very formulation of the verse, whose third element is created with an epithet, follows an ancient pattern, but the expression cannot be dated precisely nonetheless. Whatever may have been said about it (Loftson 1981: 60), the collocation of the three toponyms requires that the name Argos therein be considered as designating a city. However, the words come out of the mouth of *Argive* Hera, whose great sanctuary not far from Mycenae is roughly contemporary with the diffusion of the epic. The great *Argive* goddess was honoured by the Spartans (Paus. III, 13, 8). And we should not forget that Helen of Sparta shares the epithet *Argive* with Hera. Sparta – the Argos of Menelaus – wants to share the sovereign symbolism associated with the name of the “fair land”.

The third example occurs in the *Odyssey* (XXI, 107–109):

A woman who has no equal in the Achaean land, nor in Sacred Pylos, nor in Argos, nor in Mycenae, nor in Ithaca itself, nor on the dark mainland.

This time, Argos, paired with Mycenae once again, is associated with – or opposed to – Pylos, the city whose name and mythology have led more than one author to assume an infernal symbolism in it (Sergent 1986). And the “fair” Ithaca opposes the “dark mainland”: in that way the latter verse forms a chiasmus with the former, emphasising the implicit structure:

Pylos (-)	/	Argos (+)
Ithaca (+)	/	Dark mainland (-)

Homer and the name Argos

We can now draw several general conclusions from the Homeric usage of the name Argos. In a non-formulaic usage, the name Argos may designate the homonymous *city*; however, outside the *Catalogue*, which is a separate text within the *Iliad*, it occurs in a context where its *symbolic value* (i.e. basically its signification) remains perceptible. On the other hand, the sense “(fair) sovereign land” is confirmed by an important verse the context of which concerns exactly the legitimacy of Agamemnon’s power (*Il.* II, 108):

πολλῆσιν νήσοισι καὶ Ἄργεϊ παντὶ ἀνάσσειν
(to rule over numerous isles and all of Argos)

After the epic took shape, this verse was to play a crucial role in the building of what might be called the “imaginary hegemony” of the city-state of Argos. The narrow interpretation of the name Argos in Homer as designating a city-state is not only a linguistic error;⁶¹ for propaganda purposes, the Argives shamelessly used the epic text to ensure themselves a heroic past and justify the hegemony that they sought to establish in competition with Mycenae or Sparta, but also to effect a transition from a symbolic to a political level. Let us point out the absurdity of seeking to delimit the political referent of the name Argos in time and space, especially when it comes to its formulaic usage. What would be the point of seeking to localise at any cost a floating referent which anyway cannot exist in a stable manner in a poetry which is oral, formulaic, traditional? It is true that in several non-formulaic instances the name pertains to a concrete referent, the city of Argos or Lacedaemon. Generally, however, the workings of this kind of poetry should inspire the study of the *significations* of the name and formulas, rather than exhausting attempts to define incoherent references. Argos is the *fair land of return to life*, at the heart of the heroic world; the *royal land* where Agamemnon rules (or his brother Menelaus), and the *fair seat of Argive Hera, sovereign and bright goddess*.

There is in the *Odyssey* a polar opposition between Pylos and Argos, i.e. between *Dark Land* and *Fair Land*. This axis constitutes a pan-Hellenic representation of a polar opposition occurring on a reduced scale just about everywhere in Greece. It certainly could have played a role in the symbolic organisation of space over and over again in every community, and then in the *poleis*: that is precisely why it would be pointless to establish a *synchronically coherent* map of the whole of Greece on the basis of this opposition. It is from this structure that stems the multiplication of *Argos* and of *Pylos*. Just as each part of the magnet has a positive and a negative pole, we can find in the territory of a city-state a pole which is *Argos* (e.g. the Heraion of Argos) and a pole which is Pylos (Lerna); or Sparta–Taenarum (*cf.* Sauzeau 2005) in Laconia. On the other hand, in a pan-Hellenic “literary” work the author could reintroduce such structural coherence, playing with topography if it was needed.

Odysseus’ terrible *nóstos* is better understood if placed in the symbolic whole which “Homeric geography” constitutes, and the name Argos may well provide a key to it. In a way, this return is an initiation journey, yet paradoxical, just as Ithaca is a paradoxical Argos. While the other survivors of the Trojan War return to “Argos”, Odysseus has to reach a frontier land, the western end of the world. Ithaca, however luminous it may be, is situated “on the wrong side”,

⁶¹ An error that is surprising to find in Georgiev 1966.

far away towards the Sunset. This notion leads the poet, indifferent to realistic data, to somewhat obscure the location of Ithaca in relation to the neighbouring isles:

Itself, low, lying in the sea, the last²⁵
towards the Sunset.

(*Od.* IX, 25–26; after the French translation by the author;
cf. Germain 1954: 56of)

This description hardly corresponds to reality, since Ithaca in fact sits to the east of Cephalonia; hence many commentaries, and the famous hypothesis by W. Dörpfeld seeking to identify Homeric Ithaca with Leucadia.⁶² Such anomalies can better be explained once they are put back in the overall context, with its symbolic significations. Indeed, let us take a look at the whole of Odysseus' initiation journey: from Cape Maleas to the island of Calypso, Odysseus encounters monsters, death, solitude, and the loss of his own self. Hermes *Argeiphontēs* comes to ask Calypso, "the hiding nymph", to let him return; since this exile has something funereal about it, the role of an intermediary between the luminous Life and the darkness of Death suits him well (*cf.* e.g. Bremer 1976: 111; Dyer 1964: 29–38, esp. 38; Casevitz 1992a). So, Odysseus reaches the land of the Phaeacians, the name of which evokes "a colour obtained by mixing white and black",⁶³ and which E. Rohde described as nothing else but "a dream, drawn out of the shade, immersed in pure light" (Rohde 1928, I: 83). The description of the glittering palace of Alcinoos in Book VII reiterates the description of the palace of Menelaos from Book IV (unless it is the other way round, for analysts).⁶⁴ Astonishingly, the name of the Phaeacians takes the place, in the formulas, of that of the Argives.⁶⁵ In the initiation journey as a whole, Phaeacia functions as a decisive stage between darkness and light.

The Return makes Odysseus disguise himself in order to enter incognito his palace in Ithaca. The only creature that recognises him immediately is his dog, the famous Argos, whose name, in the masculine form, is usually

⁶² These verses have caused considerable difficulties to both ancient and modern commentators: *cf.* Heubeck, West & Hainsworth 1988, I: 63.

⁶³ Chantraine, *DELG*, s.v. φαῖός [Taillardat]; Bremer 1976: 118–119.

⁶⁴ The arrival of Telemachus in Sparta (*in Argos*) in Book IV evokes or announces the arrival of Odysseus among the Phaeacians (in Book VI): the same palaces covered in gold, etc. The explanation offered by Janni 1970, who sees Book IV as a pro-Spartan "remake" of Book VI, has a drawback in that it wipes away the symbolic structure of the *Odyssey* as a whole.

⁶⁵ A meticulous study of formulaic language might confirm the analyses given herein: Hainsworth 1968: 127–128.

explained by the epithet frequently associated with dogs. However, in the light of what has been shown above, we can see another level of signification: the faithful dog represents the land of Return itself and the sovereignty of Odysseus over his land and his palace. In a way, it is his substitute. It waited for his missing master for twenty years: it can finally die and let him reclaim his wife and his throne, the life and the light.

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SOME TYPES OF INTRODUCTORY FORMULAS IN GREEK KLEPHTIC (HEROIC) EPIC

Abstract: Certain types of introductory formulas typical of klephtic epic songs are synoptically demonstrated and analyzed. The introduction outlines the historical development of this category of folk songs, based on occasionally opposing views of literary historians and scholars concerned with the study of Greek folklore. The analysis, performed on a selected corpus of Greek klephtic epic songs, reveals basic structural principles that the anonymous folk singer abided by whilst composing these songs.

Keywords: formula, klephtic folk song, model, structure, Greek revolution

Introductory remarks

Greek epic folk poetry, also known under the term κλέφτικα τραγούδια (haiduk/heroic songs) in Greek folk literature, is quite similar to the epic poetry of other Balkan peoples in scope and character. Greek heroic songs, apart from being somewhat shorter than both Serbian and Romanian songs (as noticed early on by Vuk Stefanović Karadžić), are thematically varied, whilst being conceptually highly concise and comprehensive. Regardless of the fact that there are certain points of contact between them and the Homeric verse, the historical development of Greek epic folk songs took a relatively different course from the Serbian style.¹ The reason for this might reside in the fact that the Serbian songs needed to elaborate the storyline from all angles and to supply all elements so as to provide a background of the event narrated by the singer in order to hold the attention of the audience, enhance the intensity of the action and boost the effect of the plot. In this regard it can be said that the story in Serbian folk poetry flows with utter ease, gradually leading to a culmi-

¹ According to Kapsomenos (1996: 27), “a strong lyrical charge is often felt in Greek heroic songs”.

nation. Attention to every detail of the sujet, that is the effort not to leave out a single element, possibly even to repeat it for the sake of convincingness, is the main property of Serbian epic poetry. Unlike Greek and Albanian heroic folk poetries, the Serbian epic is the source of some excellent songs of a balladic character (Suvajdžić 2008: 307).

The historical development of Serbian folk epic was continuous and strongly marked by three historical events, carved deeply in the collective memory of the Serbian people: they took place in 1371 (The Battle on the river Maritza), in 1389 (The First Battle of Kosovo) and in 1459 (the fall of Smederevo), and were denoted as the “decline” or “fall of the Serbian empire” in epic songs. Unlike the first recordings of Greek heroic poetry, published in the 1810s owing to the zeal of the French philologist, critic and historian Claude Charles Fauriel² (1772–1844), the first recording of a *bugarštica* in Serbian was made as early as the fifteenth century (cf. Pantić 1977).

The fact that Greek folk epic was at its peak in recent history, i.e. in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century, is particularly emphasized by some Greek researchers and scholars of Greek folk poetry, by Alexis Politis among others. According to Alexis Politis (1973: 29–31), Greek “haiduk (kleptic) songs first emerged in Roumelia in the early and mid-eighteenth century and these are primarily of the armatolic type”. Unlike him, Nicholas Politis (1983: 49) is of the opinion that Greek epic poetry gained real momentum only after the Greek haiduks began a relatively well-organized fight against Ali Pasha of Yannina, the Ottoman official of Albanian origin (Alb. Ali Pashë Tepelena /Janina/, c. 1740–1822) who rebelled against the Sublime Porte in Epirus. According to the data we have been able to acquire, the true apogee of Greek folk epic may be traced only after the outbreak of the Greek uprising in 1821, when haiduk historical figures and their brave accomplishments were widely sung about in folk songs. That is the reason why Greek folk epic, which is as popular nowadays in modern Greek society³ as ever, is regarded as the living folk memory of the (not that remote) national past strongly supporting Greek national consciousness and sense of belonging to the Greek nation.

Some other students of Greek folk poetry consider the emergence of haiduk songs to be much earlier than the historical epochs mentioned above.

² This two-volume collection of modern Greek folk poetry (*Chants populaires de la Grèce moderne*) was published bilingually in Greek and French in Paris in 1824–1825.

³ Many folk heroic songs are performed with instrumental accompaniment at celebrations and festivities in today’s Greece. Modern Greek composers of worldwide renown, such as Mikis Theodorakis, Manos Hatzidakis, etc., have composed music for folk poems.

Thus, for example, Aravantinos (1996: 32–33) suggests that the first songs of *armatoles* appeared at the very beginning, or perhaps middle, of the sixteenth century, whilst the historian Vakalopoulos (1996: 267–269) is of the opinion that the beginnings of the new Greek heroic epic go back much further, to the era of the Byzantine Empire, and relates them to the area where *armatoles* had been active, continuing their armed activities in the territories conquered by the Ottomans after the fall of Constantinople in 1453: in the former case they were common looters, whilst in the latter they became fighters against the conquerors. Historian Sarris (1999: 301–302) holds a similar view in that he considers the *armatoles* as a well-known social institution in the Byzantine Empire, as prominent defenders of crop fields and properties who became well-organized and turned to serving the people as spies of the Ottomans, and whose accomplishments and fighting were later sung about. However, whilst relying on historical facts, Alexis Politis (1973: 16) quite precisely emphasizes that “the institution of *armatoles* emerged while the society was under Turkish rule (τουρκοκρατία) and thus was not a remnant of the Byzantine military organization”.

As regards their nature, Greek epic songs are not ballads. Being very short and rhymed forms, they may rather be described as direct and authentic “accounts” from the field, into which the singer embedded objectification of both time and space, and of the main character. An overwhelming majority of these songs are devoted to a *klepht* (κλέφτης, *haiduk*)⁴ or *klephtopoula* (female *haiduk*, κλεφτοπούλα) and to *armatoloi/martoloi* (αρματολός/μαρτολός)⁵. The raids by *haiduks* forced the Ottomans to build military fortifications along the roads so as to defend travellers and caravans as efficiently as possible. Since not even that was always enough, they resorted to a different tactic: they gave certain privileges to the population living in the vicinity of any major road; in return for being exempted from various duties, liable to a negligible tax and granted the right to carry and use arms, these Christian soldiers in Turkish service had to ensure safe passage of people and goods, to serve *agas* and *beys* unconditionally and to positively influence the common people. In other words,

⁴ The basic meaning of this word, “thief”, “stealer”, became euphemistic during the Greek struggle for national liberation against the Ottoman Empire, thus denoting a fighter for national freedom and social justice (Stojanović 1984: 34).

⁵ The meaning would be “armed men” (Vasić 1967: 19). According to Fauriel (1824 I: xliii), *armatoles* were “a kind of militia made up exclusively of Greeks for the purpose of maintaining public order and protecting people from arbitrary larceny and violence”. In all probability, unlike the Greek case, there remain among the Serbs “a small number of these [*martolose*] songs in older records (Erlangen Manuscript, 83). According to some assumptions, this epic had considerably contributed to the popularity of *Kraljević Marko*” (Pešić & Milošević-Djordjević 1984: 153).

Ottoman authorities hoped to prevent any mass convergence of the male population to haiduks and to coax the Christian population. Thus, *armatoles* appeared massively on the historical stage of the eighteenth-century Balkans. However, it soon became clear that this was not a good solution for the Ottomans, since *armatoles* came to control large areas from which they attacked or pursued Turks (and converts to Islam later on). Historically speaking, the importance of the *armatoles* suddenly plunged in the late eighteenth century when *klephts* became the main harbingers of the spirit of freedom and when the *klepht* became an idealized symbol of fearlessness and heroic bravery in resisting Ottoman rule.

For the reasons given above, students of Greek folk literature have divided the *klephtic* songs into two types:

- 1) those describing historical figures and important moments of their lives, and
- 2) those narrating their free life in the mountains.

In addition to the two aforementioned fixed terms, the Greeks have another one: *klephtarmatol* (κλεφταρμάτολος), used for a Greek *armatole* turned *klepht*. Unlike all other Balkan peoples, the Greeks do not have a generally accepted term for *haiduks*; hence solely the first one specified here – *klepht* – is considered as such. Generally speaking, both *haiduks* and *armatoles* formed scattered armed units among all the Balkan peoples. These groups had never been under centralised command and they acted independently within their respective areas, *armatoliki* (αρματολίκι).⁶ Their activities were well known to foreign travellers, reporters and their governments counting on them to spread their influence and political interest amongst the Balkan peoples. In this way and acting as something of a national army, both *haiduks* and *armatoles* played an important role in instigating the peoples in the Balkans to rise up and rebel against the Ottomans.

Unlike the Serbian heroic songs, which abound in fantastic elements, hyperbolas and allegories, the Greek ones “contain fewer elements of a romantic nature and embellishment” (Stojanović 1984: 186). Also, it was not unusual

⁶ *Armatolikia* could have been found only in the areas of Greece with high brigandage rates, or in Greek regions that were difficult for Ottoman authorities to govern due to the inaccessible terrain, such as the Agrafa mountains in Thessaly, where the first *armatoliki* was established in the mid-fifteenth century. An *armatoliki* was commanded by a captain (καπετάνιος), very often a former *klepht* captain hired by the governing Ottoman pasha to fight, or at least contain, local brigand groups. In most cases, the captain would have gained a level of notoriety as a *klepht* to force the Ottomans to grant him the amnesty and privilege that came with an *armatoliki*.

for klephts, particularly for haiduk leaders, to sing songs of their own feats after a battle, which implicitly means that any exaggeration, overstatement or attribution of more importance to oneself in comparison to other heroes would have been collectively sanctioned in various manners. It is thus possible to understand why Greek heroic songs are so concise and devoid of any additional poetic elements. They were above all poetic creations the main task of which was to depict events (i.e. the most important moments of fights) in a truthful and credible manner, or to put together stories of direct participants in as objective manner as possible and to transmit them further. In a way, this contradicts the claim of the English historian of contemporary Greek literature R. Beaton (1980: 111) that “klephtic songs are not a precise manifestation of lives and regards of the klephts as they were, but as they wanted them to be”, hence they represent the collective imaginary.⁷

It is worth pointing to an important fact here: although Greek folk poetry does not involve heroic epic to the extent comparable with Serbian poetry, this most certainly does not diminish the importance of modern Greek epic, since regardless of characteristics and internal properties of a people's epic “the subject of any epic must be represented as a comprehensively branched event pertaining to the entire life of both a nation and an era” (Hegel 1970 III: 448). While being close and having (had) mainly the same historical fate, the approaches of the Serbian and Greek peoples to developing and nurturing epic poetry, in particular haiduk poetry, are considerably different. Both peoples waged a series of wars against foreign conquerors during the middle ages, but they also fought against each other,⁸ thus impacting the nurturing

⁷ It seems that Beaton is quite right. In a psychological sense, epic plays an important role with smaller peoples – to encourage the national-collective spirit and morale and to strengthen the sense of social, religious and national unity from within. It is typical of epic, if observed as a well-developed cult of ancestors, to sing about heroes and their heroic deeds with a substantial amount of hyperbola and embellishment, which was supposed to contribute to building a distinctive collective sublime character of a national warrior-hero during the intensive struggle of the Serbs and Greeks against the Ottomans. By means of epic idealization this character became a personification of the anti-Turkish fighter and is only celebrated as such. If we take a closer look at the heroes, we shall see that they are mainly haiduks-highlanders (mountaineers) already living a “free life” and being far less inclined to make compromises with the Turkish authorities than the urban population.

⁸ It is quite interesting that neither in Greek nor in Serbian heroic poetry the wars between Serbs and Byzantine Greeks are much sung about or even mentioned. In Serbian epic, however, there is a character, a certain Manojlo Grčić, whom the Serbian historian Ilarion Ruvarac (1832–1905) assumed to have been an echo of the Byzantine emperor Manuel Komnenos (r. 1143–1180), who was at war with the Serbian ruler

and strengthening of epics. Yet, the so-called acritic songs (ακριτικά τραγούδια, “songs of the frontier warriors”) developed to the extent quite similar to Serbian with regard to the scope of the epic itself, but they belong to a specific kind of heroic epic, although classified as historical songs (they were first recorded in the ninth/tenth century). Since they describe the actual fights of the acrites (ακρίτες)⁹ against the Saracens on the eastern borders of the Byzantine Empire,¹⁰ they had originated before klephts and armatoles appeared and before the Ottoman Turks penetrated the Balkan Peninsula.

Corpus

The following collections have been used as the corpus of the Greek haiduk (klephtic) songs:

Sofoklis Dimitrakopoulos, *Ιστορία και δημοτικό τραγούδι (325–1945)*, Athens: Παρουσία, 1993.

Giorgos Ioannou, *Τα δημοτικά μας τραγούδια (εκλογή-εισαγωγή-σχόλια Γιώργου Ιωάννου)*, Athens: Ερμής, 1977.

Theodoros A. Nimas, *Δημοτικά τραγούδια της Θεσσαλίας: ακριτικά-παραλογές-ιστορικά-κλέφτικα*, Thessaloniki: Αδελφοί Κυριακίδης, 1981.

Nikolaos G. Politis, *Δημοτικά τραγούδια (εκλογαί από τα τραγούδια του ελληνικού λαού)*. Athens: Διόνυσος, 1975.

Claude Fauriel, *Ελληνικά δημοτικά τραγούδια*, Irakleio: Πανεπιστημιακές Εκδόσεις Κρήτης, 1999.

Antologija novogrčkog narodnog pesništva, ed. Miodrag Stojanović, Belgrade: SKZ, 1991 [in Cyrillic].

Stefan Nemanja on more than one occasion. According to Maretić (1966: 166), “this idea of Ruvarac can certainly not be proved, but it is worthy of being mentioned in absence of a better one”. What may be an exception in Greek epic are two songs bearing the same title: *Son of Servogiannis* (Του Σερβογιάννη ο γιος). One is composed of only one quatrain, and the other is a Cretan mantinada (μαντινάδα) which is somewhat more elaborate (eleven lines) in narrative terms (Digenes Akritas appears in it, whom Servogiannis’ son asks for his daughter’s hand in marriage).

⁹ In Greek heroic songs a counterpart of the figure of Marko Kraljević, the main representative of (South Slavic) epic songs, is not a historical figure: Vassilios Digenes Akritas (Βασίλειος Διγενής Ακρίτας), described in the *Epic of Digenes Akritas* (Ἔπος του Διγενή Ακρίτη). So far six manuscript versions have been found – the oldest recorded ones (Escorial and Grottaferrata manuscripts) dating from the tenth-eleventh centuries – and are considered the earliest beginnings of Greek literature in the vernacular (Politis 1978: 28).

¹⁰ These are borderland areas of Asia Minor and the Middle East: Pontus, Cappadocia and Syria.

1. Introductory formulas of klephtic songs

Particular attention has been paid here to a number of selected formulaic beginnings of Greek epic folk songs. It is considered in the literature that “by the nature of things their main function has to be to set the scene for the unfolding of future events, that is, to define the place as the starting point of an action – as the subject of the narrative” (Detelić 1996: 40). In this paper we subscribe to Parry and Lord’s view that the formula is “a group of words regularly employed under the same metrical conditions to express a given essential idea” (Lord 1971: 21). It can be stated that Greek folk epic consistently abides by the use of formulas, which contributes to the relative impression of increasing schematization. Having this in mind, we are of the opinion that it is necessary to emphasize that the place (position) of the epic formula, in particular within the Greek haiduk epic, constitutes a rather important factor of the composition of the epic song since “the position in the text is not a provisional determination for the epic formula, but rather an inevitable consequence of mutual determination of two relevant moments: the form it acquires and the function it serves” (Detelić 1996: 32). As we have previously emphasized, Greek heroic epic is highly condensed and concise both in terms of its sujet and in terms of its fabula, hence the resorting to formulas as (conditionally speaking) complete formative models can be considered a common procedure of poetic creation (although there naturally are certain derogations).

If we follow Parry-Lord’s perspective, forms creating formulas are determined models (patterns), recognized at several levels, primarily the syntactical and that of sound (Lord 1971: 38, 56). Grigoris Sifakis (1992: 91–92) translates Parry-Lord’s term as *χώρα* (pattern) and supports the opinion that formulas are created by means of combining models.

Although initial formulas in Greek epic are mostly varied, there are certain affinities that can be noticed when they are employed. A total of five types of the most frequent initial formulas will be presented here.

1.1. Numerical formulas

As a rule, this formula begins with the ordinal number *three* (*τρία, τρεις*) in the first line or within the first two initial lines of a song. Numerical formulas usually appear in the form of a syntagma, such as *τρία σύννεφα* (three clouds), *τρία πλάτανα* (three plane-trees), etc. For instance:

<p>Τι είν' το κακό που γίνεται τούτο το καλοκαίρι? Τρία χωριά μάς κλαίονται, τρία κεφαλοχώρια. (Του Ζαχαριά)</p>	<p>What kind of evil is happening this summer? <i>Three</i> villages are crying, three vilayets. (Zakharias)</p>
<p>Τριών μερών περπατησιά να πάμε σε μια νύχτα, να πάμε να πατήσουμε της Νικολούς τα σπίτια, πόχει τα άσπρα τα πολλά και τ' ασημένια πιάτα. (Το μάθημα του Νάνου)</p>	<p><i>Three</i> day's walk let's make in one night, to enter those houses of Nikolou, full of silver and shiny plates. (Lesson of Nanos)</p>
<p>Τρία πλάτανα, τα τρία αράδα αράδα, κ' ένας πλάτανος παχύν ήσκιον σπόχει! 'Σ τα κλωνάρια του σπαθιά ναι κρεμασμένα, και 'σ τη ρίζα του τουφέκια ακουμισμένα, κι αποκάτω του ο Βαρλάμης ξαπλωμένος. (Του Βαρλάμη)</p>	<p><i>Three</i> plane-trees, the <i>three</i> of them side by side, one of them such a huge shade does have! On each branch sharp sabres are hung, against its trunk many guns are leant, and beneath it Varlamis reclines. (Varlamis)</p>
<p>Τρία μεγάλα σύγνεφα 'ς το Καρπενίσι πάνε, τό να φέρνει αστρατόβροντα, τ' άλλο χαλαζοβρόχια, το τρίτο το μαυρύτερο μαντάτα του Λιβίνη. (Του Λιβίνη)</p>	<p><i>Three</i> huge clouds over Karpenisi are hanging, one of them brings thunder, the other one hailstorm, and the third, the blackest one, tidings of Livinis. (Livinis' last wish)</p>
<p>Τρία μπαϊράκια φαίνονται ποκάτω από το Σούλι. Το να ναι του Μουχτάρ πασά, τ' άλλο του Σελιχτάρη, το τρίτο το καλύτερο είναι του Μιτσομπόνου. (Σουλιωτικό)</p>	<p><i>Three</i> banners raised from Souli could be seen. One is of Mouhtar Pasha, the other of Selihtar, the third one, the most beautiful, is of Mitsobonos. (Souliotiko)</p>

In general, the number three with the Greeks is not merely a symbol of the divine in Christian theology (the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit), but it has evidently retained its archaic numerical meaning of a trinity. A trinity was particularly emphasized in Greek mythology – three brothers ruled all the known spaces – Zeus ruled the earth, Poseidon ruled the seas, and Hades ruled the underworld. According to the Pythagoreans, the number three, represented in the

form of a triangle, constitutes the utmost perfection whilst permeating the starting point of all things known, a harmonic product of action of unity as opposed to duality. In this regard the number three (or a triad) is the relation of a true spiritual synthesis. Since it is also both the first odd number and indivisible except by itself, it was primarily regarded as a “male number”,¹¹ thus being attributed a special meaning of cosmic perfection by Pythagoras and the Pythagoreans, since it expresses the beginning, the middle and the end. Unlike in Greek, in Serbian folk poetry regardless of the period (olden, middle or recent times), initial numerical formulas mainly contain the number *two* (e.g.: *dolećeše/polećeše dva vrana gavrana* – *two* black ravens flew in/flew away; *prošetala carica Milica [...]* s njome šeću *dvije* mile kćeri – empress Milica went for a walk [...] *two* sweet daughters are walking alongside her; *pojezdiše do dva pobratima preko krasna mesta Carigrada* – *two* blood brothers rode together through the fair city of Istanbul; *vino piju dva dobra junaka u Sibinju gradu bijelome* – *two* good heroes are drinking wine in the white town of Sibiu; *piju vino dva Jakšića mlada* – Jakšić Mitar i Jakšić Bogdane – *two* young Jakšićs are drinking wine – Jakšić Mitar and Jakšić Bogdan; *dva su bora naporedo rasla, medju njima tankovrha jela* – *two* pines grew side by side, between them a thin-pointed fir, etc.).

For both Greek and Serbian epics birds are particularly significant as ornithomorphic harbingers of important news. Unlike the “two black ravens” in Serbian heroic poetry, typical of Greek is the introductory formula *τρία πουλάκια* (“three birdies”). This nominal syntagma is regularly followed by the verb *κάθομαι* (“to sit [down]”, “to be placed”) in the third person plural, indicative of present or imperfect tense. There is an idiomatic expression in modern Greek taken precisely from kleptic folk poetry – *τρία πουλάκια κάθονται* – and used predominantly ironically, since its meaning is “get one’s lines/wires crossed”, “be at cross purposes”, look at someone/somebody in a sheepish manner, “fall on deaf ears”, “not care/not give a damn”. Depending on the person it is directed to, it may also have a negative (insulting) connotation, especially if we do not know well the person we are talking to.¹² However, in epics this initial formula appears

¹¹ However, there are examples in Greek mythology of the number three as a “female number”, such as the three sisters Fates (Moirae) or the three-bodied goddess Hecate (goddess of the world, underworld and Moon). This may be easily assumed to be an older stratum of myth (belief) subsequently suppressed by the emergence of the new, Olympian gods.

¹² Influence of Serbian epic is observable in contemporary Serbian phraseology as well; e.g., the already fixed metaphorical expressions originating from epic, such as *Marko arrived too late to the Field of Kosovo* (meaning: it is too late to do something); *to fall like being mown down* or *to lie like sheaves* (meaning *fall one by one* and *lie like dead*) are, according to Djura Daničić (II, 1863), the examples best demonstrating

in an ossified form both in semantic and linguistic respects. In this manner all the morphological elements constitute the key initial formula in the first part of the political verse¹³ the song begins with. For instance:

<p>Τρία πουλάκια κάθουνταν ἔς της Παναγιάς τον πύργο, τα τρία αράδα νέκλαιαν, πικρά μοιριολογούσαν. (Του Γιώτη)</p>	<p><i>Three little birds perched</i> on the tower of the Virgin Mary, all three of them crying and bitterly la- menting. (Wounded Giotis)</p>
<p>Τρία πουλάκια κάθονται ἔστη ράχη ἔστο λημέρι, το να τηράει τον Αρμυρό, τ' ἄλλο κατα το Βάλτο, το τρίτο το καλύτερο μοιρολογάει και λέει. (Του Χρήστου Μηλιόνη)</p>	<p><i>Three little birds perched</i> on the roof of our camp, one was looking towards Armyro, the other one down to Valto, the third one, the most beautiful of them, lamenting started its saying. (Christo Mylionis)</p>
<p>Τρία πουλάκια κάθονται ψηλά ἔστη Βουνιχώρα, το να τηράει τη Λιάκουρα, και τ' ἄλλο την Κωστάρτσα, το τρίτο το καλύτερο ρωτάει τους διαβάτες. (Του Βλαχοθανάση)</p>	<p><i>Three little birds perched</i> high on Vouno- hora, one was looking towards Liakoura, the other one to Kostartsa, the third one, the most beautiful one, asked the passers-by. (Vlachothanasis)</p>
<p>Τρία πουλάκια κάθουνταν στις Ἀρτας το γιοφύρι, τό να τηράει τα Γιάννινα, τ' ἄλλο κατα το Σούλι, το τρίτο, το καλύτερο, μοιρολογάει και λέει. (Ο θάνατος του Κίτσου Μποτσάρη)</p>	<p><i>Three little birds perched</i> on the bridge across the Arta, the first one was looking towards Gi- annina, the other one to Souli, the third, the most beautiful one, la- menting started its saying. (Death of Kitsou Mpotsari)</p>
<p>Τρία πουλάκια κάθουνταν ψηλά ἔς τη Χαλκουμάτα, το να τηράει τη Λιβαδιά και τ' ἄλλο το Ζιτούνι, το τρίτο το καλύτερο μοιρολογάει και λέει. (Του Διάκου)</p>	<p><i>Three little birds perched</i> high on Halkou- mata, the first one was looking towards Liva- dia, the other one to Zitouni, the third one, the best of them, lament- ing started its saying. (Death of Athanassios Diakos)</p>

the whole tragedy of death, a person's weakness and incapability (both physical and psychological).

¹³ The political verse (πολιτικός στίχος) is a fixed Greek term for iambic decapentasyllabic verse which is the most common metre in folk songs. It is divided into two half lines with a caesura usually at the seventh or, less frequently, eight syllable.

<p>Τρία πουλάκια απ' την Πρέβεζα διαβήκανε `σ την Πάργα, το να κυττάει την ξενιτειά, τ' άλλο τον Αη Γιαννάκη, το τρίτο το κατάμαυρο μοιρολογάει και λέει. (Της Πάργας)</p>	<p><i>Three birds</i> flew from Preveza to Parga, the first one looked towards foreign lands, the other one St. Job, Whilst the third one, the blackest of them, started its lament. (Sorrow for Parga)</p>
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Typical of this initial formula is a 2+1 pattern reflected in the following:

a) unlike the two speaking ravens from Serbian songs, two of the three Greek birds are silent witnesses looking in specified directions, usually towards cities or areas;

b) the third bird is regularly portrayed in the superlative, usually as the most beautiful, the best or the saddest, and

c) only the third bird assumes the role of the narrator; that is, it is the only one that laments (cries, weeps, sobs) and mourns while spreading unfavourable news.

As the examples above demonstrate, this initial formula has a complex structure: whilst the first line functions as an exposition providing a basic introduction to the situation, the second line, on the other hand, assumes the role of a gradation, thus slowly increasing the dynamics of events by inducing identical actions, which as a rule are realized in opposite directions. Such a diametric geographic-spatial contrast constitutes a remnant of the ancient notion of the two ends of the world: the East of life (sunrise) and the West of life (sunset), and of two insurmountable opposites portrayed by the Greek folk singer by the very dualism of the same action mirrored in the two birds gazing in opposite directions. Sufficient evidence for the fact that this actually is about the East-West relation resides in the following line taken from the aforementioned song:

<p>το να τηράει τη Λιάκουρα, και τ' άλλο την Κωστάρτσα.</p>	<p>One looks towards Liakoura, the other towards Kostartsa.</p>
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There is in Phocis a mount, Vardousia. One of its peaks and the settlement below is called Kostartsa (both presently called Dhikhorion, Διχώρι), whilst Liakoura is the name of the highest peak of mount Parnassus (2455m). In geographical terms, Kostartsa is in the South-West, whilst Liakoura is in the South-East. The same is found in the following line:

<p>το να τηράει τη Λιβαδιά και τ' άλλο το Ζιτούνι.</p>	<p>One looks towards Livadia, the other towards Zitouni.</p>
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Livadia is the name of the settlement in Boeotia and Zitouni (modern-day Lamya, Λαμία) is the name of a place in the area of Phthiotis (Φθιώτιδα): whilst the former settlement is located in the North-West, the latter one is in the South-West.

At the same time, yet another numerical characteristic relating to the occurrence of the number two can be observed within this initial formula. The second line of this introductory formula is the best indicator that this number constitutes the symbol of contrast and conflict, wherein ambivalence and contraposition are clearly detected. Carrying a particular type of symbolism, birds have since ancient times been seen as messengers and harbingers as well as the personification of the sublime and divine. In Greek mythology stories of how some oracles came to be established are associated with birds. According to Herodotus, the famous oracle of Dodona in Epirus was established when two doves flew from Egyptian Thebes so that one of them would found the oracle of Amon in Libya and the other that of Zeus in Greece. Birds are also important for Delphi: Greek myth has it that Zeus had sent an eagle from either end of the world, and the two met exactly above the mountain Parnassus, just above Delphi. So the ruler of the world concluded that Delphi was the centre of the world and the navel thereof (ομφαλός του κόσμου).¹⁴ According to the widespread belief, the double-headed eagle (δικέφαλος αετός) was adopted as a symbol of imperial power and authority during the reign of the Byzantine emperor Isaac Komnenos (r. 1057–1059). Even though this is a borrowed symbol (from Eastern culture), in the Byzantine Empire of that time and even later on, the double-headed eagle symbolically marked the empire overlooking the East and the West.¹⁵ This very dichotomy of the “view” is observed in the kleptic songs beginning with formulas containing the number three.

In addition to birds, other symbols (such as banners, plane-trees, clouds) may appear in a series of combinations containing the number three and are treated according to the same schematic principle.

Line three of this introductory formula accounts for the climax of the introduction, resolution and therefore a transition to the essence to be told by the singer. In certain instances, such as the following:

¹⁴ The navel is depicted as an egg-shaped stone and kept as a special relic in the very adyton of the temple of Apollo.

¹⁵ During the reign of Basil II, the Byzantine Empire actually spread both in the East (present-day Iran) and in the West (south Italy, part of Sicily). However, even though the Empire was reduced to the territory of present-day Greece as early as 1081, just before Alexios I Komnenos acceded to the throne, the double-headed eagle remained an imperial symbol.

<p>Τρεις μέρες κάνουν πόλεμο, τρεις μέρες και τρεις νύχτες, χωρίς ψωμί, χωρίς νερό, χωρίς ύπνο στο μάτι. Χιόνι έτρωγαν, χιόνι έπιναν και τη φωτιά βαστούσαν. (Του Νικοτσάρα)</p>	<p><i>Three</i> days a fearless fight they fought, <i>three</i> days and <i>three</i> nights, without bread, without water, without sleep. Snow they ate, snow they drank, no fire kept them warm. (Nikotsaras)</p>
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The initial formula encompasses the entire first line, since it is completely marked by the number three, which plays an important role later on as regards both the metrical structure and the semantic level.

On the other hand, both forms of the initial formula containing the number three may be looked at as a three-member form of a gradation, which in fact is an important property of the structure of Greek folk songs. This is the so-called law or rule of three.¹⁶ In addition, figuring as a recurrence of the mystical tradition, the number three is often elevated to the level of the major structural factor in folk poetry.

1.2. Invocations

The nature of invocation itself is twofold: it may have the form of a rhetorical question or of direct speech. As a rule, there are no invocations of God or saints, typical of Serbian epic songs (almost regularly relating to the formula of miracle, e.g.: *Bože mili, čuda velikoga* – *Dear God, what a great marvel* and the like).

When it comes to invocations containing direct speech, they clearly indicate the personal lamenting of haiduks over their “bitter” (or “unfortunate”) fate. The absence of usual epic glorification reveals a less familiar character of the hero, since he is portrayed as a mere mortal, as one who suffers, feels and endures, hence this may be construed as one of the characteristics of Greek haiduk poetry. Unlike the Serbian invocation formulas, the Greek ones demonstrate rather solid connections with the thematic contents of the song – greeting, curse, lament – which means that the invocation formula is required to mark the speech (i.e. to emphasize the confession) of the hero. Therefore, the entire song demonstrates

¹⁶ Konstantinos Romaios and Gregory Sifakis have presented equally important reflections on the function and importance of this rule. Romaios (1963: 143) claims that this three-part figure usually consists of nouns, and that the first two constituents are of the same intensity, whilst the third and most important is followed by an adjective. According to Sifakis (1988: 143–145, 201–208), this is a figure of three-part gradation (σχήμα της τριαδικής κλιμάκωσης), formed not only of words, but of entire parts of the complex sentence. Semantic gradation is performed concurrently with the gradation of form.

pronouncedly individualistic properties, starting from intonation and structure up to the impression of truthfulness and persuasiveness.

The invocation formula of a rhetorical question, as a figure of speech, is of lyric origin, since it implies the introduction of sequences of dialogue. In this manner Greek klephtic songs come closer to the balladic than to the pure epic form. From the perspective of the composition of the song, the rhetorical question must be followed by an answer, which functions like a specific type of a marked connector in the text: since it most frequently appears at the beginning of a klephtic song, the rhetorical question may be considered a specific introductory formula the essential task of which is to focus attention of the listener to the problem elaborated further on.

<p>Εχετα γεια, ψηλά βουνά και δροσερές βρυσούλες, και σεις Τσουμέρκα κι Άγραφα, παλληκαριών λημέρια. (Εχετε γεια)</p>	<p>Farewell to you, high mountains and cool springs, and to you, Tsoumerka and Agrafa, venues of fearless men. (Farewell)</p>
<p>Εγέρασα, μωρέ παιδιά, `ς τους κλέφτες καπετάνιος, τριάντα χρόνια αρματωλός, πενήντα χρόνια κλέφτης. (Του Κωσταντάρα)</p>	<p>I got old, my champs, among other chiefs, for thirty years an armatolos, fifty years a klepht. (Kostantaras)</p>
<p>Πού `σουν, περιστερούλα μου, τόσον καιρό που λείπεις? Πήγα να μάσω λάχανα με τ` άλλα κορίτσια, και οι κλέφτες μάς αγνάντευαν από ψηλά λημέρια. (Που `σουν, περιστετούλα μου)</p>	<p>Where have you been, my dove, for such a long time? With other maidens I went into the field, and the klephts from their heights were looking down at us. (Where have you been, my dove?)</p>

1.3. The Slavic antithesis

In Greek literary studies, the Slavic antithesis is known as *άσκοπα ή άστοχα ερωτήματα* (“unrelated or unfounded questions”).

The issue whether the Slavic antithesis had existed in the Greek folk tradition before or it is due to a Slavic influence as a result of centuries-long contact between Greeks and South Slavs (from the time the South Slavs inhabited the Byzantine Empire up to the formation of early South-Slavic countries¹⁷),

¹⁷ We have in mind here the tenth and eleventh centuries.

still remains open. According to its character, this formula may be either external or internal; for instance:

<p>Πολλά τουφέκια αντιβογούν, μιλιόνια, καριοφίλια, μήνα σε γάμο πέφτουνε, μήνα σε πανηγύρι, κι ουδένσε γάμο πέφτουνε κι ουδέ σε πανηγύρι, Αλή Τσεκούρας χαίρεται και ρήχνει `ς το σημάδι. (Του Χρόνη)</p>	<p>Why are the bangs of guns echoing so loud in the hills? Is someone celebrating a wedding or is it perhaps a fair? No one is celebrating a wedding nor is it a fair, it's Tsekouras rejoicing, he who can hit the target skilfully. (A Song of Chronis)</p>
<p>Κλαίνε τα μαύρα τα βουνά, παρηγοριά δεν έχουν. Δεν κλαίνε για το ψήλωμα, δεν κλαίνε για τα χιόνια, η κλεφτουριά τ' αρνήθηκε και ροβολάει `ς τους κάμπους. (Του Ανδρίτζου)</p>	<p>High mountains are crying, inconsol- able they are. They are neither crying for heights nor bemoaning for snows, but klephts abandoned them, off to the fields they went. (Klephts of Androutsos)</p>
<p>Τι έχουν της Ζίχνας τα βουνά και στέκουν μαραμμένα; Μήνα χαλάζι τα βαρεί, μήνα βαρύς χειμώνας; Ουδέ χαλάζι τα βαρεί ουδέ βαρύς χειμώνας, ο Νικοτσάρας πολεμάει με τρία βιλαέτια. (Του Νικοτσάρα)</p>	<p>What's bothering the hills of Zihna that they are so withered? Is it hailing bitterly or a heavy winter falling? It is not hailing nor is a heavy winter fall- ing, it's Nikotsaras fighting many a vilayet. (Nikotsaras)</p>

Being a figure of speech of a negative parallelism, the Slavic antithesis introduces into the song a particular kind of trinity the structure of which might be graphically represented as 2+1. In order to increase suspense in the fabula, attention is drawn to two possibilities (action-related dualism) none of which as a rule constitutes the solution to the problem; the solution is to be found in a third, usually unexpected and, from the semantic perspective, the most relevant one. According to Alexis Politis (1973: 297): "The Slavic antithesis is aimed at bringing to the crucial point in the song without prolongation and complicating its basis." Mirjana Detelić (1992: 261) also points out that this figure "associates two or more diversified occurrences, hence types of these associations are predetermined due to which any impediment with regard to the use would be perceived as erroneous".

<p>Αρματολοί της νύχτας και της αυγής οι κλέφτες, ολονυχτίς κουρσεύανε και την αυγή κοιμούνται. (Άτυχη κλέφτικη αγάπη)</p>	<p>At night they are armatoles, at dawn they are klephts, all night long they looted so they fell asleep at dawn. (Unrequited klepht love)</p>
<p>Κοιμάται αστρί, κοιμάται αυγή, κοιμάται νιό φεγγάρι, κοιμάται η καπετάνισσα, νύφη του Κοντογιάννη μες στα χρυσά παπλώματα, μες` στα χρυσά σεντόνια. (Του Κοντογιάννη)</p>	<p>The Morning Star is still sleeping and so is the young Moon together with them the fearless bride of Kontogiannis in her golden eiderdown and in golden sheets. (The Bride of Kontogiannis)</p>

The previously specified examples lead to the conclusion that the very space (location) where an action takes place implies the following: either it is in the open, outdoors, which is a lot more common, or less frequently, in a closed area. A thus demonstrated open space in initial formulas does not contain a negative connotation and, quite contrary to the opinion of Ivanov and Toporov (1965: 187–188; 190–191), it does not stretch between “strong epic places” – houses and forests, i.e. between the so-called positive and negative spatial positions (Detelić 1992: 128). Furthermore, as a rule, there is also an absence of the name and description of the place where the action takes place, but the concretization of the space (or an attempt at the exact localization thereof) is specified in the largest number of instances. This is always a forest or mountain, which is quite sufficient for the structure of the song, whilst being a rather wide determination in both abstract and geographical terms. In other words, the space remains largely undefined although being strictly defined by clearly set temporal opposites (such as night-dawn). In this manner the singer of tales has succeeded in effectively establishing a synthesis of the place, time and action in the song and in providing an illusion of a unified structure.

In lieu of a conclusion

In an effort to provide certain conclusive remarks on the introductory formulas presented herein, we would primarily point to the variety of patterns available to the singer whilst composing folk songs. Although using the already confirmed and verified models which often are epic patterns or the so-called epic rules of folk narration, whether there are one, two, three or more verses, their functionality concurrently proves the inventiveness of the folk singer of tales to change the rhythmicity of the verse by altering merely one constitutive

element, as well as to enrich the image by means of a twist or parallelism and create the atmosphere of animism typical of klephtic songs. In all probability, it seems on the basis of the selected examples presented herein that the number *three* actually plays a particularly important role in this category of Greek folk songs. The trinity of the structure itself is revealed in almost all examples whether through a progressive gradation, exception to the rules, repetition or antithesis, whilst the aforementioned introductory formulas constitute an indispensable part thereof.

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THE VARIETIES OF FORMULAIC DICTION IN TURKIC ORAL EPICS

Abstract: This article tries to show that the formulaic diction on the level of verse line and formulaic patterning in the composition of scenes are closely related and must be studied together. The analysis is done on the example of Turkic epics. Of the formulaic patterns the most prominent one is the variety of use of the attribute *ak* (white), which appears to be one of the most common epithets in Turkic epic poetry. It is usually connected with cloth (e.g. caftan, yurt), different parts of body (face, bosom), antelope, the lumps of gold given as bride-price and various kinds of arms (sword, spear), etc. It is usually denoted evaluatively as purity and beauty. In this matter Turkic epics share its position with many national epics of the middle ages including Serbian, Old English, Old German, etc. The same role is analyzed for the opposite pattern “dust of earth”, and for the two themes: preparation of the hero for his journey and council scenes which are also mutual to many medieval epic traditions such as aforementioned Serbian and others.

Key words: Turkic epics, formula, formulaic diction, pattern, composition

Formula, meter, parallelism

Martin P. Nilsson, in a book on Homer, writes that “[t]he singer is able to improvise because he has learnt the epic technique or, to quote Goethe: *eine Sprache, die für dich dichtet und denkt*” (Nilsson 1933: 202). The main reason why the language of oral poetry can be described as “a language that creates poetry and thinks for you” is doubtless its formulaic nature. There is, however, no agreement in the many studies devoted to formulaic style and diction on what is to count as a formula. A case in point is Old English. Serious scholarship on the formulaic nature of Old Germanic poetry began in 1889 with the publication by R. M. Meyer of a collection of “formelhafte Elemente” [formulaic elements] in Old Norse, Old English, and Old High German poetry, running to over 500 pages (Meyer 1990). Today, more than a hundred years later, our notion of the formula has been sharpened

and Meyer's all-inclusive use of the concept has been discarded. But even so, the work of the various scholars who have done research on the formulaic character of Old English poetry embodies widely diverging and sometimes mutually contradictory views. Despite disagreement and controversy, most scholars today will concede, however, that their point of departure is Milman Parry's definition of the formula with regard to the Homeric epics, and that this definition should indeed be the basis for any definition of the formula, however much a particular tradition might call for adjustment and refinement. According to Parry (1971: 272), a formula is defined as "a group of words which is regularly employed under the same metrical conditions to express a given essential idea."¹ For Parry the metrical conditions governing the "group of words" were those of the Greek hexameter, just as they are those of the South Slavic *deseterac* for Lord or those of the alliterative line for scholars in the field of Old Germanic poetry. When we look at the formulaic character of Turkic oral epic poetry, we find a close relationship between meter and syntactic structure on the one hand, and between syntactic patterning and parallelism on the other.

The verse of Turkic oral poetry is syllabic; two types of verse-line are most widespread in the epics, a line of 7 or 8 syllables, and a line of 11 or 12 syllables. The shorter line is typical of heroic epics, in particular in Kirghiz and Kazakh; the longer line is often found in "romances," i.e. in oral narratives of a more lyrical character, generally love-stories that often have an unhappy ending. In Kirghiz and Kazakh heroic epics are as a rule in verse, while in other traditions (Uzbek, Karakalpak, Turkmen, etc.) they tend to be performed in a mixture of verse and prose. Here the verse parts are sung, while the prose parts are spoken. This "prosimetric" form is typical of the oral romances.²

Parallelistic structures in Turkic are first found in the runic inscriptions of the eighth century; the earliest records of parallelistic lines in Turkic oral poetry occur in the eleventh-century *Divān luġāt at-Turk* by Mahmūd of Kashgar. In epic poetry, the formulaic beginning is frequently in the form of parallelistic locative constructions (suffix *-da*), as for instance in the Karakalpak epic *Qiriq Qiz* (Forty Maidens):³

¹ For a recent survey of the oral-formulaic theory, see Foley and Ramey, 2012: 71–102.

² For a discussion on this form, cf. Reichl 1997: 321–348.

³ Quoted from Q. M. Maqsetov, N. Žapaqov, T. Niyetullaev, eds., *Qiriq Qiz* [Forty Maidens] (Nukus 1980: 42).

Buringi ötken zamanda, sol zamanniñ qädiminde, qaraqalpaq xalqında, ata jurti Turkstanda, Sarkop degen qalada, az noğaylı elatında.		In the days of old, in the days of yore, among the Karakalpaks, in the homeland of Turkestan, in a town called Sarkop, in the small Noghay tribe.
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As Viktor Zhirmunsky has argued, the predilection of parallelism has led to the creation of rhyme in Turkic oral poetry (Zhirmunsky 1985: 320–352). The Turkic languages belong to the agglutinative type of languages, which means that the various grammatical morphemes expressing case, number, tense, etc. are suffixed to the word-stem and remain comparatively fixed. These suffixes vary only slightly according to the rules of vowel harmony. In the quotation above the locative suffix is found in the forms *-da* after dark and *-de* after light vowels (as after *i* in *qädimin-de*).

A Turkic epic might also begin with some maxim or gnomic verses, arranged in parallelistic fashion, such as in the Kirghiz *Kökötöydün aşı* (*The Memorial Feast of Kökötöy-Khan*) from the *Manas*-cycle:

Altın iyerniñ kaşı eken: ata yurtnuñ başı eken.		A golden saddle has its pommel: a people has its chieftain.
Kümüş iyerniñ kaşı eken: tün tüškön kaliñ köp Noğay yurtnuñ başı eken.		A silver saddle has its pommel: the Nogay teeming as shadows at night- fall have their chieftain.

Here the parallelism of the lines can be analysed as Qualification + noun + genitive + noun + possessive + *eken* (is):

Altın ata kümüş tün tüškön kaliñ köp Noğay	iyer- yurt- iyer- yurt-	-niñ/ -nuñ	kaş- baş- kaş- baş-	-i	eken
gold father silver the Nogay teeming as shadows at nightfall	saddle- land- saddle- land-	-OF	pommel- head- pommel- head-	-ITS	is

Formula and formulaic system

In order to illustrate the formulaic patterning of Turkic oral epics, I will take a short passage from the Kazakh heroic poem *Qambar*. Äzimbay, a rich man of the Noghays, has six sons and a daughter. When his daughter, the beautiful Nazim, comes of age, she is allowed to choose a husband from the men who have flocked to Äzimbay's encampment as prospective husbands. But none of the suitors passing in review finds favour with Nazim. One young man had, however, not been invited to this gathering, Qambar of the impoverished clan of the Tobir, and it is precisely with this young man that Nazim falls in love when she first hears of him. Qambar has to prove his valour before he can marry Nazim, and it is his heroic deeds that form the substance of the narrative. In this passage Nazim is reviewing her suitors:⁴

<p>Altin tuğir üstinde Nazim otir qonaqtap 105 aq tuyğında erikken. Qara men töre talasıp, forimına qarasıp, aldınan ötti körikten. Qız Nazimniñ maydanı 110 är toptıñ boldı bazarı, tüsedı köpke säwlesi qağazday kirsiz aزاری. Osınša žurttıñ artınan awmadi žanga nazarı. 115 Žerdıñ žüzin şañdattı žiyilğan qorşap adamı.</p>	<p>On a golden perch Nazim was sitting in boredom like a white hawk. Ordinary people and noblemen argued with one another, looked at her stature, and passed in front of the beauty. The <i>maydan</i>⁵ where Qız Nazim was sitting turned into a bazaar, teeming with people of all kinds. Her brightness shone on the many people. Her complexion was spotless like paper. Among so many peoples her gaze did not settle on a single person. The people who had gathered and surrounded her raised the dust from the earth.</p>
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This particular passage describes a fairly individual scene. The passage is certainly not a theme in the sense of oral formulaic theory; this explains the low “formulaic density” of these lines as compared to that of a type-scene. The formulaic density of a particular passage is not only relative to the degree it is a typical scene or part of one, but also to its length and to the size of the referent corpus. The longer an extract is and the more numerous the random passages selected for formulaic analysis are, the greater is the likelihood that the analysis will be representative; and the larger the referent corpus is, the more clearly the

⁴ Quoted from M. O. Auezov and N. S. Smirnova, eds., *Qambar-batır* [The hero Qambar] (Alma-Ata 1959: 38).

⁵ The word *maydan* (from Persian) means both “square” and “battlefield.”

formulaic nature of a passage can be shown. The following formulaic analysis is based on a concordance of somewhat over 8,000 lines of Kazakh epic poetry, the epic *Qambar* in the version from which I quoted, and the epic *Qoblandi* in Šapay Qalmağanbetov's version.⁶ Hence it must be stressed that a larger referent corpus may substantially change the percentage of formulaic lines, although it would not, I believe, give a radically different picture of the nature of Kazakh formulaic diction.

Looking at the referent, we find that parallels can be cited for only six out of the fourteen lines quoted (these lines are underlined in the quotation above). The first line in our sample having a parallel in the referent is line 105:

aq tuyğınday erikken	105	white hawk-like being-bored
aq tuğınday quntıydi	1726	white hawk-like he-hunched-up-his-shoulders

Aq, “white,” is one of the most common epithets in Turkic epic poetry. In *Qambar* not only the hawk (*tuyğın*) is white (105, 1726), but also Nazim's face (81) and bosom (539), the various types of yurt (416, 799, 1774), the antelope (228), the caftan (1317), and the lumps of gold given as bride-price (1819). More important for formulaic diction is the use of *aq* as an epithet for arms. The sword has the epithet *aq* (665), and five out of six occurrences of *nayza*, “spear,” are modified by *aq*, either as *aq nayza*, “white spear” (1007, 1574, 1735) or in the collocation *aq saptı bolat nayza*, “white-shafted steel spear” (836, 1680; compare 1123 *aq bolat*, “white steel”). The latter is formulaic in the strict sense that the same metrical unit is repeated with identical words, differing only in grammatical morphemes such as case endings, postpositions, or possessive suffixes.

The epithet *aq* has in these lines three ranges of meaning. In collocations like *aq tuyğın* the adjective denotes a physical quality, the actual colour of a material object. When modifying parts of the body, as in *aq žüz*, “white face,” or *aq tös*, “white bosom,” the adjective not only denotes a colour, but is also used evaluatively. “White” suggests here purity and beauty; this is brought out by line 112 *Qağazday kirsiz ažari*, “her complexion was spotless like paper.” We might compare to this the use of the adjectival epithet λευκώλενος, “white-armed,” in the Homeric epics, the epithet of Hera and women in general. When *aq* is, however, used as an attribute of weapons, it denotes brightness

⁶ The concordance comprises 1851 + 6490 lines. The text of *Qoblandi-batır* is based on the edition by N. V. Kidajš-Pokrovskaja and O. A. Nurmagambetova, eds. and trans., *Koblandy-batyr. Kazaxskij geroičeskij èpos* [The hero Qoblandi-batır. A Kazakh heroic epic] (Moscow 1975). For further details, cf. Reichl 1989a: 360–381.

and radiance. Here, too, we find parallels in other epic traditions. Beowulf's helmet, which he dons before descending into Grendel's underwater den, is described as *hwit*, "white-shining" (*se hwīta helm*, l. 1448). Shining armour and weapons are, of course, a common motif of heroic poetry. Hector is described in the *Iliad* as with a shining helmet (κορυθαίολος), and the various epithets used for weapons in the Homeric poems include a fair number of adjectives denoting a bright and radiant quality.

A more detailed analysis of formulas in the passage from *Qambar* quoted above than can be given here leads to a distinction between four types of formulaic line. The first type can be termed "formula in the strict sense." This type of formula comprises lines which are repeated in the referent corpus without changes that affect its lexical composition. An example of this type of formula is the following:

aq sapti bolat nayzamen	826	with the white-shafted steel spear
aq sapti bolat nayzaᅇdi	1672	your white-shafted steel spear

These lines only differ by their grammatical morphemes (possessive suffixes, case suffixes).

A second type of formula is more variable than the first insofar as variation within the line is not restricted to grammatical morphemes or minor parts of speech. An example is line 115 of the passage, *žerdiᅇ žüzin šaᅇdatti*, "they raised the dust from the earth." To capture the parallels to this line, we must have recourse to the notion of a formulaic system. Parry had defined a formulaic system as "a group of phrases which have the same metrical value and which are enough alike in thought and words to leave no doubt that the poet who used them knew them not only as single formulas, but also as formulas of a certain type" (Parry 1971: 275; cf. Lord 1960: 47ff.) This somewhat loose definition has not remained unchallenged, and various competing definitions have attempted to make the notion of a formulaic system more precise. In relationship to Old English A. Riedinger has proposed a threefold distinction between system, set, and formula, which is also helpful for Turkic oral poetry (Riedinger 1985: 294–317). According to Riedinger, a particular formula belongs with other formulas to the same set, if they all share at least one constant word and if the relationship of their variable elements can be semantically specified, i.e. if the variable elements are synonyms or belong to the same semantic field.

Line 115 consists of two phrases and hence two ideas: (1) "surface of the earth" and (2) "raised the dust." If we take the first phrase as the constant element, we get the following parallel in *Qambar*:

žerdiŋ žüsin šaŋdatti	115	of-the-earth its-surface he-caused-to-be-dusty
žerdiŋ žüsin sel aldi	1359	of-the-earth its-surface the-torrent took away

If we take the second phrase as the constant element, we get the following parallels:

awıldiŋ üstin šaŋdatıp <i>Qambar</i> 1158	of-the-village its-top causing-to-be-dusty
köšeniŋ awzın šaŋdatıp <i>Qoblandi</i> 1926	of-the-street its-mouth causing-to-be-dusty

There is strict parallelism in all variants of the first phrase; furthermore, all phrases are semantically related in as far as they are all geographical terms of some kind (earth, village, street) and specify a location (surface, top, mouth). The semantic affinity between the variants of the second phrase, however, is less tight. According to the oral-formulaic theory, we have here a formulaic system:

žerdiŋ žüzin		šaŋdatti	
awıldiŋ üstin		šaŋdatıp	
köšeniŋ awzın		sel aldi	

represented by the sets:

- (1) |žerdiŋ žüzin | |šaŋdatti |
 |awıldiŋ üstin | |šaŋdatıp |
 |köšeniŋ awzın |
- (2) žerdiŋ žüzin sel aldi

In a third type of formulaic line the semantic constraint on the variable elements of the line is dropped. It consists of a fixed phrasal unit in the first part of the line and a slot, with metrical and possibly also grammatical constraints on the lexical units filling the slot. An example of this type of formulaic line is *Qız Nazımniŋ maydanı* (*Qambar* 109). Here the line begins with a genitive (*-niŋ*) and continues with a noun ending in a possessive affix (*i* or *i*). The latter is caused by the preceding genitive (of-the-NOUN its-NOUN):

Qız Nazım-niŋ maydan-ı	109	of-Qız Nazım her-place
Qız Nazım-niŋ zaman-ı	125	her-time
Qız Nazım-niŋ awıl-i-niŋ	412	(of) her-village
Qız Nazım-niŋ iŝ-i-ne	445	(to) her inside

There is finally a fourth type of formulaic line, exemplified in one of the occurrences of the epithet *aq* in *Qoblandi*. In this epic the word *mata*, “cloth, material,” is qualified by *aq*. This collocation invariably occurs in the following two lines:

Bazarda bar aq mata, oynaqtaydi žas bota. (485–86, 693–94, 2583–84)	At the bazaar there is white material, the young camel foal is frolicking.
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Lines like these punctuate the epic at irregular intervals. They often contain nature images, but also proverbial and gnomic lore. These cliché-like lines are similar to the repeated couplets in Serbian and Croatian heroic poetry as described by A. B. Lord:

Just as formulaic lines with internal rhyme or with a striking chiasmic arrangement have a long life, so couplets with clearly marked patterns persist with little if any change. For example:

Bez edjelja nema umiranja, Od edjelja nema zaviranja. (II, 24: 631–632)	Without the fated hour there is no dying, From the fated hour there is no escape.
or:	
A zečki je polje pregazio, A vučki se maši planinama. (II, 24:41–42)	Like a rabbit he crossed the plain, Like a wolf he ranged over the mountains.

It seems preferable to keep such couplets in a class by themselves and not to call them formulas, reserving that term for the components of a single verse (Lord 1960: 57).

Thematic patterning

According to Parry and Lord a theme is a “group of ideas regularly used in telling a tale in the formulaic style of traditional song” (Lord 1960: 68). This term corresponds basically to what German scholars call *typische Szene* (type-scene) or *Erzählshablone* (narrative template), although the emphasis is somewhat different within different scholarly traditions.⁷ Lord begins his discussion of themes in Serbian and Croatian epic poetry with the opening scene in the *Song of Bagdad*, a council at the sultan’s court in Istanbul, and draws attention to the similar council scene at the beginning of the *Chanson de Roland* (Lord 1960: 68).⁸ The Uzbek version of the heroic epic *Alpāmiš* in Fāzil Yoldāš-oġli’s variant

⁷ The phrase *typische Szene* is associated in particular with Arend 1933; compare Parry’s review, reprinted in Parry 1971: 404–407.

⁸ The *Song of Bagdad* is No. 1 in Parry and Lord, eds. 1953–1954.

also begins with this theme (Zhirmunsky 1960; Reichl 2001).⁹ When Bāysari is told that he has to pay an alms-tax (*zakāt*) to his brother, Bāybori, the ruler of Qoᅅgirāt, he summons his tribesmen to a *madžlis* (council) to deliberate what to do. Bāysari opens the council with the following words:¹⁰

- Āh urganda kozdan āqar selāb yāš,
 maslahat ber, on miᅅ uyli qarindāš,
 Barčīnāyim boy yetgandir qalamqāš,
 zālīm bilan hargiz bolmaᅅlar yoldāš.
 5 Qoᅅgirāt eldan mālga zakāt kelibdi,
 maslahat ber, on miᅅ uyli qarindāš!
 Qursin Hakimbegi, mulla bolibdi,
 bezakāt māllarni harām bilibdi,
 Qoᅅgirāt eldan mālga zakāt kelibdi,
 10 maslahat ber, on miᅅ uyli qarindāš.
 Dardli qul dardimni kimga yāraman,
 ayrāliq otiga baᅅri pāraman,
 muna elda siᅅindi bop turaman,
 oz akamga qanday zakāt beraman?!
 15 Maslahat ber, on miᅅ uyli qarindāš!
 Xazān bolib bāᅅda gullar solibdi,
 šum falak bāšimga sawdā sālibdi,
 Bāyboridan mālga zakāt kelibdi,
 maslahat ber, on miᅅ uyli qarindāš!

- Amid sighs, tears flow from (my) eyes like a stream,
 give advice, tribal companions (relations) of the ten thousand yurts!
 My Barčīn-āy with black eyebrows has come of age.
 Don't ever associate with a tyrant!
 5 From Qoᅅgirāt came (a demand for) tax on (our) cattle (property).
 Give advice, tribal companions of the ten thousand yurts!
 May Hakimbeg (Alpāmiš) be cursed! He has become a mullah.¹¹
 According to his knowledge cattle without tax is against the law;
 from Qoᅅgirāt came a demand for tax on our cattle.
 10 Give advice, tribal companions of the ten thousand yurts!
 As a sorrowful slave (of God), to whom can I tell my grief?

⁹ On *Alpāmiš*, cf. Zhirmunsky 1960; for a German translation of an Uzbek version of the epic, cf. Reichl 2001.

¹⁰ T. Mirzaev and M. Abduraximov, eds. and trans., *Alpamyš. Uzbekskij narodnyj geroičeskij epos* [Alpāmiš. An Uzbek heroic folk-epic] (Tashkent 1999: 72).

¹¹ I.e. “he has become proficient in reading and writing”. Alpāmiš suggested that such a tax be levied, as this is part of Muslim tradition.

- My heart is burning in the fire of separation,
 among this people I have become a stranger (poor relation).
 How should I pay tax to my older brother?
 15 Give advice, tribal companions of the ten thousand yurts!
 When autumn comes, the roses wither in the garden.
 Cruel destiny has brought woe upon my head.
 From Bāybori came a demand for tax on our cattle:
 Give advice, tribal companions of the ten thousand yurts!

The passage continues for another 34 lines in the edited text. It is in lines of 11 syllables with a fairly loose sequence of rhymes. As can be seen, the passage is punctuated by the line “Give advice, tribal companions of the ten thousand yurts!” A wise old man (*āq sāqāl*), called Yartibāy, replies to Bāysari (in a passage comprising 50 lines in the printed edition), repeating twice the couplet (Mirzaev & Abduraximov 1999: 73–74):

Maslahat bermaymiz Bāysaribiyga, āsilmaymiz Bāyboriniñ dāriga...	We will not give advice to Bāysari-biy, we will not hang on Bāybori’s gallows...
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and adding the four times repeated line:

Maslahatni, šāhim, oziñ bilasan.	You yourself, my shah, know the advice.
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Bāysari then suggests (in a passage of 64 lines) that they migrate to the land of Kalmucks, to which proposal Yartibāy (in a passage of 64 lines) agrees. There is a second type of repeated line in this passage:

Xazān bolib bāğda gullar solibdi.	When autumn comes, the roses wither in the garden.
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This line is repeated in the other speeches, with slight variations such as:

Xazān bolsa bāğda gullar solmaymi?	When autumn comes, do not then the ros- es wither in the garden?
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Such stock lines are very common in Uzbek oral epic poetry; they are of the same type as the cliché-couplets discussed above in relation to Kazakh epic poetry. These cliché-lines emphasize a certain tone and, by evoking natural phenomena, underline the mood of a passage. This particular verse is often used in contexts that suggest distress, unhappiness, or grief, just as the corresponding line occurs in situations of joy and happiness (Mirzaev & Abduraximov 1999: 79 and *passim*):

Yana bahār bolsa āçilar gullar.	When spring comes again, the roses open up.
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The council scene consists of four verse-passages, distributed over two speakers and connected by prose-passages. It is highly patterned, but it is not stereotyped to the same degree as the council scene in the *Song of Bagdad*. The receiving and sending of letters as in the *Song of Bagdad* is one of the most common ways of beginning a heroic song; about 30% of the songs collected by Vuk Karadžić begin with this theme (Kravcov 1985: 260ff). In Turkic epic poetry, on the other hand, council scenes like the one opening Fāzil's variant of *Alpamiš* occur with far lower frequency and are furthermore, despite their patterning, far more closely linked to the matter of deliberation. There are, however, typical scenes in Turkic oral epic poetry which show a high degree of formulaic patterning both on the level of expression and that of content.

To conclude I will give a brief example of one such theme, namely the arming of the hero before he sets out on a war-like expedition or a journey. This theme is one of the invariant elements of Turkic heroic epic poetry. A very short version of this theme, combined with the theme of the hero's ride, is found in one of the Kazakh variants of the *Alpamiš*-story:¹²

725	Saymandarın saylanıp, altinnan kemer baylanıp, abžilanday tolğanıp, qızıl nayza qolğa alıp Šubarğa qarğıp minedi,	He prepared his gear, bound his golden belt round his waist, turned about like a water snake, took his red spear into his hand, jumped onto Šubar,
730	qudaydan medet tiledi qarğıp minip žas bala ašuwı kernep žönedi. Läšker tartıp keledi, awızdıqpen alıšıp,	asked God for his help; the young man jumped up, rode along, filled with wrath. He went to war, pulling his reins tight,
735	ušqan quspen žarışıp, key žerde bala šoqıtıp, key žerde basın tögedi. Bir kün šapsa Šubar at aylıq žer alıp beredi.	racing with the flying birds, where the young man was galloping, where he was heading for. When the horse Šubar had galloped for one day, he had covered the distance of a monthly journey.

In lines 725–729 (–732) the preparation of the hero for his journey is briefly described, while the journey itself is the subject of the following lines. Just two or three strokes suffice to paint the hero's arming: he fastens his golden belt round his waist (726), speedily swings himself round (727), and takes his red spear into his hand (728). His psychological state is no more than alluded to when his anger is mentioned in line 732. The hero asks God for his help (730), swings himself on his horse (731), rides along as fast (or faster) than

¹² M. O. Auezov and N. S. Smirnova, eds., *Alpamiš-batır* [The hero Alpamiš] (Alma-Ata 1961: 23).

a bird (735), and covers the space of a monthly journey in one day (739). All these motifs and images belong to the inventory of the theme of the hero's arming and ride. In *Qambar* the hero's preparation-and-parting is slightly more elaborate, consisting of the same basic motifs: the donning of his armor, the invocation of God's help, the hero's anger, and his ride on his horse, galloping as fast as a flying bird (Auezov & Smirnova 1961: 71):

	Badana kōz berik sawit basa ũstine kiyedi,	He pulled the strong coat of mail with its fine mesh over his head,
1550	řaw řarađin asinip řũrmekke dayar boladi.	took his deadly weapons and was ready to depart.
	Qurama bolat duwliđa řekesine qoyadi.	He put the helmet of wrought steel over his temples.
1555	Ordasinda otirip řarapqa abden toyadi.	Sitting in his <i>orda</i> (yurt), he had drunk a lot of wine.
	Awmin dep qol řayip, bir qudayđa tapsirip	Saying: "Amen!" he extended his arms, commended himself to the One God
	řurtinan řawap suradi.	and took leave of his people.
1560	Qoř aytisip Qambarđa toqsan ũyli tobir me	Saying: "Farewell!" to Qambar, the Tobir of the ninety yurts and
	alpis ũyli arigi amandasip řiladi.	the Arđin of the sixty yurts cried when they said good-bye.
	Aristan aman kelgey dep bari de duđa qiladi.	Saying: "May the lion come back safely!" they all fell down in prayer.
1565	Bastirip qatti qadamın qara qasqa tulpardi	Urging on its vigorous steps, he whipped the black horse with the white
	qaharlanip uradi; qustay usip asuwmen	markangrily. Flying like a bird, full of wrath,
	tezde řetip baradi.	he arrived in no time.

The type-scene of the hero's preparation for combat and his departure is clearly one of the universals of heroic poetry. It is not only found in the different traditions of Turkic oral epic poetry, but also in a wide variety of poetic traditions. A. B. Lord compares this theme as it is represented in Serbian and Croatian heroic song to the arming of Basil in *Digenis Akritas* and that of Achilles and Patroclus in the *Iliad* (Lord 1960: 89ff). A number of medieval parallels could be cited here, in particular from the Old French *chanson de geste*.¹³ This is not the place to embark on a comparative analysis of this theme, however attractive a task. In conclusion, I would like to emphasize that formulaic diction on the level of verse line and formulaic patterning in the composition of scenes

¹³ On the theme of the hero's putting on his armour in the *chanson de geste*, cf. Rychner 1955: 128 and 132 ff. For a more detailed analysis of formulaic diction in Uzbek oral epics, cf. Reichl 1989b: 94–120.

are closely related and must be studied together. Their analysis takes us to the core of the singer's art.

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SPECIFIC INITIAL (INTRODUCTORY) FORMULAS IN ALBANIAN (DECASYLLABIC) SONGS OF THE FRONTIER WARRIORS

Abstract: This paper primarily seeks to demonstrate the position and importance of specific initial (introductory) formulas in the Albanian songs of the frontier warriors (Alb. *këngë kreshnikësh, këngë të kreshnikëve*), proposing their classification into several categories. The analysis performed on the corpus consisting of 102 songs has resulted in a typology similar to the one in Detelić 1996. Such a classification serves as a starting point for further research and future mandatory study of structural and other concordances between the corresponding formulas in South Slavic epic, which could be useful in shedding light on the issue of originality of the Albanian songs.

Keywords: specific initial (introductory) formulas, formulaity, Albanian songs of the Frontier Warriors, classification, typology

Introductory remarks

Whilst developing on the model of the neighbouring South Slavic Christian and Muslim epics, Albanian decasyllabic songs, known as *këngë kreshnikësh*¹ (Eng. songs of the frontier warriors/songs of *kreshniks*)² were first recorded as late as the end of the nineteenth century. Although written in decasyllables, atypical of Albanian epics, these songs have taken primacy over the octosyllabic songs. In spite of the fact that they were traditionally sung in the far north of Albania (and in the adjacent areas), they are nowadays regarded as

¹ Some of the recorded terms are also *këngë (kângë/kâjkë/kâtkë) lahute/të moçme/trimash/kershish/të Mujit e Halilit/agajsh të Jutbinës* (Eng. *lahuta/anchient/heroic/kreshnik songs/songs of Muji and Halil/of agas of Udbina*). However, we disagree with the term *heroic songs* due to the existence of a specific type of Albanian octosyllabic songs called *këngë trimnije* or, literally, *heroic songs*.

² According to Stanišić 1995, *kreshnik*, Eng. “knight, hero”, comes from the Serb. *krajišnik* via the transitional form *кpаëишник*.

referential pan-Albanian folk creations and are accepted as national instead of regional in all Albanian-speaking territories.

In addition to being of a somewhat limited scope compared to South Slavic epic poetry, the Albanian songs of the frontier warriors differ from it in several other respects. Firstly, the fact that they do not describe historical events denotes them as heroic instead of historic. The very existence of a separate type of Albanian octosyllabic songs called *këngë trimnije* (Eng. *heroic songs*) in which historical figures and events are described points to the conclusion that these are actually two typologically different kinds of songs. Furthermore, the next property which largely separates them from South Slavic decasyllabic songs is reflected in the absence of temporal determination. Whilst in the songs collected by Vuk Stefanović Karadžić there is a clear reference to certain historical events (e.g. the Battle of Kosovo, the First Serbian Uprising, etc.), such a reference lacks in the Albanian songs, which makes them temporally indifferent. It has been concluded, on the basis of numerous analyses of this type of Albanian songs aimed at determining the temporal context and framework in which they originated, that they certainly did not emerge later than the seventeenth or eighteenth century, i.e. the period when, according to an overwhelming majority of authors, they doubtlessly crystallized as an individual kind of oral tradition with the Albanians (Elsie 2011: 2).

The disagreement about their origin, originality, date, etc. has divided authors into two main opposing groups: the one supporting the theory of their indigenoussness, and the other suggesting that they essentially do not differ from Vuk's songs of the Hrnjica Brothers cycle. However, regardless of the degree of concordance of topics (*sujets*) between these two oral traditions (which, in a wider context, may certainly be denoted as Balkan traditions), Kolsti (1990: 60) concluded, using the example of Salih Ugljanin, that via language each culture transfers specific tradition attributed to it, thus incorporating a series of specific (for a certain people typical) subthemes. Consequently, each (even the smallest) additional element has the capacity to completely change the course of narrative, thereby modifying its final shape. However, since the issue of the strata that undoubtedly resemble Serbian decasyllabic songs remains open, it is necessary to pay them full attention in the context of determining the date of Albanian songs. Even if such information remains unrevealed, the very process of studying the exchange of formulas, motifs, characters and other elements is invaluable since it should eventually provide answers to the question what happens when oral poetry is transferred from one group of languages to the adjacent (Parry 1971: 477), in this case an unrelated one.

Objectives and methodology

The primary objective of the paper is to perform a synoptic semantic-structural analysis of specific introductory formulas in North Albanian decasyllabic songs, whereas the contrasting is carried out by means of corresponding formulas in South Slavic (both Christian and Muslim) oral decasyllabic songs. A thus defined objective of research also implies examining the degree of concordance between the aforementioned formulas, expressed in terms of absolute, partial or zero equivalence categories.

Based on the analysis performed on the corpus consisting of 102 Albanian songs, a classification is carried out according to which the formulas are divided into several basic types: *situational*, *temporal*, and *numerical* in addition to a specific type denoted as *fairytale-like formulas*, which are not found in the corresponding South Slavic songs. Certain attention has been paid to the types and subtypes of Albanian formulas where partial or zero equivalence with the Serbian ones has been determined.

Corpus

The corpus used for performing a contrastive analysis of specific introductory formulas in Albanian decasyllabic songs has been excerpted from the following:

a) resources in Albanian:

- EL: *Epika legjendare (cikli i kreshnikëve)*, Tirana: Instituti i folklorit, 1966.
- EKL: *Eposi i kreshnikëve dhe legjenda*, Visaret e kombit, vëllimi II, Tirana: Plejad, 2005.

b) resources in Serbian:

- Vuk II–IX: Vuk Stefanović Karadžić, *Srpske narodne pjesme I–IV*, Belgrade: Prosveta, 1976, 1988; I–IX, Belgrade: Državno izdanje, 1897–1902.
- SANU II–IV: *Srpske narodne pjesme iz neobjavljenih rukopisa Vuka Stefanovića Karadžića*, II–IV, Belgrade: SANU, 1973–1974.
- KN I–II: *Narodne pjesme muslimana u Bosni i Hercegovini*, sabrao Kosta Herman 1898–1899, 2 vols., Sarajevo: Svetlost, 1976.

The titles and quoted parts of both Albanian and Serbian songs are given herein in their original form and in English translation/adaptation. In some instances translations/adaptations of Albanian songs by Robert Elsie and Janice

Mathie-Heck (Elsie & Mathie-Heck 2004) are used and these are marked with an asterisk (*), whilst all other unmarked translations are ours.

Specific introductory (initial) formulas in the Albanian songs of the frontier warriors

If their role in the preservation of oral heritage is taken into account, formulas may also be regarded as keepers of specific codes of tradition. In times of limited literacy (that is, widespread illiteracy), the structure of orally transmitted songs had to be such as to enable the singer to memorize them as easily as possible and to pass them to the next generation (Fan 2011: 53). In this way formulas became a valuable means of preserving tradition, culture, collective memory, etc., whilst their function became multifaceted. Specific introductory formulas in the Albanian songs of the frontier warriors are analyzed herein based on such an approach to formulas, as well as on Parry's definition of the formula³ as *a group of words regularly employed under the same metrical conditions to express a given essential idea* (Parry 1971: 272).

Specific introductory formulas encompassed herein cover any formula formally and semantically linked to the text, closed at the beginning and closed/open at the end, the use of which might be determined as standardized. Unlike general introductory formulas, their link to the song is distinctive, whilst in order for a formula to be classified into this category it needs to have three important properties: variability of form, vividness and cumulativity (Detelić 1992: 282). Since one of their essential functions is to introduce the listener to narrative, they are consequentially conveyors of information on the event sung about, which, in addition to the main character, includes the spatial and temporal determination.

The excerpted specific initial formulas in Albanian songs are here classified in accordance with the typology of the corresponding South Slavic formulas proposed by Detelić (1996: 127–129), whilst the analysis has arrived at four basic types and several subtypes. Their statistical analysis, aimed at obtaining as representative results as possible, has also been performed in addition to the contrastive and comparative analyses, the purpose of which is twofold: to demonstrate their differentiation and distribution by types, as well as to point out the portion of those formulas that have not been recorded in the corresponding South Slavic songs.

³ The definition which, as is well known, was also adopted by Albert Lord, who further defined formulaic expression as *a line or half line constructed on the pattern of the formulas* (Lord 1960: 4) to be used herein for the purpose of analysis.

1. Situational formulas

In terms of percentage, the number of situational introductory formulas in the Albanian songs of the frontier warriors is much lower than in the Serbian songs. Out of a total of 102 Albanian songs considered here, situational initial formulas occur in only nine instances, which accounts for approximately nine percent of the analyzed corpus. Nevertheless, if we know that as many as 55 Albanian songs begin with an invocation (unlike the Serbian songs, where only 64 of the corpus of 1184 songs begin with a general introductory formula according to Detelić 1996), it is necessary to direct attention to specific formulas subsequent thereto, that is to the entire so-called introductory block composed of a general and specific formula. However, there are only five instances in which a situational formula is preceded by an invocation, which does not have a substantial effect on their portion in the total number of introductory formulas. As to their semantic structure and type, “venë po pine” (Eng. “they are drinking wine”) and “janë mbledhë” (Eng. “they (have) gathered together”) occur in a majority of instances:

Kur ka kjenë Dizdar Osman Aga,
në kudhë të vet, tuj pi venë të kuqe,
Hajkuna, e bija, i ban hysmet,
po i ep venë me tas të praruem,
po ja shtren ajo me dorë të bardhë;
po pin venë edhe kjenka gie,
për uj të kritë mendja i kish ra,
atherë vazjës aj i kishte thanë:
(EL 51: 1–8)

There was once Disdar Osman Aga,
He is drinking red wine in the tower
His daughter Ajkuna serving him,
He is drinking wine from the finest glass,
His daughter serving him with her white hand,
He is drinking wine and is well-fed,
Cold water cleared his thoughts,
So he spoke to his daughter:

Venë po pinë krentë e Senjës,
në kudhë të bardhë të Senjanin Ivanit.
(EL 52: 1–2)

Leaders from Senj are drinking wine,
in the white tower of Senjanin Ivan.

Vino pije Kupinović Vuče
U malenu selu Kupinovu,
Služi vino vijernica ljuba.
(Vuk VI, 6: 1–3)

Kupinović Vuk is drinking wine
In a small village of Kupinovo,
Wine is served by his faithful wife.

Vino pije Senjanin Ivo
Nasred Senja grada bijeloga
Su dobrije šezdeset Senjana.
(Vuk VI, 72:1–3).

Senjanjin Ivo is drinking wine
In the white city of Senj
with sixty good men from Senj.

Janë mbledhë tridhetë kapidana.
 kanë fillue pijen e po pijnë,
 venë të kuqe e raki të bardhë;
 vena e kuqe në faqe u ka dalë
 e rakija n'kuvend i ka qitë.
 (EL 12: 1–5)

Up to thirty captains gathered together,
 Started drinking in copious amounts,
 Drinking red wine and white plum brandy;
 Red wine struck them into their cheeks,
 And the brandy made them gather together.

Vino piju trides' kapetana
 U primorje na bijeloj kuli,
 A na kuli silna Bokčevića,
 Među njima Bokčević Šćepane.
 (Vuk VII, 19: 1–4)

Thirty captains are drinking wine
 In a white tower near the sea,
 In the tower of the mighty Bokčevići,
 Amongst them is Bokčević Šćepan.

The examples given above lead to the conclusion that the formulas of the “they are/he is drinking wine” type may also be conveyors of rather complex information instead of only that of characters, space or time of an action to be further developed in the narrative part of the song. In the song *Vuk Harambashi e Hajkuna e Dezdar Osman Agës* (EL 51; *Vuk Harambasha and Dezdar Osman Aga's Hajkuna*), for instance, information we obtain from the formula does not merely contain references to the space, but also to the psychological/physical condition of the main character: “he is drinking wine and is well-fed, / cold water cleared his thoughts.” Furthermore, the use of the attribute *white* is almost equally frequent in these songs as it is in the Serbian ones, as already discussed in Sivački 2013. Numerous other examples testify to the fact that this is one of the most frequent epithets in Albanian songs, amongst which are some of those we have already given above: “red [lit. black] wine and *white* plum brandy”;⁴ “in the *white* tower of Senjanin Ivan”, etc.

Toponyms and anthroponyms of undisputed Slavic origin occur within the *kreshnik* epic space – whether being of an attested Slavic etymology, or directly taken from one of the Slavic languages surrounding the Albanian language territory. These toponyms generally appear in two forms: one, which is phonetically adjusted to the Albanian language, and another, which has preserved its original appearance. Since there are a lot of these examples, we will focus our attention only on those toponyms and anthroponyms that occur in specific introductory formulas.

Even the first examples given above contain Slavic toponyms, such as *Senj*, Alb. *Senjë* (*Sejë*) and the anthroponym *Senjanin Ivan*, Alb. *Senjanin Ivani* in the song *Martesa e Halilit të ri me Rushën e Galan Kapetanit* (EL 52; Eng.

⁴ It is worth mentioning that the position of the adjective *i, e bardhë* (Eng. “white”) is fixed unlike in Serbian; it always comes after a noun and is accompanied by a prepositive article, which cannot be seen in the translation.

Wedding of the young Halil with Galan Captain's Rusha). The oiconym *Senjë* has retained its original form from Serbian, which is rather interesting from the dialectological perspective, especially if we take into account the tendency of the Northern Albanian (Gegë) dialect to phonetically simplify final consonants or consonant clusters, especially the sonant *nj>j*. In other analyzed examples this toponym occurs in the form *Sejë* (e.g. in the songs *Muja merr çikën e Kralit të Sejës* (EL 96) Eng. *Muja captures the daughter of the King of Senj*; *Agë Jabanxhija*,⁵ *Muji dhe Krajli i Sejës* (EL 87) Eng. *Aga Jabanxhija, Muji and the King of Senj*; and *Kotuzi* (EL 57). What we have here is unequivocally the same toponym in two different phonetic forms, since we know that the sonant *-nj* is reduced in the Gegë dialect, particularly between two vowels or at the end of a word (Gjinari 2003) – e.g. Tosk. *ftonj* > Geg. *ftoj*; Tosk. *lanj* > Geg. *laj*, etc. In all songs in which it appears, this toponym occurs without any attribute and is usually both semantically and structurally attached to the noun *krajl* (*kral*)/*krajli*, Eng. *king/kingdom*, except when it occurs independently or within a prepositional-case structure: “e në *Sejë* për me më çue” (Eng. “and to set off for Senj”); “ka një çikë të bukur *Krali i Sejës*” (Eng. “The King of Senj has a beautiful daughter”), etc.

The introductory formula from the song *Bejlegu ndërmjet dy vllazënve të panjoftun* (EKL, 12; Eng. *Rivalry between two unknown brothers*) is characterized by a common epic feature also found in Serbian examples, and that is the chaining of formulas – known also as concatenation. In this instance the chaining is carried out by combining two typologically equal formulas “they (have) gathered” and “he is drinking wine”. A nominal or verbal phrase, i.e. a verb itself is here employed for the purpose of marking action in both Albanian and Serbian songs:

<p><i>Janë mbledhë tridhetë kapidana. kanë fillue pijen e po pijnë, venë të kuqe e raki të bardhë; vena e kuqe në faqe u ka dalë e rakija n'kuvend i ka qitë.</i> (EL 12: 1–5)</p>	<p>Up to thirty captains gathered together, Started drinking in copious amounts Drinking red wine and white plum brandy; Red wine struck them into their cheeks, And the brandy made them gather together.</p>
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A formal-structural inconsistency may be observed in this case: “janë mbledhë” is a vernacular form occurring under the Slavic influence, whereby the verb *jam* (Eng. *be*) is used for forming the perfect tense, unlike standard Albanian where the verb *kam* (Eng. *have*) is used. The aforementioned inconsistency is manifested in the subsequent line, whereas the so-called Gegë parti-

⁵ *Jabanxhija* (Serb. vern. *jabandžija*) means “a foreigner”.

ciple is retained – Alb. *fillue* (Eng. *began*), which most likely suggests erroneous recording of this part of the song.

Assuming that the songs of the frontier warriors incorporated to a certain extent the formulas from the South Slavic songs, in addition to *sujets*, motifs, characters and other elements, the question arises as to why situational formulas are not as frequent in the Albanian songs. Their relatively limited percentage of the total number of specific introductory formulas, in addition to their poor stratification⁶ compared to the corresponding formulas in Serbian songs, may be explained by formal-structural differences between the two languages. One of the restrictions of a morphological nature pertains to *figurae etymologicae*,⁷ which in this case do not have absolutely equivalent translations in Albanian; therefore, no direct borrowing could have occurred without disturbing their grammatical structure in the target language.

2. Fairytale-like formulas

The typological classification of specific introductory formulas has revealed a rather large number of songs (as many as 50, i.e. 49 percent) containing the initial formula “so there was/there once was/there was a/when there was” or some of its possible variants. In an overwhelming majority of instances (as in the previous case) they occur within the introductory block, i.e. they are preceded by a general formula, but it is worth emphasizing that the largest number of songs that do not contain an invocation begins with this very type of formula. Its most frequent form in Albanian is “kur ish/janë kânë/kenë”, etc., the literal translation equivalents of which are “when there was/were”, which at first may lead to the conclusion that this is a formula of a temporal kind. However, since the time-related dimension of the plot is in no manner determined therein, there is no difference whatsoever between such a beginning and the most common introductory formula in fairytales: “Once upon a time [there was]...”

Another important property of this type of formulas is that they easily combine with other formulas into a structure which is closed at the beginning

⁶ Situational formulas are amongst the most frequent ones in Serbian songs (in addition to the formulas of communication and movement) and this type comprises as many as 13 subtypes (Detelić 1996), which shows how numerous they actually are by comparison to the corresponding Albanian formulas.

⁷ Out of the thirteen subtypes of situational formulas mentioned above, *figurae etymologicae* have been found in four.

and open at its other end. If their structure, that is the quantity of information they convey, is looked at, the conclusion seems inevitable that their single function is to provide an answer to the question *who*: “When there was an old man with motherless children” (EL 36: 1); “So there was Aga Hasan Aga” (EL 46: 1); “There was Hysen Gradenica” (EL 63: 1); “When there was Gjuri Harambasha” (EL 78: 1), etc. Only when supplemented or chained, i.e. combined with other formulas, do they become direct conveyors of information on the space, time, situation, other characters, etc.:

Ishin kanë Muji e Halili,
shum trimni bashkë kin pa' ba,
të gjitha Mujit i kin pa mbetë.
(EL 101: 1–3)

There were once Mujo and Halili,
Many braveries together they made,
But Mujo took credit for all of them.

Paj ish kanun Aga Hasan Aga,
m'i kish qitun vjetat me i kullotë,
m'i kish qitun n'lagjen Potureshë,
baslikë me j çikë vjetat po i kullotë.
(EL 46: 1–4)

There was once Aga Hasan Aga,
Took the herd out for a pasture,
Took the herd to Potureshë,
The herd was grazing basil with a maiden.

Kanka kanë Hysen Gradenica,
kishte marrë diali langoj e zagarë
e në bjeshkë kish dalë për gjah,
për me gjuajtë asht dalë në bjeshkë,
ka kërkue tri dit e tri net,
tri ditë e tri net ka kërkue
e kurgja nuk mundka me gjetue.
(EL 63: 1–7)

There was once Hysen Gradenica,
Took the greyhound and the hunting dogs,
Set off to the mountain to hunt,
To hunt he went up to the mountain,
Looking for prey for three days and nights,
Three days and nights he spent looking for it
But nothing was to be found.

The last example from the song *Hysen Gradenica* (EL 63; Eng. *Hysen Gradenica*) in the form of a block which can be stratified into several formulas in this case (fairytale-like formula + formula of setting off to hunt + temporal formula + formula of a futile hunt), corresponds to a specific type of formulas of movement in Serbian songs, denoted as the formula of a substituted or futile hunt. Owing to the fact that its mythological background (cf. Detelić 1996: 64–76). has been pointed to on the corpus of South Slavic songs, the existence of this formula in Albanian songs is of the utmost importance for several reasons: primarily because it contains information on the intensity of connections between myth and sujet; furthermore, also because of the manner in which the fourth element of the cliché denoted as the encounter with Destiny is realized in the Albanian epic space. The formulas in our example are chained according to the same principle as in South Slavic songs, whereas the third element of the cliché

is introduced when narrative has substantially been underway, whilst the prey is substituted by an indication of future events of importance for the hero,⁸ i.e. by his captivity. Concurrently with other instances in which this formula has been recorded, its full realization (the moment when a decision is made as to what in fact the prey is to be substituted with) determines the further course of the narrative. The hero is captured and the sujet is then subservient to his rescue from captivity, which is ultimately achieved. Such a course of events i.e. structural concordance with the pattern obtained based on the analysis of South Slavic songs points to the strength of this cliché in Albanian epics, the further analysis of which may yield a series of answers to questions pertaining not only to the relationship between Albanian and South Slavic epics, but also between these two Balkan cultural traditions.

The following example is from the song *Gjuri Harambash* (EL 87; Eng. *Gjuri Harambash*), in which an epic repetition assumes the role of describing the title character, a notorious *Shkija*,⁹ which is accomplished by a semantically appealing construction “nuk ka lanë” (Eng. “left no/did not leave”). Such a repetitive series is then interrupted by a semantically identical, yet structurally discordant construction “s’ka lanë” (Eng. “left no/did not leave”), employed for metrical reasons, i.e. so that the decasyllable remains undisturbed:

<p>Kur ish kanë ai Gjuri Harambash, zollumtar zoti si e ka falë, nuk ka lanë drum per pa thye, s’ka lanë nanë per me u gzue, nuk ka lanë çikë m’u fejue, nuk ka lanë pazar me u çilë, nuk ka lanë djel të ri me u rritë. (EL 78: 1–7)</p>	<p>There was once Gjuri Harambash, Tyrant he was, God did make him that way, No road did he leave uncrossed, No mother did he leave in joy, No maiden did he let engaged, No market did he let open, No lad did he let grow up.</p>
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The frequency of this version of a fairytale-like formula in Albanian songs reveals, inter alia, its plausible originality, since its elements do not occur in such an arrangement in formulas of the surrounding Slavic peoples. Besides, its metrical suitability to the Albanian decasyllabic verse, as well as its capacity to fit into any context owing to its simple semantic structure, must have largely

⁸ Corresponding to one of the manners in which a futile hunt is substituted according to Detelić 1992: 287–288.

⁹ The Albanian forms *shkau*, *shkina*, *shkie*, Eng. *Serb* (m.), *Serb* (f.), *Serbs* are derived from the Latin appellative *sclavus* (Stanišić 1995: 37), and in the songs of the frontier warriors they semantically encompass all other Slavic peoples, considering that therein *the consistent opposing party... are the Slavs... without any individualization. The land of the opponent: Kingdom* (Medenica 1974).

contributed to its popularity with local singers. If compared to any other specific formula, e.g. “he is drinking wine”, it appears that regardless of how fixed or petrified it is due to being widespread and able to adjust to a large number of different situations, it still has a tendency of restricting and pointing to the action of “wine drinking”, which is usually done *somewhere* or *with somebody*, whilst the formula “there was a...” mainly imposes no constraints. Hence in this case its neutral connotation contributes to its greater universality.

The temporal indifference is particularly distinctive in these formulas (merely one out of 50 songs contains temporal markers), which is compensated in two manners: by further describing the character(s) or by describing the spatial context:

<p>Ishin kanë Muji e Halili, kin pa' dalë ne bjeshkë te nelta. (EL 100: 1–2)</p> <p>Kur ish kanë një plakë me jetima, i kish pasë nandë djelm e 'i çikë, me gazep e mjera i ki' rritë, me lesh ferrash i veshë e i bathë, me lypë dyerësh u ep me granëIsh' kenë ardhë një vjetë fort e keqe, in lidhë jetimat me dekë. (EL 36: 1–7)</p>	<p>There once were Mujo and Halili, They went out to highland mountains.</p> <p>There once was an old man with motherless children, Nine sons and one daughter had he, In poverty and woes did he bring them up, He dressed them in rough cloths only, Door to door begging for food for them, A terrible year fell upon them, His poor children almost died on him.</p>
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The contrasting with Serbian songs has demonstrated that fairytale-like formulas do not exist or at least have not been recorded there; however, judging by the type of formulas attached to their free end, they may be partially replaced by the formula “mother/emperor is feeding...” (cf. Vuk II, 15; SANU II, 24). Being unique itself, the introductory formula Serb. “netko bješe (Strahiniću bane)” (Eng. “[Strahinić Ban] a noble man he was”)¹⁰ might be compared to this type to a certain extent. Its parallel in Albanian songs is “a hero of all heroes that [name]” Alb. “trim mbi trima ay” / “ky trim trimit”, as in the song *Gjergj Elez Alija* (EL 5), the sujet of which treats the *Bolani Dojčin* motif (Eng. *Ailing Doichin*). We have noticed a certain similarity also in the category of formulas of *appellation* (Suvajdzić 2008: 159), the function of which is realized by a declarative introduction of the hero; however, we may not denote them as fairytale-like. It is our opinion that both the Albanian and Serbian formulas intertwine only on the level of function, whilst completely diverging both semantically and structurally; therefore we cannot speak of their typological concordance.

¹⁰ Trans. by Geoffrey N. W. Locke (1997: 115).

According to many of their properties (*cf.* Medenica 1974), such as the motif, lack of a more specific spatial determination of the sujet, etc., the aforementioned Albanian song *Gjergj Elez Alija* differs from the other songs of the frontier warriors and is therefore worthy of being paid greater attention. The first dissimilarity compared to the Serbian version *Bolani Dojčin* (Vuk II, 78)¹¹ pertains to different types of correlation between the introductory and final formulas. The mentioned correlation is in the Albanian song achieved by reference to the same personality¹² (similar to the Serbian song *Banović Strahinja*: “Strahinych Ban, a noble man was he; Of all the heroes that have ever been, / One nobler than the Ban was never seen”),¹³ whilst in the analyzed Serbian version it is achieved by emphasizing the cause in the initial, and the consequence in the final formula. Establishing such a connection between the initial and final formulas serves the purpose of expressing the finiteness of a told tale, which (unlike some other instances) (*cf.* Detelić 1996) is impossible to continue:

¹¹ Since the motif of a sick hero (known as the *ailing Doichin motif*) exists not only in the South Slavic but also in the epics of other Balkan peoples (which most likely makes the number of songs with this motif a three-digit one; e.g. in his analysis Fochi (1956, *cit.* in Medenica 1974) analyzed as many as 85 songs with this sujet (44 Romanian, 26 Bulgarian, 13 Serbo-Croatian and 2 Albanian), we shall focus here on contrasting it with the mentioned Serbian version exclusively in order to draw attention to possible derogations of the Albanian song, which should later be analyzed more thoroughly to determine whether such innovations are under the influence of Albanian, or their origin can be traced to another (either adjacent or non-adjacent) cultural tradition.

¹² The difference that may be noticed between the forms *Gjergj Elez Alija* and *Gjergj Elez Ali* is of a formal-grammatical nature and it pertains to the aspect of the personal noun affecting the flexion in Albanian: the former form is definite whilst the latter is indefinite. It is necessary to emphasize that there is a derogation from standard Albanian in the case of the initial formula and the form *Gjergj Elez Alija*, which is reflected in the following: (1) employing the phonetically modified personal pronoun *ay* (3rd pers. sing., m.), the standard form of which is *ai*, which assumes the role of the demonstrative pronoun *ky* (also 3rd pers. sing., m.); and (2) employing the noun in the definite form with the aforementioned demonstrative pronoun (which is a vernacular form, since in standard Albanian the demonstrative pronoun *ky* requires nouns in the indefinite form). The use of the definite aspect results in both concretization and individualization of the noun, thus simultaneously causing change on the semantic level. If an absolute separation and emphatic use of the definite aspect occurred in the initial formula, then the final formula contains a sort of a statement, leading to a conclusion that the formal-grammatical aspect follows the weakening of the signal from the initial to the final formula, which is the most probable reason why the singer chose to “sacrifice” the decasyllable in the first case.

¹³ Trans. Locke 1997: 115 and 165.

The phraseology of the introductory half-line “hero of all heroes” in the Albanian song additionally reinforces the impression made on the listener; hence its function is twofold: to convey the information on actors, whilst simultaneously marking the language code shift (considering the fact there is no general introductory formula). This formula is spatially undetermined, unlike the formula in the Serbian version which contains more pieces of information despite its conciseness. On the other hand, the Albanian singer had at his disposal the option of substituting the opening line either with one of the previously discussed versions of the fairytale formula (“there was”, “once there was”, “when there was”, etc.) or with one of the situational formulas, in order to describe the scene and condition of the main character. However, by selecting a semantically more effective and concise option he connected it to the subsequent line by formal-grammatical means, which therefore should not be regarded separately: “qe nand’ vjet nand’ varra në shtat m’i ka!” (lit. “that for nine years has [to me]¹⁴ nine wounds on his body”). In this manner a rounded image of a great hero ailing for nine years is depicted, whilst spatial coordinates are omitted.

Later in the song *Gjergj Elez Alija* different tools are used to introduce the sister tending to Gjergj – contrast: “veç një motër nat’ e ditë te kryet” (Eng. “Night and day one sister stays at his bedside”^{*}); repetition: “ja lan varrat me ujt e gurrës nandvjeçe, / ja lan varrat me ata lott e syve” (Eng. “here she is cleansing his wounds with spring water, / here she is cleansing his wounds and shedding tears”), etc. In the entire course of the narrative the listener is informed that Gjergj is nearly dead by internal formulas in the form of frequent references to his difficult condition and by other means:

P’a prej vorrit, Gjergj, ti konke çue? [...]	From the grave, Gjergj, have you risen? [*] [...]
Të lumët goja, baloz, mirë po thue!	I well understand, haughty words have you spoken,
Qe nandë vjet qi kam marrë rru- gn e vorrit.	Nine years have gone by that I’ve been on death’s door. [*]

Therefore, the cuckoo speaking to the wanderer passing by in the final part of the song should not be construed as an act of introducing a harbinger of death, but a guardian of the memory of the extraordinary hero, thus leaving the legacy of keeping the story of Gjergj Elez Alija and his sister alive. The very legacy (Alb. *amanet*) is the original Albanian addition to this sujet

¹⁴ The dative case employed in such a manner (i.e. a short form of the personal pronoun *unë* (Eng. *I*) in the dative) has an emphatic character and additionally confirms the assumption made in the previous reference.

(cf. Medenica 1974; Skendi 1954, etc.), which is referred to in as many as 28 songs from our corpus. However, the occurrence of this lexeme in initial and final formulas is negligible, since it is found in the initial position only in one other formula (in the song *Martesa e Ali Bajraktarit* – KE, 14: Eng. *Wedding of Ali Bajraktari*): “Kur ish kenë Ali Bajraktari, / amanet baba ja kish lane” (Eng. “Once there was Ali Bajraktari, / and his father left him a legacy”). In all other instances it appears in the medial position whilst functioning within an internal formula.

If the final formulas in both songs are taken into consideration, a striking difference can be noticed primarily with regard to their length: a concise and effective Serbian formula consisting of only one verse as opposed to the Albanian formula containing a developed lamenting ending. The Serbian final formula abides by the narrative structure of epic songs within which the death of the hero usually represents the end of the *sujet* (Ajdačić 2007), although there are instances in which a song continues even afterwards (e.g. Vuk II, 16, etc.). On the other hand, brother and sister die together in the Albanian song, whilst the phraseology of the formula used to describe their death is rather similar to the Serbian – “Those were his words. He spoke them, and he died”:

<p>Vlla e motër dekun paskan ramun, Kurkuj shpirti ma mirë s'i ka dalun! (EL 5: 166–167)</p>	<p>Dead to the ground fell both brother and sister, No better spirits have ever been rendered!*</p>
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Such an arrangement of the Albanian song suggests the conclusion that it could easily end with line 167. However, it continues with a lamenting formula followed by the final formula of funeral assuming the role of an internal one:

<p>Gjamë të madhe shokët qi m'i kanë ba! Po ja çilin nji vorr bukur të gjanë, vlla e motër ngrykas për me i xanë e 'i muranë të bukur e kanë mbarue, vlla e motër kurr mos me u harrue.</p>	<p>His friends began mourning in great lamentation, And for the two siblings a wide grave dug open, For brother and sister, their arms round each other, And over the grave did they make a fair tombstone, That brother and sister would not be forgotten.*</p>
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It is quite interesting to take a look at the Albanian adjective *i, e bukur* (Eng. *nice, beautiful*; m./f.), which in this case is attached to the nouns *vorr*¹⁵

¹⁵ The standard form of this lexeme is *varr*, the Northern Gegë form of which contains a nasalized vocal *-a*, thus entailing one of the most distinctive differences between the

(Eng. grave) and *muranë* (Eng. tomb). On the level of semantics this attribution approaches the final formula “she buried him nicely” in Serbian songs, wherefrom it had probably been taken since the singer was certainly able to choose another epithet (e.g. *large, wide*, etc.). This leads to a conclusion that the epithet *nice* is not related to the aforementioned lexemes in order to describe their external (physical) appearance, but its semantics (just as it is in the Serbian formula) is directed towards demonstrating that the hero and his sister had been buried honourably and properly. As a result, there is no need to describe the very act of their burial any further, which opens the possibility of ending the song even with a formula such as this one.

Other versions of this song demonstrate (e.g. Miladinovci 88, 154, 155, etc.) that it is absolutely possible to add other types of formulas after the final formula in *Ailing Doychin* and not only the previously mentioned final formula of funeral, hence prolonging it in this manner. Alternatively, any other general final formula would also be suitable, as well as animal speech (as it is the case in the Albanian song), or a personal comment of the singer. However, it is questionable as to what would be gained in this case for the following two reasons:

1) if a general final formula or a personal comment is added, its dispersed signal will largely “suffocate” both the intensity and effectiveness of the formula “Those were his words. He spoke them, and he died”, as well as the ending of the song;

2) if a specific formula (be it an introductory formula in the position of an internal or a final one) or an animal speech is added, the sujet itself will be somewhat altered, which means new elements will be adjoined thereto in a similar manner as in the Albanian version: e.g. leaving a legacy, lament (by mother/sister), burial, etc. All of the specified above, as well as numerous potential elements that could be supplied, account for an alteration in the sujet and the narrative itself; hence the song will become completely different if different formulas are added.

In addition to the aforementioned options, there is also the possibility of their mutual combining (e.g. specific final + general final formula), but in this case the existing final formula would particularly lose its strength, whilst its function would be reduced to informing of the death of the main character.

If we go back to the final formula in the Albanian song: “*kërkund s’ndesha m’Gjergj Elez Ali!*”¹⁶ which can literally be translated as: “Nowhere

Northern and Southern Albanian dialects.

¹⁶ The aforementioned indefinite aspect of the proper noun Gjergj Elez Ali is by no means a coincidence, since the context suggests that in terms of semantics not

have I found/stumbled upon Gjergj Elez Ali”, we may draw the conclusion that for semantic reasons it requires chaining with at least one more formula, since it has one flexible end. The function of the adverb *kërkund*¹⁷ (Eng. nowhere) is here subordinate to achieving a contrast with regard to a series of previous formulas in which the effect of the final line is enhanced through repetition and chaining of similar formulas. In addition, lines 183–184 (“should you be singing, cease here for a moment, / should you be crying, stop lamenting”) ensure a certain kind of tension and somewhat amplify the rather weakened signal at the very end of the song (particularly after the death of the hero). Upon it, the narrative circle between the final and introductory formulas is closed and a correlation between them established through chaining concordant formulas semantically and structurally.

3. Temporal (time-relating) formulas

Temporal or time-relating formulas are a distinctive type of initial formulas occurring in twenty songs either at the very beginning or within the introductory block, i.e. after a general initial formula. The most frequent are those relating to nature in one way or another, or those determined by a natural occurrence. Instances of formulas of this type containing a specific date (or at least a year) are rare, whilst those in which the time of action is specified through the Sun/Moon, light/darkness or day/night are by far the most frequent, as it is the case in the song *Gjogu i Mujit* (EL 9; Eng. *Mujo's Courser*):

Nata a shkue, hana s'ka dalë, Muji 'i anderr e ki' andrrue, andërr paka hargelen tuj pjellë. (EL 9:1–3)	Night was passing, moon not risen, Mujo was dreaming a dream, Dreaming about his mare foaling.
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The prophetic dream formula expressed by means of the *figura etymologica* “he was dreaming a dream” achieves its function through chaining with the initial temporal formula the semantics of which has the role of emphasizing secrecy (accentuating darkness) in order to create an ambience of conspiracy

only does it denote a concrete person, but it also takes on the meaning “someone/somebody like Gjergj Elez Alija” or simply “a/one Gjergj Elez Alija” (which is achieved by the use of articles in the languages that have them). This is why despite the fact that one would expect the use of the definite aspect in this case, the formal-grammatical aspect is subordinated to the needs of the context and metrics (since, inter alia, rhyme is achieved by means of the indefinite form).

¹⁷ *Kërkund* is a vernacular form of the standard *kërrkund*.

and mystical occurrence. There are two important reasons why this formula requires particular attention: (1) since a dream formula in Serbian epics rarely predicts a joyous event (Suvajdžić 2000), further contrasting might reveal information on how it was transferred to *kreshnik* epic and what changes it underwent along the way; (2) the fact that we have not found a prophetic dream formula in any other introductory block in the Albanian songs, its very presence in a limited corpus such as this one suggests that this is a direct influence of another genre and/or tradition.

In addition to the combination of two typologically different introductory formulas (“the night has come” and “he was dreaming a dream”), the half-line “Moon not risen^{*18}” serves the purpose of preparing for the contrast that follows in the next line:

ki' ba mazin bardhë si bora (EL 9:4)	And this foal was as white as snow
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as well as later on in the narrative complex, when Ajkuna goes to check if Mujo's dream came true:

ndriti qymja si bora e malit, hyllin bardh shkrue n'shtek të ballit. (EL 9: 21–22)	The foal shone like the mountain snowflakes, A star was shining on its forehead.*
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Another version of this initial formula is found in the song *Muji e Jevrenija* (EL 23; Eng. *Mujo and Jevrenija*):

Drita dalë, hana prarue, ç'kin ba çikat e Krajlisë? (EL 23: 2–3)	The light has appeared, the Moon is of gold, What is it the maidens of the Kingdom are doing?
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The second line already contains the *interrogative* formula: “what are they doing”, which also appears independently as an internal formula in a fairly large number of songs. The singer most commonly embeds this formula between two internal formulas, of which one is closed at the end and the other one is open at the beginning, which is most likely done for two particular reasons: either to boost the effect of the previous event and of the introduction to what ensues in the narrative; or to change the course of action, particularly in the songs of the “Muslim type” (*cf.* Medenica 1974), one of the basic prop-

¹⁸ The phrasing “the Moon did not come out” is used in the actual original version in Albanian.

erties of which is an excessively ornamental style accompanied by frequent introductions or shifts in action, plot, characters, scene, etc. Since no standardized beginning in the form of the Slavic antithesis has been observed in any of the Albanian songs analyzed here, it seems that introductory formulas of this type might be a kind of substitute, although the Slavic antithesis occurs in the narrative of several songs. Interrogative formulas of the “what are they doing” type in the initial position have been observed in only four instances, which we found to be insufficient for classifying them as a separate formula type.

With regard to the temporal aspect (i.e. temporal definiteness/indefiniteness), a parallel between the Albanian and Serbian songs may be drawn according to several criteria. Firstly, the hero/maiden/antagonist are always *early*; an action is more closely temporally determined by an adverb or adverbial phrase, while the most common one in both languages is *when*,²² etc. However, the analyzed corpus of Albanian songs contains no temporal formula referencing a historical event, contrary to, for example, the Serbian songs with the initial formula of the “in + year” type.

On the other hand, although seemingly far less complex, Albanian temporal formulas abound in beautiful descriptions of the scene where an event takes place, as well as in contrasts aimed at emphasizing not only characters, but also the background against which they are placed. For instance, the introductory formula from the song *Omeri prej Mujit* (EL 27; Eng. *Omer, son of Mujo*) demonstrates emotional engagement to a rather large degree, as opposed to the similar formula from the Serbian song *Ropstvo i ženidba Jakšića Šćepana* (Vuk II, 95; Eng. *Captivity and Marriage of Jakšić Šćepan*), which remains relatively “stiff” and frugal in this regard:

Još zorica nije zab'jelila,	The dayspring has yet not appeared,
Ni danica lica pomolila,	Nor has the daystar shown her face,
Bijela je vila pokliknula	The white fairy has loudly cried
Sa Avale zelene planine,	From Avala, mountain of green,
Vila zove u Bijograd Stojni	The fairy calls up to Belgrade the Capital
Po imenu dva brata Jakšića,	She calls by name two Jakšić brothers,
Jakšić-Mitra i Jakšić-Šćepana.	Jakšić Mitar and Jakšić Šćepan.
(Vuk II, 95: 1–7)	

¹⁹ Formal-structural requirements, on the one hand, and metrical, on the other, compel the Albanian singer (and the Serbian as well) to use several basic (semantically equal, yet formally different) versions of this formula beginning with *when* in each of the examples specified above, the function of which here is not temporal marking as it is in the Serbian language.

Dritë ka dalë e drit-o nuk ka ba, ka ra dielli e me xe nuk po xe! Kish nevojë drita mos me dalë, kish nevojë dielli mos me ra: Janë xanë rob dy agët ma t'mirët, janë xanë rob Muji me Halilin! (EL 27: 2-7)	The day dawned, but little light shone, The sun came up, no warmth provided, Better had the light not come out, Better had the sun not risen, The two best agas were made prisoner, Caught were Mujo and Halili!*
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Although the formula provides no indication of the actual place of the event, unlike the one in the Serbian song, the delayed character introduction (only in lines six and seven), contrasts and repetitions sufficiently compensate for the poor spatial definition. In this respect, it is interesting to note that temporal and spatial coordinates in Albanian songs are marked in an inverse proportionality.

The subsequent type of temporal introductory formulas may be denoted as *preceding* (Suvajđić 2002) or as a form of preparation for the forthcoming main action as the narrative continues. In addition, they frequently appear together with the formula Serb. “poranio” (Eng. “be early”)²⁰ or with the movement formula “(he) rose to his feet”. In the examples given below almost identical introductory formulas appear, whereas the main characters²¹ are firstly introduced in a fairytale beginning and placed in a temporal context (“early in the morning”), followed by a concretization of the ambience and a preparation of the listener for the introduction to the main action by means of an interrogative formula:

Kur ish kanë Muji me Halilin, najde heret trimat kenkan çue, ma kanë ndezë zjarmin n'oxhak, m'i kanë pi kafet sheqerli e po e pijnë duhanin stambollëli. Ça ka qitë Muji e Halilit i ka thanë? (EL 26: 3-8)	When Mujo was with Halili, They jumped to their feet early in the morning, Lit the fire on the hearthstone, Drank coffee with a lot of sugar, And lit the pipes with Istanbul tobacco. What did Mujo say to Halili?
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Kur ish kanë Muji me Halilin, najde heret trimat kenkan çue,	When Mujo was with Halili, They jumped to their feet early in the morning,
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²⁰ There is no absolute translation equivalent for the Serbian verb *poraniti*, since it means “do something early in the morning”, which can refer to any action. It is commonly translated as either “rise/be early” or “go somewhere early”.

²¹ In both cases these are Mujo and Halil corresponding to Muja and Alija from Vuk's songs.

<p>ma kanë ndezë zjarmin n'oxhak, m'i kanë pi kafet sheqerli e po e pijnë duhanin stambollëli. Ça ka qitë Muji e Halilit i ka thanë? (EL 26: 3–8)</p>	<p>Lit the fire on the hearthstone, Drank coffee with a lot of sugar, And lit the pipes with Istanbul tobacco. What did Mujo say to Halili?</p>
<p>Kanka kanë Qetobash Muja,²⁵ heret nadjet Muja kanka çue e po pin kafë me sheqer. Shka kanë ba orët e bjeshkëve? (EL 61: 2–5)</p>	<p>There once was Chetobasha Mujo, He jumped to his feet early in the morning To drink coffee with sugar. What did mountain fairies do?</p>
<p>Kur m'ish kenë Muji e Halili, m'ishin çua natje heret, m'ishin veshë e m'ishin mbathë, m'i kanë pjekë kafet me sheqerr... E Muja ç'ka qitë e i ka thanë? (EL 77: 1–4; 12)</p>	<p>When there was Mujo with Halili, They got up early in the morning, Got dressed and put on their shoes, They made coffee with a lot of sugar... What did Mujo say?</p>

Our examples demonstrate the chaining of three different introductory formulas according to the principle²³ that can schematically be represented as: fairytale-like + temporal formula + situational formula. Their being clichéd is undisputable, but their mutual relationship is obviously firm, thus making them an appealing introductory block fulfilling the requirements as regards metrics, character introduction, spatial and temporal coordinates, etc. This type of a block may be joined by the previously mentioned interrogative formula (these usually are of the “what did he do” or “what did he say” type), although its link to the rest of the formulas is not so strong, as confirmed by our last example in which the interrogative formula only appears in verse 12.

4. Numerical formulas

Numerical formulas are also quite frequent in Albanian songs. Our corpus contains 14 instances (14%), in which five ordinal numbers appear: three, seven, twelve, thirty and three hundred. Typical of all of the analyzed examples is that they appear as a phrase composed of a number and a noun, as well as that they

²² Qetobash (Serb. četobaša) meaning: “the leader of a company”. It is not a personal name but a rank, but being associated with some of the famous anti-Ottoman rebels time and again, it eventually became their nickname, or an element of the name itself.

²³ Observed in six more cases (EL 6, 44, 69, 70, 75, 85 and 86), thus amounting to a total of ten examples of formulas combined in this manner, which accounts for almost ten percent of the corpus.

are mostly supplemented with another formula, the most common of which is “they gathered”:

<p>In mbledhë treqind agët e Jutbinës. Gjumi i randë Halilin ma ka marrë edhe Muji shokve m'u ka thanë. (EL 32:1)</p>	<p><i>Three hundred agas of Udbina came, But Halili was sound asleep, Mujo spoke to his companions.</i></p>
<p>Tridhetë agë ishin bashkue, n'ulicë të Judbinës ishin dalë, po e qortojnë Gjeto Basha Mujën edhe agët Mujs po i thonë. (EL 62: 1)</p>	<p><i>Thirty agas gathered together, They took to the streets of Udbina, Qetobasha Mujo rebuked all the agas, And the agas retorted this.</i></p>
<p>Të shtatë krajlrat mendim po bajnë, si me çartë Mujon me Halilin. (EL 39:1–2)</p>	<p><i>Seven kings started thinking How to set Mujo against Halili.</i></p>
<p>Tridhetë agë bashkë ishin mbledhë e po qortojnë Gjeto Basho Mujën. (EL 96:1)</p>	<p><i>Thirty agas gathered together, Qetobasha Mujo rebuked all the agas.</i></p>
<p>Tridhetë agë ishin bashkue e kishin marrë llafue tue llafue. (EL 97:1)</p>	<p><i>Thirty agas gathered together, They were talking with one another.</i></p>

Both the initial formula of the song *Smililiq Alia* (EL 62) and the very title contain lexemes of Slavic origin: the toponym *Judbinë* (Serb. *Udbina*) and the patronym *Smililiq* (Serb. *Smiljanić*). Since there is no place called Udbina (*Jutbinë*, *Udbinjë* and *Jutbi*) in Northern Albania, this oikonym (in addition to a certain number of others) was directly taken from Muslim decasyllabic songs. Similarly to the previously mentioned town of Senj, the toponym in question does not occur with an attribution either, but within a prepositional-case structure, mainly in the accusative case combined with the preposition *në* (Eng. in, on, at). Such a prepositional-case structure metrically fits into the first half-line of the decasyllable since it contains four syllables,²⁴ which is the simplest solution for the singer who is therefore not obliged to attach any attribution thereto. Another form in which this toponym frequently occurs is “*në fushë të Jutbinës*” (Eng. “on the field of Udbina”). Considering that such a hexasyllabic half-line enables easy incorporation into the decasyllable, the singer uses it quite often as a spatial determinant of an action (usually a battle or a duel). On the other hand, *Smililiq Alia* is a phonetically altered form of Serb. *Smiljanić Ilija*, and also occurs

²⁴ The epic decasyllable is also referred to as *asymmetric* because of its 4 + 6 structure, whereas the lyric decasyllable with its 5 + 5 structure is referred to as *symmetric*.

as *Smilaliq Ali*, *Sminanicë Serdar* and *Smi Nanice Serdar* in our corpus. According to Skendi (1964), the form *Smililiq* was derived through progressive assimilation, encompassing also the intermediate stage *Smilaliq* in which *-n>-l*, occurring in certain other songs, as we have previously pointed out.

Numerical formulas can be found in Serbian songs as well, but in a somewhat smaller percentage (according to Detelić 1996, only in 2% of the songs) and they usually contain ordinal numbers *two/nine/thirty* as predominant within the initial numerical-noun structure:

<p>Putem idu <i>dva</i> mlada putnika, Putem idu, a putem beesedu. (SANU II, 6: 1–2)</p> <p>Vino pije <i>trideset</i> ajduka U gorici pod jelom zelenom I medj' njima Mitar arambaša, Vino služi Stojko Mitroviću. (Vuk VII, 41)</p> <p>Rodi majka <i>devet</i> posobaca, U zlo doba, u godine gladne, Sve je devet majka odranila, Sve preslicom i desnicom rukom, I osam je majka oženila. (SANU II, 24: 1–5)</p>	<p><i>Two</i> young wayfarers are walking down the road, Walking down the road, saying.</p> <p><i>Thirty</i> haiduks are drinking wine In the forest, under a green fir Among them, Mitar the Chieftain, Wine is served by Stojko Mitrović.</p> <p>Mother gave birth to <i>nine</i> sons in a row, In evil times, in the years of famine, All of the nine were raised by the mother, With her distaff and her right hand, Eight of them the mother married off.</p>
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These examples from Serbian songs show a similar tendency of combining with other types of formulas, as is the case in Albanian songs. The formulas “they’re walking down the road”, “mother gave birth”, etc. in this context are close to the Albanian “ishin bashkue” (“they gathered”) or “mendim po bajnë” (“they started thinking”). This is not surprising since numerical-noun structures (or more accurately, phrases) themselves may not denote any action whatsoever, but merely provide information on the character(s) introduced at the beginning, and therefore need to be supplemented with at least a verb in order to function as formulas.

Discussion and conclusion

In accordance with our primary goal – to establish the degree of concordance between specific initial formulas in the Albanian decasyllabic and corresponding South Slavic songs, as well as their typology – the analysis has resulted in four clearly differentiated types of formulas: situational, temporal, numerical

and fairytale-like. We have found that interrogative formulas may be classified as a separate type, but have chosen not to define them as a subtype of initial formulas due to the fact that they occur in the song-initial position in very few instances.

Contrary to the initial assumption based on the share of situational formulas in the corpus of South Slavic songs, these formulas actualize their frequency to a larger extent through chaining with other specific, primarily fairytale-like and numerical formulas. Their perceptibly smaller number compared to the South Slavic ones is reflected in both formal-structural and anthropological-cultural differences, ultimately resulting in the development of formulas of other types, primarily the fairytale-like one. The latter is at the same time the only type of formulas demonstrating zero equivalence with specific introductory formulas in South Slavic songs, which may be characterized to some extent as a certain kind of innovation brought into the decasyllable verse by the Albanian songs. Although this is an international formula taken from another genre, its neutral connotation and its function of conveying exclusively one piece of information (i.e. introduction of the [main] character[s] in the narrative) make it productive and favourite with Albanian singers. Therefore, it also has an accentuated tendency of chaining with other specific formulas, whilst assuming the role of a general formula rather often, as concluded based on these two crucial facts:

(1) a relatively high percentage of the songs of the frontier warriors begin with a general formula (62 songs, i.e. 60%); hence their absence in the initial part is a derogation rather than a rule (which is particularly noticeable in comparison with South Slavic songs). Out of the remaining 50 songs within the corpus, as many as 22 begin with this type of formula, thus making them by far the most productive;

(2) since one of the basic functions of general formulas is to mark a code shift, and each piece of information of importance for narrative is redundant in this case, fairytale-like formulas are probably the most appropriate substitute since they are connected to narrative only by information on the character that is being introduced, which is not the case with other specific formulas usually carrying spatial-temporal markers.

Given the antiquity of this type of formulas in epics, their frequency in our corpus points to the degree of development of the epic expression of Albanian songs insofar as we have not encountered highly developed formulas in terms of phraseology and style compared to the Serbian decasyllable. There are two possible interpretations of such an occurrence: syntactical-metrical restrictions (emphasized on several occasions herein) of Albanian as a language

unrelated to Slavic languages; and a limited period of time during which these songs were developing, which supports the theory that they do not date farther back than the seventeenth or eighteenth century.

Temporal initial formulas have revealed several other innovations of the Albanian songs, such as chaining with a specific type of so-called interrogative (usually internal) formulas. Since the corpus has revealed that the Albanian songs do not begin with the rudimentary form of the Slavic antithesis otherwise existing therein, a conclusion may be drawn that a more thorough research is necessary in order to determine whether this is an indigenous and intrinsic Albanian property and what its function is.

The formal-structural analysis has drawn attention to another instrument in the hands of the Albanian singer, which does not exist in Serbian songs in the same form for rather obvious reasons: the definite/indefinite aspect as a grammatical category having a direct influence on semantics. Our example has demonstrated in which manner it is possible to carry out a concretization and separation with regard to generalization, hence altering the phraseology of an expression, i.e. of a personal noun in this instance. This is by no means an unusual occurrence in the languages in which there are clearly expressed categories of definite and indefinite aspects, but it is most certainly interesting in the context of epics since it offers a possibility to gain an insight into the tools unavailable to the Slavic singer. We believe that a detailed analysis may lead to an answer to the question as to how much the Albanian decasyllable has evolved after it was taken from the South Slavic tradition and to what extent it has introduced innovations not only in terms of motifs and other elements (amongst which e.g. legacy, word of honour, etc.), but also in terms of style.

The corpus itself has imposed the need for determining the degree of concordance between the Albanian and South Slavic epic space. Although observed on a limited material, it turned out that attachment of an attribution (most commonly of the attribute *white*) to oiconyms is not a common occurrence in Albanian songs (despite the fact that it is one of the most frequent ones in general), regardless of its presence in both Christian and Muslim South Slavic decasyllabic songs (Detelić & Ilić 2006: 18–19). In this case contrasting might shed light on certain aspects of the relationship between these two epics, as well as on the idea of the town/city and the manner in which transferred elements behave within an unrelated epic tradition, etc.

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*III SOUTH SLAVS AND SLAVIC
CONTEXT*

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FORMULA IN TRANSFORMATION. HARBINGER FAIRY

Abstract: The paper presents the results of a study of the distribution, structure and semantic potential of the *harbinger fairy – fairy’s cry* motif (Krstić 1984: A 5, 3). The research was conducted on the corpus that includes “classical” records as well as examples published in periodicals, author collections, etc. Regardless of its essentially relatively simple structure (the fairy calls out to the hero/opponent and, while relating the events in retrospective, warns against a danger and/or calls for action), the fairy’s cry formula has offered a multitude of opportunities for analytical reading. The following elements have been included into analysis: 1) structure of the formula; 2) scope of the formula, i.e. the number of verses used for its realisation; 3) sender of the message; 4) recipient of the message – the character addressed by the demonic being. Expectedly, linking structural particularities of such a multiform to the semantics of the text as a whole and to the outcome of the thematised conflict has also proven to be important. Such a “reading” of the formula has created an opportunity to analyse its manifold stratification, from registering transformations on the structural, stylistic and semantic planes in the classical corpus/postfolklore records and determining particularities of both the Christian and Muslim traditions of singing to registering the introduction of the formula in the context of an ethnic polemical dialogue (in shorter, lyric genres).

Keywords: epic formula, hypertrophy of formula, demonology, ideology

Introductory remarks

The paper presents the results of a study of the distribution, structure and semantic potential of the motif denominated as *the harbinger fairy – the fairy’s cry* (Krstić 1984: A 5, 3). The motif is realised in a relatively simple manner: the fairy summons the hero/opponent and, while relating the events in retrospective, warns against a danger and/or calls for action. The research was conducted on the corpus encompassing “classical” records as well as examples published in periodicals, author collections, etc.¹

¹ A list of sources is given at the end of the paper.

The motif/formula² of the fairy's cry offers a multitude of opportunities for analytical reading. The analysis presented here takes the following elements into consideration:

- 1) Structure of the formula (formalised curse cast upon the hero; formalised curse that the hero casts upon the demonic being; development and hypertrophy of the dialogue structure);
- 2) Scope of the formula, i.e. number of verses used for its realisation;
- 3) Message sender (attribution, locus, function/purview);
- 4) Message recipient – the character addressed by the demonic being (function/purview).

Expectedly, linking structural particularities of such a multiform to the semantics of the text as a whole and to the outcome of the thematised conflict has also proven to be important.

Such a "reading" of the formula has created an opportunity to analyse its manifold stratification and to register transformations on the structural, stylistic and semantic planes on the classical corpus/postfolklore records level.³

Structure of the formula – from condensed form to formalisation, "loosening" and hypertrophy

In the stratified (heterogeneous) corpus, the formula primarily appears in the initial position (or the initial formulaic block – multiform), showing a particularly high frequency in so-called chronicle epics. In that way, the formula assumes the important role of structuring the composition of the text as a whole, since it constitutes a prologue to and foundation of the epic plot, the primary factor of motivation.

It is also relatively frequent in the medial position (usually combined with the omission of temporal contextualisation), where it operates as a means of flagging a new segment in the development of the plot, (usually) assuming the role of a "shifter" (change of scene, a shift of perspective from the opponent's side to the hero's side). By combining it with other frequent formulaic structures (e.g. with the prophetic dream motif, the composition scheme

² Given its structural and functional properties, the motif may be seen as a formula.

³ For the theoretical conceptualisation of these terms cf. Djordjević 2014 (the term *postfolklore* is used to denote distinctive structural-stylistic features of the texts emerging in the borderland between "oral" and "written" traditions, without referring to any particular cultural-historical period).

of the *harbinger raven*, etc.), complex plots are realised, in particular in texts where the plot branches into several directions.

In its developed form, the formula is realised as a formulaic block or multiform, which encompasses the following formulaic segments:

- 1) Temporal and spatial localisation;
- 2) The fairy's addressing the hero/opponent (usually with introducing a formalised curse expressed by conditional constructions of the *if-then* type), for example:

<p>O, kurviću, Djoko Petroviću! Dje si danas? Nidje te ne bilo! Ako piješ u mehani vino, Vino ti se na rane prolilo! Ako ležiš u ložnici s ljubom, Udova ti ljuba ostanula! (Vuk IV, 40)</p>	<p>O you sleaze, Djoko Petrović! Where are you today? May you be nowhere! If you're drinking wine at the inn, May it spill on your wounds! If you're lying in bed with your wife, May she become a widow!</p>
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- 3) Response of the addressee (often with a formalised curse addressed to the fairy), for example:

Muči, vilo, grlo ti zaraslo! (ER 90)
Hush you, fairy, may your throat grow together!

Muči, vilo, mukom se zamukla! (Vuk IV, 40)
Hush you, fairy, may a hush hush you!

The introduction of the formula activates a recognisable chronotope. If specified, the temporal level of the formula is quite stable, fixed by several lexical and syntagmatic combinations (e.g. *The dawn has not broken, / nor has the daystar shown her face yet; / Neither dawn nor white day...*). In addition to a hypertrophied structure, the postfolklore songs often lack temporal concretisation (e.g. Rodić 2005: 217; Draškić I, 2).

In accordance with the conventions of the genre, the epic chronotope is laden with, inter alia, a particularly high ideological/ideologised semantic potential. The other-worldly space from which the *fairy is crying out* is unfailingly linked to “upper” points in the vertical system of stratification⁴ (*mountain/*

⁴ Exhaustively discussing the semantics of epic space, M. Detelić (1992) points to its vertical and horizontal stratification, to the functioning of binary oppositions, as well as to the fact that it is constituted as a series of “strong” points. The space, in her view, is also a symbol of the social stratification of the epic world (Detelić 2008; Detelić & Ilić 2006) and a symbol of the hero's social status (tower, city, etc.). The opposition one's own : someone else's is also realised through the binary oppositions such as open :

hill/rock, a space above the city, etc.).⁵ The flagged points are also perceived as centres of a local (or broader) sacral space, which thus assumes features of the centre of the cult space of a concrete (narrower or wider) community. In examples with hypertrophic structures and reduplicated characters, the spatial image realised through activated toponyms also becomes much more complex, with a specific system of ideological coding. Thus, for instance, in an (author's) epic chronicle published in 1913, the image of unity of the allied countries in the First Balkan War is symbolically constituted through a series of toponyms:

Zakliktao soko, tica siva,	Falcon, the grey bird, cries,
Sa Avale, visoke planine,	From Avala, the high mountain,
Više dvora kralja Petra Prvog,	Above the court of King Peter the First,
Pa doziva vilu sa Lovćena,	And it's calling the fairy of Lovćen,
Od dvorova kuće Petrovića.	Of the court of the House of Petrović.
Glas odlazi još na dvije strane;	The voice travels in two more directions;
Odziva se vila sa Balkana,	Responds the fairy from the Balkans,
Sa Balkana od Sofije grada,	From the Balkans, from the city of Sofia,
A druga se, braćo, odaziva,	And another responds, my brethren,
Sa Atine, sa grčkoga dvora.	From Athens, from the Greek court.
(<i>Cetinjski vjesnik</i> [Cetinje Herald] 1913; cit. after Tomić 1999)	

In another one, created during the First World War, the exposition delimits the space of Serbia as a national state (within its new borders established after the Balkan Wars), while the verses of the epilogue create the image of the desired (political) space of a common state and express the then current and progressive Yugoslav idea:

Kliče vila s Avale planine,	A fairy cries from the mount of Avala,
Pa doziva svoje posestrime,	Calling her blood sisters,
Srpske vile sa Srpskih planina,	Serbian fairies from Serbian mounts,
Sa Jastrepa, Cera i Rudnika,	From Jastrebac, Cer and Rudnik,
Sa Miroča, Rtnja i Babune,	From Miroč, Rtanj and Babuna,
S Durmitora i Šare planine [...]	From Durmitor and Šara mounts [...]
Sestre moje, nagorkinje vile,	O my sisters, mountain fairies,
Sad kliknite što vam grlo dava,	Cry now from the top of your lungs,
Nek se slegnu Šara i Dinara,	Let Šara and Dinara gather together,
Romanija i Velebit suri,	Romanija and stony Velebit,

losed, city : forest, etc. which, however, are not completely fixed and correspond to the cultural-historical context of the development of epic singing in the Balkans.

⁵ It is only rarely that the space is not specified (e.g. in ER 116; Vuk III, 31).

Do sinjega mora Jadranskoga,
I Istrija do grada Ljubljane,
Preko Fruške, do Karpata sami.
(Djuričić, *Evropski rat*
[European War], 1915)

By the blue Adriatic Sea,
And Istria, and up to the town of Ljubljana,
Across Fruška and as far as the Carpathians.

In this way the formula is given both the highly ideologised function to delimit the ideological/state/national space and an important role in creating (new) types of collective identities.

Given that the fairy's cry formula in the studied corpus encompasses from about 20 to as many as 590 verses, one may speak of the processes of its formalisation, hypertrophy and "loosening". Understood by formalisation in this context is the process that Schmaus (Schmaus 1963) described as the vanishing of old, inherited patterns, i.e. a change in their primary function. Those "old" formulae survive as relics. The process of formalisation is accompanied by functionalisation since "the new content element can take on a formal function" and become part of the stock of traditional epic devices. The term "loosening" of classical formulae (on the general or narrower level of text structuring) may be used to designate the process of partial defunctionalisation of the formula, which is usually accompanied by an expansion in the number of verses. In the process, formulae also become a means for introducing new contents and for overcoming the problem posed by the vastness of the material (a broad range of events that need to be introduced as a kind of motivation on a broader level; e.g. explaining the cause of a war, the political situation preceding it, the balance of power in European politics, recounting the course of the war, etc.; the process is analysed in more detail in Djordjević 2012).

Hypertrophy and formalisation are realised through building up the dialogue structure, with the fairy assuming to a certain degree the central narrating role (e.g. SANU IV, 6; Vuk VIII, 42) and accepting the function of a reasoner as well. In this way the formula may encompass the entire sujet structure of the song. With the exception of a few texts which are not integral (e.g. Vuk IV, 38 and 46), this technique is generally used for shaping songs that are close to the postfolklore type of singing. Thus, for instance, the deeds of Bishop Janičije Nešković (SANU IV, 44) are extolled through a dialogue between a fairy and two young pupils. A compressed recent history of Montenegro is expounded in a similar manner, through reduplicating demonic beings – the fairy of Lovćen and the fairy of Cetinje (SANU IV, 38; Djuričić 1915; *Cetinjski vjesnik* 1913, cit. after Tomić 1999).

The aforementioned transformations are particularly frequent in post-folklore singing since the second half of the nineteenth century, but they can be found in the oldest recordings as well. A pattern similar to the described

one is observable in the dialogue developing between *eagle* and *adder* (Bogišić 58).⁶ The appearance of the *maiden of Gradiška* or of the *Hungarian of Sentoš* in examples from the *Erlangen Manuscript* (81 and 166) may be construed as the lowering of the register at the position of the character. This interpretation would be supported by the very manner in which the plot develops, which is expected precisely for the fairy's cry formula, and especially by the survival of other elements of the multiform (curse and the manner of its stylisation: *Hush maiden, may God kill you!* – ER 166; temporal contextualisation – *Neither dawn nor white day* – ER 81). Such a perspective would also open a window for looking into the processes of transformation in the sense of the profanation of the formula.

The formula, formalised to a greater or lesser extent, also occurs in artistic literature (epics of Renaissance and Baroque authors from Dubrovnik, literary works from the period of national romanticism, etc.).

Its marked frequency in the initial position indicates its assumption of the genre-flagging role as well.

Semantic potential of the formula and “betrayed expectation”

The fairy's message is initially intended for the hero/opponent. However, the situations in which the hero is absent/dead/asleep call for introducing a new character as a “real addressee” combined with building a more complex purview system.⁷ The fairy's voice and message will reach a relative of the hero's (usually his mother, father, wife, brother) who then assumes the role of the order-giver in the quest for the hero's substitute (e.g. Vuk IV, 21) or of the intermediary in conveying the message to the hero. The introduction of an intermediary is particularly typical of Muslim tradition (KH II, 48; KH II, 72; MH IX, 5; MH IV, 42). In the examples with the formalisation and hypertrophy of the formula, the collective figure of the “people” is indirectly revealed behind the unnamed and relatively vague recipient.

Connection between the demonic being of the “fairy” type and the hero (or opponent) in highly stylised, condensed songs of the “motif-like” nature realised through recognisable sujet models, can be established in a number

⁶ Such dialogue structures are also close to allegories that characterise contemporary artistic literary works (especially Baroque ones). On such structures in literature “in a folk style” cf. Zečević 1978 (cf. n. 4 above).

⁷ A specific situation is found in Vuk VI, 73 where the fairy addresses the mother of captured Staniša Kotarac.

of ways: the fairy is a mother, stepmother, wet-nurse, blood sister, etc. with a relatively complex repertoire of possible (and expected) functions: harbinger, (often active) helper, adversary, etc.⁸

Incorporated into the formula analysed here, the fairy is a harbinger of bad news, and her appearance may implicitly code the information about the approaching death of the person she is addressing.⁹ Hence the formalised curse addressed to the fairy may also be interpreted as a prophylactic response to a recognised, foreshadowed danger. It appears that the information is preserved to an extent particularly in older records. Thus, in texts from Bogišić's collection, the fairy addresses exclusively the opponent whose army will be defeated and he himself killed (Bogišić 36, 116). The appearance of the fairy in the *Erlangen Manuscript* is also more frequently linked to the opponent's camp than to the one of the hero. Both the unsuccessful defence of a city and the death of the hero (ER 90) are an echo of historical reality, but the activation of the fairy's cry scheme in the epic shaping of events may also be seen as an echo of the deepest semantic layers of the formula.

In the nineteenth-century examples, the outcome of the thematised conflict is realised in different ways: the hero and his company/band/army are victorious; the conflict, with losses on both sides, is resolved in an "agreed truce"; but also in the death of the hero (and/or his close relatives) regardless of the (possible) victory of his camp. Situations in which the recipient of the fairy's message is captured (Vuk II, 95) or withdraws to the mountain (becoming "invisible" to others – MH IV, 42) may also be read in the key of an initiation story (symbolic, temporary death).

Epic chronicles of twentieth-century historical events (particularly the Balkan Wars and both world wars) push this layer of the formula into the background, changing the purview of the demonic being in the epic sujet: harbinger → advisor → protector of a collective/ethnos/people/nation → symbol of collective identity. This change in function is particularly related to the process of hypertrophying the formula. One should also bear in mind the tendency towards developing similar symbolism in the literary works on the border between oral and written cultures (in the spirit of Pan-Slavism and national romanticism) observable in culture at large (visual arts, particularly depictions of fairies in calendars, almanacs, so-called "books for the people", etc.).

Although the fairy loses to a certain degree the characteristics of a mystical being whose status is ambivalent, the attribution system remains highly stable:

⁸ On these aspects of the image of the fairy in epic see e.g. Djordjević 1989; Suvajdžić 2005; Samardžija 2008: 165.

⁹ On the fairy as the harbinger of death in the epic world cf. Zečević 1964 and Loma 2002.

bela/bijela/prebijela [white/very white]. Occasional deviations occur in texts that have undergone editorial interventions or those included in author collections: *tanahna* [slender] (SM 74), *lahkokrila* [light-winged] (SM 47), *bjelogorka* [forest fairy] (Dobričanin 1984), *nagorkinja* [mountain fairy] (Petranović III, 31). As already pointed out, the locus to which the fairy is attached almost without exception bears marks of the “other-worldly”. The poetic elaboration of the description concerns editorially modified examples (e.g. *From the top of the clouds and sunny rays / light-winged fairy dashes off / and on Garač rests*; SM 47).

The harbinger (and herald of death) function is also realised through the position of the protector of the hero of a broader or narrower collective: from heroes from “the earliest times” and local heroes to political power figures – Bishop Peter I, *vojvoda* Luka Vukalović, Prince Danilo, King Peter, King Alexander, Josip Broz Tito, Draža Mihailović, Radovan Karadžić, etc. Hence modelling after the figure of the protectress (and mother) of the people/nation seems logical and expected (in certain instances such a status is explicated with the attribute *srpska* [Serbian (f.)]). She may lament over the collective (children) (cf. Djordjević 2013) and/or pour a panegyric upon the heroes who are its metonymical substitute (e.g. Nedeljković 1960: 134). Hence the impression that the status of this demonic being in the folklore text oscillates between “ethnographic reality” and folklorisation. The tendency towards hypertrophying the monologue occasionally (particularly in twentieth-century postfolklore author chronicles) leads to a reduction of (expected) epic narration (in the form of a prospective narrative of events from the narrator’s perspective), whereby the genre characteristics of the text are also transformed (epic chronicle – lament/panegyric, *oro* song; cf. e.g. Draškić I, 2; Rodić 2005: 217).

Therefore, in the symbolic (and ideological) (pre)coding the fairy loses some of her status of a demonological entity and becomes involved in the process of constituting a “new/desirable/appropriate tradition”. In collusion with this process are the aforementioned particularities of the activated epic topography.

Formula in the system of genres and the development of the polemic dialogue

The analysis of different levels of the structure and semantics of the fairy’s cry formula has shown an exceptionally high degree of concordance between the Christian and Muslim traditions of singing. Such a finding is quite expected since it is a deep-embedded element of the common epic language. The absence of markedly hypertrophic structures in the Muslim songs is determined by the nature of the corpus, i.e. by the absence of songs dealing with a recent past. Minor differences are observable in the abovementioned more frequent

“doubling” of message recipients (an intermediary relaying the fairy’s message), which may be linked to poetic, structural-stylistic characteristics of this epic layer (a more complex system of characters and plot branching, cf. Schmaus 1953). The higher complexity of the system of characters may be accompanied by a tendency towards lirycisation, the image of a family, homely atmosphere, combined with the introduction of a motif which may be linked to fairy tale or legend (sister/mother awakens the hero with her tear¹⁰):

Zakliktala vila s Alatuše, S Alatuše, visoke planine, Na ime više od Kladuše Muju, Ni po noći nije bitisalo. To ne čuje u odaji Mujo, Nego čuje sestra Hrnjičina, Jer je Mujo sanak boravio [...] Kod nje svića gori vidjalica A žao joj brata probuditi, Pa divojci suze udarile, Padoše joj Muji po obrazu, U tome se Mujo probudio. (MH IV, 4; cf. also KH II, 72)	The fairy cries out from Alatuša, From Alatuša, a high mountain, Calling the name of Mujo of Kladaša, It’s not midnight yet. In his quarters Mujo hears it not, But Hrnjica’s sister does, For Mujo is sound asleep [...] A candle is burning in her chamber But she is sorry to wake her brother, Tears start running down her cheeks, Falling down onto Mujo’s face, And at that Mujo awakens.
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The capacity of the formula to cross genre boundaries is demonstrated by its being re-directed towards a lyrical backdrop, as evidenced even by Bogišić’s collection (Bogišić 122). The formula also occurs in shorter folklore texts (in the form of a rhymed couplet or quatrain primarily related to the *oro* tradition), which were particularly popular in WWII folklore and in the post-war period, but are still popular, e.g.:

Jedno jutro prije zore rane, Viknu vila s velike planine I doživlje Tita velikoga: “Druže Tito, vodjo puka svoga, Ti očisti zemlju od fašista, Pravica se na sve strane blista. Druže Tito, krilo sokolovo, Porušeno diže se ponovo. Država je tvoja prvog reda, U nju cjela Evropa sad gleda.” (Nedeljković 1960: 134)	One morning, well before dawn, The fairy cried from a big mountain Calling the great Tito: “Comrade Tito, leader of your people, You purged the country of fascists, Justice shines all over the land. Comrade Tito, falcon’s wing, All that was wrecked is being rebuilt. Yours is the country of the first rate, All of Europe is looking at it now.”
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¹⁰ On the motif of waking up the hero with a tear in the mythical and fairy-tale context cf. Prop 1990.

It also occurs in *sevdalinkas* (currently primarily perceived as part of Muslim ethno-cultural identity). Some of them earned a special status owing to being interpreted by popular singers or incorporated into other artistic works. Thus, as a polemical reply to the opening verses of a *sevdalinka*: *The fairy is crying out from the top of Trebević* (famous from one of the cult scenes of E. Kusturica's film *When Father Was Away on Business*), there appeared, during the civil war in Bosnia and Herzegovina, the verses: *The fairy is crying out from the top of Trebević / and calling Raša Karadžić*. A differently directed ethnic polemic is developed in the following verses: *The fairy is crying out from Trebević / Bosnia is not Pavelić's* (source: www.micapetrovic.com).

The change of genre is usually accompanied by a considerable reduction of the multiform (temporal contextualisation and a developed dialogue are frequently missing), which points to epic (and its mythic matrix) as the "original habitat".

Obverse and reverse: from heroic to parodic

A daily newspaper has recently featured an article in which a song containing the formula under study is introduced into an anecdotal narrative. Recollecting the time he spent with Josip Broz Tito, his personal physician recorded, among other things, the following:

Tito was fond of Savka Dapčević both as a leader and as a woman. He had a certain weakness for her. [...] Quite intentionally, songs modelled on Partisan songs began to be sung in Croatia. They expressed love and care for Tito and what his beloved people expected from him. Some of the verses read: "A fairy is crying out from Velebit and hailing comrade Tito: / Comrade Tito, dear brother, come back to being a Croat. / Croatian white rose (Savka) is holding out her arms to you too. / Comrade Tito, I kiss you on the forehead / Go and put on Ustasha uniform. / Comrade Tito, leave Jovanka, and marry professor Savka." (*Večernje novosti*, 15 March 2007)¹¹

The formula found itself once more in media discourse in an article on the political background of the show of the Rolling Stones in Budva. The text

¹¹ "Tito je Savka Dapčević bila simpatična i kao rukovodilac i kao žena. Prema njoj je pokazivao izvesnu slabost. [...] Vrlo smišljeno počele su u Hrvatskoj da se pevaju pesme po uzoru na partizanske. One su izražavale ljubav i brigu prema Titu i kazivale šta od njega očekuje njegov voljeni narod. Neki od ovih stihova su glasili: 'Kliče vila s Velebita i pozdravlja druga Tita: / Druže Tito, mili brate, vrati nam se u Hrvate. / Tebi svoje ruke pruža i hrvatska bela ruža (Savka). / Druže Tito, ljubim te u čelo / Ti obuci ustaško odelo. / Druže Tito, ostavi Jovanku, pa oženi profesorku Savku.'"

had a striking headline – *The fairy is crying out from Lovćen, Welcome Mick Jagger* (www.vreme.com, 7 July 2007). Its introduction into an ironic context shows in a specific manner how recognisable and vital the formula is, but also the level of stratification of the attitude towards tradition and its transformations.

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THE TRANSLATION OF EPIC FORMULAS IN VARIOUS ITALIAN INTERPRETATIONS OF *KOSOVKA DJEVOJKA* (THE KOSOVO MAIDEN)

Abstract: This paper makes a comparative analysis of the various Italian translations of the famous Serbian popular poem *Kosovka djevojka* [The Kosovo Maiden] and illustrates the different interpretations and consequent translations of epic formulas in nineteenth- and twentieth-century Italy. The Parry-Lord oral formulaic theory, together with other important contributions in the field of oral studies, is a starting point for this analysis, which also takes into consideration the socio-cultural context in which these translations were produced. Translation solutions are therefore brought into relation with the poetics of individual translators and especially with the socio-cultural context of their time. Particular attention is devoted to the centuries-old Italian rhetorical tradition, which influenced even the greatest experts in popular poetry in their interpretation of the figures and clichés typical of oral production.

Keywords: *Kosovka djevojka*, translation, formulaic diction, Tommaseo, Nikolić, Cronia

In the study presented here, I will try to find correlations between three different Italian translations of the Serbian epic poem *Kosovka djevojka* (Vuk II, 51) and the socio-cultural context in which they appeared by devoting particular attention to the way in which the original epic formulas were conveyed. The studies of Dominique Kirchner Reill and others (Todorova 1997; Wolff 2001) will serve as a socio-cultural background for the analysis of these three translations, which were the fruit or, in the case of Cronia, the consequence of the cultural climate indicated by Reill.

The importance of Italian culture for the diffusion of Serbo-Croatian popular poetry has been widely recognised and a number of studies have been conducted on the subject.¹ In this respect, the year 1774, when the Paduan

¹ Maria Rita Leto's notable and detailed research on the fortune of Serbo-Croatian popular poetry in Italy from Fortis to Kasandrić was published in two articles in the

abbot and naturalist Alberto Fortis published his *Viaggio in Dalmazia*, is to be considered a key date. The chapter devoted to the customs of the inhabitants of the Dalmatian hinterland, known as Morlaks,² aroused lively interest, which manifested itself in the prompt translation of the book into the main European languages. *Canzone dolente della nobile sposa d'Asan-aga*, Fortis's translation of the famous ballad *Hasanaginica*, reported in this chapter, sparked off interest and admiration among some of the greatest literary names of the time. It was Italy that discovered the Serbo-Croatian oral production for the world and not Germany, as Arturo Cronia (1958) proudly states, and it was Fortis on the one hand and Vico on the other who preceded Herder, and not vice versa.³ Nonetheless, and contrary to Cronia's suggestions,⁴ Italy did not maintain the same level of interest in South Slavic folk poetry as did the rest of Europe in the following decades; at least, this subject did not involve the major cultural and literary figures of the time, as happened in Germany for instance. Fortis's publication, and the stir it caused, is one of the two moments that Nikša Stipčević (1975) defines as *organic* to the Italian reception of Serbo-Croatian oral production. The second moment was the publication of *Canti popolari illirici* (1842), a highly regarded translation of Serbian epic poetry into the Italian language, produced by Niccolò Tommaseo (1802–1874), an Italian writer, linguist, politician and journalist, from which our first example for the analysis is taken. Surprisingly enough, between these two moments, there were no important translations, while the best German translations appeared

Italian journal for Slavic Studies, *Europa orientalis* (1992 and 1995). See also Stipčević 1975, as well as a recent contribution to this field by the Italian Homerist Mario Cantilena (2012), who gives an overview of the reception of Serbo-Croatian popular poetry in Italy and analyses its further influence on Homeric studies.

² The stir that this subject caused in Romantic Europe was described by Cronia (1958: 307–308) as “morlacomania”. For detailed research on the subject, cf. Wolff 2001 and Bešker 2007. For the vast bibliography concerning probably the most famous text of South Slavic folk poetry, cf. Isaković 1975.

³ “Qui, prima di Herder, sorgeva dall'estetica del Vico e alla scuola del Cesarotti, colui che può essere il primo e fortunato scopritore e rivelatore della poesia popolare serbo-croata: il Fortis” [Here, before Herder, influenced by Vico's aesthetics and forming part of the school of Cesarotti, was born the discoverer of Serbo-Croatian folk poetry: Fortis] (Cronia 1958: 303). It is interesting to observe that Italian culture gave yet another important contribution to this field, still not acknowledged at the time of Cronia: the first recording of a Serbo-Croatian popular poem comes from the Italian Renaissance epic poem *Lo Balzino*, written in 1497 by Rogeri de Pacienza, but published only in 1977 by Mario Marti (cf. Pantić 1977).

⁴ In this regard cf. Leto 1992: 117, whose opinion I share.

precisely in these years.⁵ Nikola Giaxich's *Carmi slavi* (1829), the only Italian collection of translations that preceded *Canti illirici*, went almost unnoticed (Leto 1992: 142–146). It was Tommaseo's anthology that was to mark a much more prolific epoch in this area of study: he was not only an inspiration, but also a mentor for almost all the translators that came after him (Leto 1995).

In fact, Tommaseo had a remarkable influence on the Trieste literary journal *La Favilla*, the main instrument of mediation between the Italian and Illyrian⁶ cultures at the time hosting a number of studies devoted to the folklore of the South Slavs and publishing translations of their popular poetry. Its editors, Francesco Dall'Ongaro and Pacifico Valussi, were both Tommaseo's correspondents and friends, and in terms of political and social positions, his epigones. These three figures were among the main protagonists of the movement which Reill (2012) calls "Adriatic multi-nationalism",⁷ and whose "unofficial leader" she considers to have been Tommaseo.

Since Niccolò Tommaseo is also the author of the first translation that is analysed here, it will be interesting to look at how his socio-cultural and political engagement influenced his style. *Kosovka djevojka* became in his version *Cadaveri di Cossovo* [Cadavers of Kosovo]⁸ and was included in the great collection of *Canti popolari illirici*, which brought together thirty-four poems, mostly from the second book of *Narodne srpske pjesme* [Serbian popular poems] (1823–1833) collected by Vuk Stefanović Karadžić. With his knowledge of the differences between the Italian and Serbo-Croatian metrical systems, Tommaseo was determined to maintain the authentic meaning even to the detriment of the formal aspect of the text. His translation is thus in prose,⁹

⁵ I shall limit myself to referring only to the early but still very reliable monograph by Ćurčić 1905, which offers a detailed analysis of the major German translations of this period.

⁶ Tommaseo himself, in the first footnote of his Illyrian collection (1873: 5), explains that Illyrians live in the Habsburg Empire and comprise "Serbi, Bossinesi, Dalmati, Bulgari" [Serbians, Bosnians, Dalmatians, Bulgarians]. Moreover, the definition of *il-lirico* in his *Dizionario* suggests that: "della lingua, dicevasi fino ad ora, comunem. Il-lirico lo slavo meridionale" [as regards language, the South Slavic language has been commonly called Illyrian]. Illyrian may thus be considered synonymous with South Slavic in a wider sense and with Serbo-Croatian in a narrower sense.

⁷ In her work, Reill studies how the idea of "supra-national Adriatic regionalism affected local nationhood" through the work of Tommaseo and other prominent Adriatic writers of the time. Unfortunately, this idea did not last very long, as the 1848 revolutions inspired diametrically opposite movements.

⁸ On the translation of the titles cf. Drndarski 1989.

⁹ Various scholars have analysed the "prose" of Tommaseo's Illyrian and Greek translations, trying to explain its characteristics and to define it. Giovanni Pascoli, for in-

which reproduces accurately, line by line, the structure and meaning of the original and maintains the original line division. The myriad of theoretical works concerning South Slavic popular poetry and its verse that Tommaseo produced (especially the treatise *Sul numero* [On metre and rhythm]) demonstrates his profound knowledge of the subject, which is easily discernible both in the translation and in his editing practice (comments, introductions to every poem, notes, and so on).

The second translation that we shall deal with is a work by Giovanni Nikolić (1822–1902), a Dalmatian court clerk, a native of Trogir (Traù).¹⁰ Although his collection *Canti popolari serbi* [Serbian popular poems], published in 1894 in Zadar, was initially well received and republished in an amplified edition the following year,¹¹ it had never played an important role in the history of the reception of Serbo-Croatian popular poetry in Italy.

Our third translator, Arturo Cronia (1896–1967),¹² a Dalmatian-born Italian Slavist, judged Nikolić's translation in a very sharp and wholesale manner as a "parafrasi di montiana memoria" [a paraphrase emulating Vincenzo Monti's style] (Cronia 1958: 549) without giving it any further space in his already mentioned encyclopaedic handbook *La conoscenza del mondo slavo*

stance, in his treatise on the neoclassical metre (1900), analyses one of Tommaseo's Illyrian poems in order to show that it is not an ordinary prose text, but a borderline case between verse and prose. Modern studies on metre would interpret these lines as verses, as the only parameter in distinguishing prose from verse is precisely the line division present in Tommaseo (and in Cronia). Nevertheless, in order to determine whether these lines should be considered prose or poetry, a more detailed metrical analysis of Tommaseo's translation is needed, which will be part of my future research.

¹⁰ It was believed that Nikolić was a native of the island of Hvar (and this was stated in the first version of this article), while the years of his birth and death remained uncertain. Recent research in the archives of Zagreb, Zadar and Padua has led me to conclude that Nikolić was actually born in Trogir in 1822 and died in Zadar in 1897 (see Bradaš 2015). Moreover, certain information he provided to Angelo De Gubernatis in an autobiographical letter published by Aloe (2000: 245–246) has proven to be only partially true.

¹¹ The second edition (*Canti serbi*) was enlarged and enriched with Tommaseo's notes. Leto quotes the review given by the Italian orientalist Angelo De Gubernatis (1995: 269, n. 108). On De Gubernatis and Illyrian (and more widely, Slavic) culture, cf. Aloe 2000.

¹² There does not seem to have been any study on Cronia's translation work. The recently published monograph by Delbianco (2004) gives much useful information on a myriad of Cronia's studies on Croatian literature and language, but makes only passing mention of his translation, judging it (p. 198) as "almost literal (at some points also very gauche)". For a detailed bibliography of more than 400 works that Cronia produced during his prolific academic life, cf. Durica 1978.

in *Italia* [Knowledge of the Slavic world in Italy].¹³ On the other hand, Tommaseo was given greater attention¹⁴ and was certainly the greatest influence in Cronia's own translation work. Cronia's collection, *La poesia popolare serbo-croata* [Serbo-Croatian popular poetry] (1949), was meant to be a handbook and was divided into two parts: the first was devoted to theory and the second to the translations given together with the originals, and both enriched with very competent and helpful notes.

These three collections vary in composition, structure and above all in the stylistic and metrical solutions offered. They all are without any doubt products of their time and the main reason for any differences lies in the temporal distance between them (the first was published in 1842, the second in 1894 and the third in 1949), but we should not underestimate the poetics of their authors as a valid influential factor either. More than one century intervenes between Tommaseo's translations and Cronia's collection, but even so they are much closer to each other than Tommaseo's and those of Nikolić, although Tommaseo and Nikolić were near contemporaries. The scholarly profile that distinguished both Tommaseo and Cronia from their fellow translators was certainly decisive in the elaboration of their source-oriented translations. On the contrary, Nikolić elaborates a kind of translation which is target-oriented on every level and, moreover, attempts to emulate Italian translations of Homer, in the first place that of Vincenzo Monti (Cronia 1958; Leto 1995). Since this markedly neoclassical translation was produced at the end of the nineteenth century, it may appear somewhat out-of-date, and the reason for this is not only the peripheral position of Nikolić's cultural environment, but also the fondness of the archaic that had characterised the Italian literary tradition for centuries. Therefore, Nikolić's translation, being a product of these tendencies, fails to convey the original formulaic style and repetitions by creating a completely new and independent version, which might appear cumbersome at some points, but should not be considered only in relation to the source text.¹⁵

Kosovka djevojka, a poem which describes scenes taking place in the immediate aftermath of the Battle of Kosovo, forms part of the centuries-old

¹³ Nikolić's translations of authors such as P. P. Njegoš, P. Preradović and I. Mažuranić are often judged negatively; cf. Stipčević 2000: 100.

¹⁴ See also Cronia's article (1942) on Tommaseo's *Canti illirici*, the first important review of this work.

¹⁵ Since I am studying the rendernig of epic formulas and other epic repetitions in this translation, ignoring the source text seems hardly possible. Nevertheless, I hope to have another occasion to analyse and re-evaluate Nikolić's translation as an independent literary work.

Kosovo mythology which finds its roots in the fusion of two battles of Kosovo into a single battle, according to the oral tradition and popular imagination.¹⁶ *Kosovka djevojka* represents the shift from the heroic and male perspective to the individual and female, which may be observed through the lyrical element present in the text, a cause of much discussion about the genre of the poem.

Tommaseo (1973: 131) acutely notices these lyrical elements, discerning very well the identification of the individual (*i tre guerrieri*) with the collective (*Servia morente*): “I tre ch’ella cerca sono tre come fratelli, due de’ quali avevan promesso darle il terzo in isposo, ed esserle compari alle nozze. E avevano alla fanciulla dato in passando l’addio, e lasciatole memoria di se. Presaghi della misera fine, nelle poche parole che fanno, versano tutta la mestizia dell’anima; che paion come parole della Servia morente.”¹⁷

One century later, Cronia (1949: 111) has almost the same remarks, when he states: “Qui però il dolore non è più represso e si traduce in lamento che sembra il grido disperato della nazione morente. Al canto marziale fa riscontro l’elegia, alla madre eroica, la fanciulla piangente. Resta l’emergenza del sesso femminile in questo eroico e fiero ciclo di Kosovo.”¹⁸

In order better to illustrate the differences in the return of epic formulas, and the figures of parallelism that distinguish them, I have divided the poem *Kosovka djevojka* into three parts: the introduction, the speech opening with the description of the three warriors, and the final, short but powerful, exchange of words between the wounded warrior and the maiden. It was not difficult to draw a line between the different structural segments in the text, as the narrative skeleton of this poem is balanced by the inner formulas and other stylistic means. The poem opens with an initial formula, which informs us of the action and of the main character. The scene is set in the battlefield after the battle, where a young girl assists the wounded with “white bread, fresh water and red wine” (symbolism of Holy Communion) until “by chance she chances

¹⁶ Both battles were fought in the same Kosovo plain but at different times (one in 1389 and the other in 1448) and in different conditions (Kostić 1939; Ljubinković 1990).

¹⁷ The three that she is looking for are like brothers, two of whom promised to give her in marriage to the third and to be his groomsmen. And, as a sign of farewell they gave the maiden gifts as a memento. In the few words they say, premonitions of a sad end, they pour out all the sadness of their souls; they seem the words of a dying Serbia.

¹⁸ But here, the pain is no longer repressed and becomes the lament of a desperate dying nation. War songs give way to an elegy, the heroic mother to a crying maiden. What remains is the emergence of the female sex in this heroic and proud cycle of Kosovo.

upon”¹⁹ Pavle Orlović, the standard-bearer. This formulaic verse acts as a shifter in the building of narration and, as Mirjana Detelić (1996: 224) notes, it is “a means of smooth connection between the successive segments of a poem” whose “dependence on the direct semantic environment is twofold”. Therefore, it will be interesting to see how and to what extent the translators detect this shifter. Its formulaic diction is underlined not only by the usual repetitions of words, but in this case also of sounds, which “aid in the choice of words even as the syntactic patterns assist in deterring their structure. The words that are symbols of key ideas elicit a pattern of sound which clusters around them” (Lord 1956: 304). The narrative then continues in dialogue, much of which is given in a very loose form of the Slavic antithesis (the question, the negation and the delayed answer, given only after a long epic description of heroes). The final lines are characterised by the *brevitas* of dialogue from which the Maiden of Kosovo learns her destiny, which is also the destiny of the whole people, as was acutely understood by both Tommaseo and Cronia.

Let us now consider the initial lines of the poem in all three translations, preceded by the source text and followed by the English translation.²⁰ The elements of the formulaic diction maintained in the translations are italicised.

Uranila Kosovka devojka, Uranila rano u nedelju, U nedelju prije jarka sunca, Zasukala bijele rukave, Zasukala do beli lakata, Na plećima nosi leba bela, U rukama dva kondira zlatna, U jednome lađane vodice, U drugome rumenoga vina; Ona ide na Kosovo ravno, Pa se šeće po razboju mlada, Po razboju čestitoga kneza,	<i>S'alzò per tempo in dì di domenica,</i> <i>Domenica, prima del chiaro sole,</i> <i>Raccolse le maniche bianche,</i> <i>Le raccolse fino alle bianche gomita:</i> <i>In ispalla reca pan bianco,</i> <i>Nelle mani due calici d'oro;</i> <i>In uno fresc'acqua,</i> <i>Nell'altro vermiglio vino:</i> <i>Ella va di Cossovo sul piano,</i> <i>E scende sul campo la giovane donna,</i> <i>Sul campo dell'inclito conte;</i> <i>E rivolta nel sangue i guerrieri.</i>
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¹⁹ The literal translation is given in order to convey the meaning and formula of the original: *Namera je namerila bila*.

²⁰ “On a Sunday early in the morning / The Maid of Kosovo awoke to brilliant sun / And rolled her sleeves above her snow-white elbows; / On her back she carries warm, white bread, / And in her hands she bears two golden goblets, / One of water, one of dark red wine. / Seeking out the plain of Kosovo, / She walks upon the field of slaughter there / Where noble Lazarus, the Tsar, was slain, / And turns the warriors over in their blood; / Should one still breathe she bathes him with the water / And offers him, as if in sacrament, / The dark red wine to drink, the bread to eat. / At length she comes to Pavle Orlovich, / Standard-bearer of his lord the Tsar” (this and other quotations that will be provided are taken from the translation by John Matthias and Vladeta Vučković, *The Battle of Kosovo*, Swallow Press, 1987).

Te prevrće po krvi junake;
 Kog junaka u životu nađe,
 Umiva ga lađanom vodicom,
 Pričešćuje vinom crvenijem
 I zalaže lebom bijelijem.
 Namera je namerila bila
 Na junaka Orlovića Pavla.
 (Vuk)

Non albeggiava ancora, e già pel campo
 Di Cossovo fatal sola movea
 La giovinetta. Nella manca mano
 Un'anfora di vin, nella dritta
 Una d'acqua teneva, ed un canestro
 Di *bianco pane* alle *robuste* spalle.
 Per la strage si aggira, e se taluno
 Vivo ancor vede, con attenta cura
 Pria coll'acqua lo lava, indi di pane
 Lo ristora e di vin. Così le morte
 Salme la mesta, rivolgendo, il caso
 La condusse dappresso al valoroso
 Orlovich Polo.
 (Nikolić)

Qual guerriero in vita ella trova,
 Lavalò con *fresc'acqua*,
 Conforta con *vinò vermiglio*
 E ristora con *pane bianco*.
Per ventura s'avvenne
 Nel prode Orlovic Paolo.
 (Tommaseo)

S'alzò di Cossovo una fanciulla,
s'alzò per tempo di domenica,
di domenica prima del cocente sole.
 Rimboccò le *bianche maniche*,
 rimboccò fin ai *bianchi gomiti*;
 in ispalla porta *bianco pane*,
 nelle mani due *dorate anfore*,
 nell'una *acqua fresca*,
 nell'altra *vin vermiglio*.
 Ell'andò al piano di Cossovo
 e, giovane, si aggira per il campo.
 per il campo dell'*onorato principe*,
 e rovista nel sangue i guerrieri.
 Qual guerriero in vita trova,
 lo pulisce con *fresc'acqua*,
 gl'amministra il *vin vermiglio*,
 gli imbocca il *pane bianco*
 Per ventura s'imbattè
 nel prode Paolo Orlovich.
 (Cronia)

In this cluster of descriptive elements that can be understood as a theme,²¹ we immediately notice that Nikolić's translation is shorter and that it does not conform to the original line division. Being a proper paraphrase, it respects neither word order nor repetitions, and it introduces stylistic nuances that are completely alien to oral production. Regular enjambment, to be found in almost every line, is typical of classical Italian authors, whom Nikolić strives to emulate, in this way mangling the beauty of the simplicity of oral expression. None of the original figures of repetition is reproduced (such as anadiplosis, anaphora, epistrophe), thus leaving the two initial formulas without a proper form. However, it should be pointed out that the absence of formulaic phraseology from Nikolić's translation is caused mainly by his choice of register: the traditional Italian poetic language recommends variation, as one of the main prescriptions.

²¹ According to Lord's definition (1960: 68), themes are "the groups of ideas regularly used in telling a tale in the formulaic style of traditional song".

By contrast, Tommaseo and Cronia employ the line-by-line method in translation in order to convey both the structure and the formulaic style of the original. Tommaseo's prose is, in his opinion, a response to the impossibility of conveying the rhythm of the Serbian decasyllabic verse into the Italian language. Inspired by his predecessor,²² Cronia employs a similar strategy, and with very similar results. Namely, Tommaseo's translation is strongly determined by its poetic language, which very often reflects the centuries-old Italian rhetorical tradition. This translation can actually be considered a conjunction between Italian literary tradition and oral style,²³ while the other two translations seem to be more univocal. Cronia simply transmits the oral style following Tommaseo (sometimes literally word for word), whereas Nikolić favours traditional rhetoric. This is why only Nikolić's translation is produced in verse; more precisely, in unrhymed hendecasyllables, the Italian verse of epic expression par excellence and, what is even more significant, the typical verse of the Italian translation style: a choice that carries clear connotations. As it is the only one of the three to have a metrical component, it may also be the only one to have preserved all the aspects of the epic formula as it is defined by Milman Parry: "a group of words which is regularly employed under the same metrical conditions to express a given essential idea";²⁴ while the other two might maintain only the syntactical part of the formula. Nonetheless, Nikolić does not take the formulaic expression of the source text into account and so in his version all the formulaic lines are lost. Moreover, he completely omits four and a half lines, mostly those that give repetitions (on the whole, his version omits as many as forty-one lines). Unlike him, Tommaseo and Cronia render all the formulas and figures of parallelism that mark the oral style. The first three lines of the original text give three of the four main formulas, according to Parry-Lord's classification.²⁵ In the first line we find the formulas of

²² "È così bello procedere sulla sua [di Tommaseo] luminosa scia!" [It's so fine to follow his bright path!] (Cronia 1949: 2).

²³ I have already studied this union of *sublime* and *popolare* in Tommaseo's translation of Serbian epic poetry (cf. Bradaš 2013). For Tommaseo, only the major poetical expressions, such as Dante's *Comedy* or Homer's epics, can make these two poetical expressions flow together in the same literary work.

²⁴ I follow Parry's definition despite the vagueness of its third part ("given essential idea"), as it still remains the only functional definition in oral studies. In this regard, see Detelić 1996, who offers some valuable elucidations. See also Ljubinković 1991 for an interesting critique of Parry-Lord's method.

²⁵ "The most stable formulas will be those for the most common ideas of the poetry. They will express the names of the actors, the main actions, time, and place" (Lord 1960: 34).

action and character presentation, while the second verse contains anaphora in the first hemistich (that is, a repeated formula of action) and the formula of time in the second hemistich. The third line repeats the formula of time in the length of the whole verse. Within these three lines, we find figures such as anaphora, anadiplosis, figura etymologica, periphrasis, thus all figures of parallelism, which Tommaseo and Cronia successfully convey in their versions.²⁶ Nevertheless, they both fail to convey the pleonastic figura etymologica (*uranila rano*), as Italian does not have a single word to say “to rise early” (and neither does English); so they simply use “to rise” (*s'alzò*) and add “early” only as a modifier, thus failing to convey the pleonastic meaning of the original. The only difference between the two authors lies in the fact that Tommaseo succeeds in conveying the alliteration of the original verb phrase. Not being able to render it within the same phrase, he uses the expression *di di domenica* [a Sunday day] and in this way achieves the *d* alliteration within the formula of time. In translation of the shifter-line, known also as “boundary line” (Foley 1990), *Namera je namerila bila* [By chance she chanced upon], only Tommaseo succeeds in rendering the figura etymologica and alliteration of the source text. By translating *Per ventura s'avvenne*, Tommaseo once again employs the stylistic nuance of the old Italian tradition, to which the verb *avvenirsi* belongs, in order to convey a typical oral expression, but also to maintain the alliteration. This verb in the meaning employed here [run into, chance upon] occurs in Dante and Boccaccio,²⁷ but not so often in the authors of Tommaseo's epoch, and is completely absent in this form from contemporary Italian.

Some of the most frequent epithets in Serbo-Croatian epic poetry, such as *beli/bijeli* [white], are regularly reproduced in Cronia's and Tommaseo's translations, and almost completely omitted in that of Nikolić. Tommaseo reproduces the same word order as the source text, in which epithets can be placed before or after a noun, while in Cronia an adjective is almost always followed by a noun. This procedure makes Cronia's style even more formulaic than that of the bard. An interesting example is found in the translation of *dva kondira zlatna* [two gold goblets]. In the original, the adjective follows the noun, and this order is maintained in Tommaseo's translation, which also appears to conform more to the original meaning (*due calici d'oro*). Unlike this, Cronia places the adjective with a synonymic meaning (*dorate anfore*) before the noun.

²⁶ In contrast to his usual method of translation, here Tommaseo contracts the original first three formulaic lines into only two.

²⁷ The Tommaseo-Bellini Italian *Dictionary* gives examples from these two authors; *GDLI*, e.g., marks it as no longer in use.

Another epithet translation that is a good illustration of the difference between the translators is *čestitoga kneza* [honourable prince]: the translations *inclito* (Tommaseo), *almo* (Nikolić) and *onorato* (Cronia), with different lexical connotations, indicate the translators' different approaches and poetics. Tommaseo's *inclito* is a literary term, commonly used in poetic language. By translating *inclito conte* Tommaseo is probably paying homage to Annibal Caro's translation of *Eneide*, where this epithet appears, forming the noun phrase *inclito Sire*, which Tommaseo uses regularly in other Illyrian translations of the same collection.²⁸ Nikolić's choice has a similar literary connotation, but with a slightly different meaning (*almo* derives from the Latin verb *altĕre*, meaning "to feed", and the adjective has also maintained the same meaning of "feeding", "giving life"). This epithet combined with the noun "Sire" has had a certain literary fortune in the Italian language, especially in translations of Greek epics and tragedies.²⁹ Both adjectives have a classical background, unlike Cronia's solution, which is less literary and thus more suitable for the translation of popular poetry.

More examples of this kind can be found in the second part of the poem, where the Maiden of Kosovo describes three heroes whom she met before the battle, one of whom was to marry her if he returned from the battle (Milan Toplica), while the other two would be his groomsman (Miloš vojvoda) and best man (Kosančić Ivan) respectively. The conversation is introduced by the speech-opening formula and starts, according to the rules, with an apostrophe, and continues with questions and negative answers (the two first parts of the Slavic antithesis, as I have already mentioned). Here follows the entire portion of the original text, but only the translations of the formulas:³⁰

Progovara Orloviću Pavle:
 "Sestro draga, Kosovko devojko!
 Koja ti je golema nevolja,
 Te prevrćeš po krvi junake?
 Koga tražiš po razboju mlada?"

²⁸ Under the entry *inclito* in his *Dictionary*, Tommaseo quotes the lines from Caro's *Eneide*. For other examples of this noun phrase in Tommaseo's translation, cf. Tommaseo 1973: 129–130.

²⁹ E.g., Felice Bellotti's translations of Aeschylus' tragedies.

³⁰ "Pavle Orlovich revives and speaks: / 'Maid of Kosovo, my dearest sister, / What misfortune leads you to this plain / To turn the warriors over in their blood? / Whom can you be looking for out here? / Have you lost a brother or a nephew? / Have you lost perhaps an aging father?' / And the Maid of Kosovo replies: / 'O my brother, O my unknown hero! / It is not for someone of my blood / I'm searching: not an aging father / Neither is it for a brother or a nephew.' "

Ili brata, ili bratučeda?
 Al' po greku stara roditelja?"
 Progovara Kosovka devojka:
 "Dragi brato, delijo neznana!
 Ja od roda nikoga ne tražim:
 Niti brata niti bratučeda,
 Ni po greku stara roditelja." (Vuk)

Tommaseo	<i>Dice Orlovic Paolo:</i> <i>Sorella cara, fanciulla di Cossovo</i> [...] <i>Parla di Cossovo la fanciulla:</i> <i>Caro fratello, incognito guerriero.</i>
Nikolić	E alla vergine pia, che lo soccorre: – Quale, esclama, sciagura il cuor ti preme, <i>O giovinetta</i> , che a vagar ti spinge [...] La vergine commossa <i>in questi accenti:</i> – Né un mio germano, <i>o buon guerriero</i> , ricerco.
Cronia	<i>Prende a dire Paolo Orlovich:</i> <i>"Sorella cara, di Cossovo fanciulla,</i> [...] <i>Parla di Cossovo la fanciulla:</i> <i>"Fratello caro, ignoto cavaliere.</i>

As the examples show, Nikolić does not convey any of the formulaic expressions, but it is surprising that neither Tommaseo nor Cronia maintain the parallelism of the same *verbum dicendi* (*progovara*) at the beginning of the speech-opening formula, since they both use different verbs. It is also curious that Tommaseo does not regularly employ the inversion *di Cossovo fanciulla*, formed without doubt intentionally to convey the original word order. This is understandable, however, if we bear in mind the traditional inclination of Italian poetic language towards variation. I only give the description of the first hero, due to the limited space and because the other two are almost identical in the original (the lines that are repeated in all three descriptions are italicised).³¹

³¹ "As Milosh Obilich passed grandly by / There is no fairer warrior in this world / He trailed his saber there upon the stones / And on his head he wore a helmet made / Of wound white silk with feathers intertwined / A brightly colored cloak hung down his back / And round his neck he wore a silken scarf. / As he passed he turned and looked

Kad se šeta vojvoda Milošu,
Krasan junak na ovome svetu,
Sablja mu se po kaldrmi vuče,
Svilen kalpak, okovano perje,
Na junaku kolasta azdija,
Oko vrata svilena marama,
Obazre se i pogleda na me
S' sebe skide kolastu azdiju,
S' sebe skide, pa je meni dade
Na, devojko, kolastu azdiju,
Po čemu ćeš mene spomenuti,
Po azdiji po imenu mome:
Evo t' idem poginuti, dušo,
U taboru čestitoga kneza;
Moli Boga, draga dušo moja,
Da ti s' zdravo iz tabora vratim
A i tebe dobra sreća nađe.
 (Vuk)

Del tempio al limitar meravigliata
 Riguardava Milosse. Oh, quanto bello,
 Quanto fiero l'eroe unico al mondo!
 Al mutar de'suoi passi acuto un suono
 Sbattendo al suolo, il brando suo
 mettea;
 Sul berretto di seta alto di struzzo
 Ondeggiava una penna, e intono al collo
 Un aureo velo; agli omeri un mantello
 Avea di fregi ricamente adorno,
 Aurati fregi. Egli mi vide, il prode,
 E dal dorso togliendo il ricco manto,
 Con questi accenti me lo porse: – tieni,
 O mia bella fanciulla, e questo dono
 Di me ti faccia ricordar: io vado,
 Vado in guerra a morir; ma tu gentile
 Prega intanto il Signor che salvo io rieda.
 (Nikolić)

Quando passa il voivoda Milosio
De' più be' prodi del mondo:
La spada per la strada gli strascica:
Serico berrettone, metallica piuma;
Indossogli screziato mantello,
Al collo pezzuola di seta.
Volgesi e guarda in me;
 Si leva lo screziato mantello,
 Sel leva e a me lo dà:
 Ecco fanciulla, lo screziato mantello,
 Al qual di me ricordati,
 Al mantello, ed al nome mio.
 Ecco ti vo' a perire, o diletta,
 Nel campo dell'inclito conte.
 Prega Iddio, dolce anima mia,
 Che salvo dal campo i' ti torni:
 E anco a te buona fortuna tocchi.
 (Tommaseo)

Quando passa il capitano Milosse,
 magnifico guerriero a questo mondo:
 la spada sul selciato gli si strascica,
 di seta il berretto, adorno il pennacchio,
 indosso a lui un variopinto manto,
 intorno al collo uno scialle di seta.
 Volsse lo sguardo e a me guardò,
 tolse da sé il variopinto manto,
 se lo tolse e lo diede a me:
 “Ecco, fanciulla, il variopinto manto,
 al quale ti ricorderai di me,
 al mantello e al nome mio.
 Ecco, io ti vo', o cara, a perire
 sul campo dell'onorato principe.
 Prega Iddio, anima mia cara,
 che salvo dal campo io ti torni
 ed anche a te buona ventura tocchi.”
 (Cronia)

Expectedly, Nikolić is the only translator who does not give literal repetitions from the original. Moreover, he abridges the description of the second hero and completely omits the third one, violating in this way the very nature of the oral style. Repetitions from this part of the song are fundamental not

at me / And offered me his brightly colored cloak, / Took it off and gave it to me, saying: / ‘Maiden, take this brightly colored cloak / By which I hope you will remember me / This cloak by which you can recall my name: / Dear soul, I’m going out to risk my life / In battle for the great Tsar Lazarus; / Pray God, my love, that I return alive, / And that good fortune shortly shall be yours.’”

only as a means of *ritardatio* of action, but also because they actually contribute to the force of the *brevitas* that the final lines carry (see below). Without them, the effect of the Maiden's and thus of Serbia's tragedy would not be the same. Hence, the translator not only transgresses the laws of the oral style, but also, by arriving to the concluding exchange of words too quickly, alters the meaning of the poem. Moreover, by repeating the very same description for all the three warriors the bard intends to underline the same fate that will befall them all. The three of them, but also all the other warriors in the Field of Kosovo, are destined to die in the battle, and through this repetition the bard actually forecasts their shared fate. Translating in the way he does, Nikolić loses all the nuances present in the original text, whereas Tommaseo and Cronia reproduce, almost with devotion, all the repetitive lines and nearly in the same way.³² The extraordinary similarity between these two translators is also shown by the initial group of lines. Cronia follows Tommaseo's version probably because they both seem to share the same poetic theory regarding the translation of the oral style. But this confirms the modernity of Tommaseo's version, whose decision to render the original verse in prose is to be seen as almost revolutionary if we consider the trends in the Italian literature of the time, and especially in translation practice, which was dominated by the neoclassical ideas of Melchiorre Cesarotti, Vincenzo Monti and Ugo Foscolo. Another common characteristic of Tommaseo's translation, which confirms its source-orientation, is the presence of loanwords. The first line of the hero's description contains an epithetic noun, *voivoda* [captain], taken from the original and only slightly altered to fit into the Italian phonetic system. Similar examples, such as *vila* [fairy], *busdovano* [mace], and *svati* [wedding guests] can be found frequently in other poems in Tommaseo's anthology.

The only difference in the description of the heroes is influenced by different roles they were supposed to play in the Maiden's life after the battle. This is the reason for the three different gifts they give the Maiden as a symbol of their solemn promise: a many-coloured mantle, a gold ring, and a veil. This part of the description has caused much discussion among the scholars of Serbian oral epic, ever since Vuk Karadžić received it from Lukijan Mušicki, a Serbian

³² Despite this, Cronia did not praise repetition in the oral style, as evidence by the note to v. 80 of *Kosovka djevojka*: "Incominciano le solite tipiche ripetizioni che prolungano il canto, facilitano la sua recitazione a memoria, ma sprigionano un'onda di monotonia" [Here we find the usual, typical repetitions that make the poem longer and its reciting by heart easier, but they also emanate a wave of monotony] (Cronia 1949: 109). Cronia regarded the formulaic diction, which he called "convenzionalismi strutturali" [structural conventions], "motivi tematici" [theme motifs] or simply monotone repetitions, as lack of style.

neoclassical poet.³³ The song was recorded from a female singer from Srem, who was unable to explain the meaning of two words which confused Vuk himself: *koprena* [veil], which is a gift that the groom presents to his bride, and *stremen* [literally stirrup] from the final lines. Vuk immediately asked Mušicki for an explanation, but was not really satisfied with it, as he found it unacceptable that the groom should present a veil and not a ring. So he defined this word as a ring in the first edition of his *Dictionary*, and thus Tommaseo, confused by Vuk's definition, translated it erroneously.³⁴ It is interesting to observe that Nikolić goes so far as to invert the gifts, as he must also have found it strange for the groom to present the bride with a veil, and not with a ring. Probably considering it a mistake, he offers a translation that is a "correction" of the original:

D'aurati fregi. A me donando *il velo*
 Così parlomi il bel Cosanci: – il dono
 [...]

 Io stesso all'ara vò guidarti sposa
 Del mio prode Toplizza. A questo dire,
 Tratto da ditto un ricco *anel* Milano:
 [...]

 E l'*anello* mi diede.

Unlike Nikolić, Tommaseo and Cronia offer more regularity, but different lexical solutions:

<p>In ditogli <i>corniola nell'oro</i>. Volgesi e guarda in me: Di man si leva la <i>corniola nell'oro</i>, [...] In ditogli <i>anello d'oro</i>. Volgesi e guarda in me, Di man si leva l'<i>anello dell'oro</i>. (Tommaseo)</p>	<p>dalla man si tolse <i>il dorato anello</i>, se lo tolse e lo diede a me: "Ecco, fanciulla, l'<i>anello dorato</i>, [...] dalla man si tolse <i>il velo</i>, se lo tolse e lo diede a me: "Ecco, fanciulla, <i>il vel trapuntato d'oro</i>. (Cronia)</p>
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As these examples show, Cronia is the only one to give an accurate translation of the original noun phrases. Tommaseo was confused by Vuk's misinterpretation, and Nikolić intervened on the text by inverting the gifts. The bardess of Srem, who recited this song, might have made a mistake. It is highly likely that she did, as she probably did not memorise the song properly, or she actually received it in that form without asking herself about the

³³ For this, cf. Banašević 1960 and Matić 1964.

³⁴ Tommaseo received a copy of Vuk's *Srpski rječnik* (*Serbian Dictionary*) as a gift from his friend and Illyrian teacher, Špiro Popović; cf. Zorić 1989.

meaning of all the words. Cronia corrected Tommaseo's mistake as he had at his disposal the instruments that Tommaseo had not. Besides the differences in the translation of particular words, there is also in Tommaseo's translation an interesting syntactic structure: *in dittoqli* meaning literally "on the finger to him" that was meant to render the possessive use of the dative of the original *na ruci mu*, "on his hand" (or literally "on the hand to him"). This union of a noun and an enclitic pronoun into one word is a completely alien syntactic pattern in contemporary Italian, but was occasionally used in the Italian literary language until the middle of the nineteenth century (Migliorini 1975; Seriani 1989).

The third and final part of the song, according to our division, contains a higher level of formulaic phraseology compared to the other two. Here we find the speech-opening formula, the subject of one of the first comparative studies on formulas in Greek and South Slavic poetry (Parry 1971), usually followed by an apostrophe, as in this case:

Al' besedi Orloviću Pavle:
 "Sestro draga, Kosovko devojko!
 Vidiš, dušo, ona koplja bojna
 Ponajviša a i ponajgušća,
 Onde j' pala krvca od junaka
 Ta dobrome konju *do stremena,*
Do stremena i do uzendije,
 A junaku do svilena pasa,
 Onde su ti sva tri poginula,
 Već ti idi dvoru *bijelome,*
 Ne krvavi skuta ni rukava."
 Kad devojka saslušala reči
 Proli suze niz *bijelo* lice,
 Ona ode svom *bijelu* dvoru
 Kukajući iz *bijela* grla:
 "Jao jadna! ude ti sam sreće!
 Da se, jadna, za *zelen* bor vatim,
 I on bi se *zelen* osušio."
 (Vuk)

Vedi là, proruppe,
 Il ferito guerrier quell'alto ingombro
 Di cadaveri monchi e di spezzate
 Spade e di lancie? O giovinetta il sangue
 A torrenti là corse, e sì che l'onda
 Allo sprone giungea dei cavalieri.
 Ivi caddero i forti. Alla paterna
 Casa adunque ritorna, e non volere
 Buttar più a lungo la tua *bianca* veste.

Or dice Orlovic Paolo:
 Sorella cara, fanciulla di Cossovo,
 Vedi, diletta, quelle aste guerriere
 Vie più alte e più fitte.
 Lì corse il sangue de' prodi,
 Al buon destriero *infino alla staffa,*
Alla staffa e allo sprone;
 E al guerriero, al serico cinto.
 Lì tutti e tre ti perirono.
 Ma tu vanne alla *candida* casa;
 Non insanguinare i lembi e le maniche.
 Quando la fanciulla udì le parole,
 Versa lagrime dal *bianco* viso.
 Ella va alla *bianca* sua casa
 Lamentando dal *bianco* petto:
 Ahi misera! mala sorte la mia!
 Se, misera, a un *verde* pino m'apprendo,
 Anch'esso, verde com'è, seccherebbe.
 (Tommaseo)

Or favella Paolo Orlovich:
 "Sorella cara, di Cossovo fanciulla,
 vedi, diletta, quelle guerresche lancie,
 le più alte e le più dense,
 lì è corso il sangue degli eroi
 del buon cavallo *infino alla staffa,*
infino alla staffa e alla coreggia
 ed al guerriero fino al serico (suo) cinto.
 Lì tutti e tre ti son periti,

A que'detti la pia dirottamente
Lagrimando lasciò l'inafausto campo.
(Nikolić)

Ma tu vanne alla *bianca* casa,
non insanguinare lembi e maniche!"
Quando la fanciulla i detti intese,
lagrime versò pel *bianco* volto.
Ella se ne va alla sua *bianca* casa
lamentando dalla *bianca* gola:
"Ahi, misera! Ben amara è la mia sorte!
Se, misera, m'appiglio a un *verde* pino,
anch'esso verde, (mi) si seccherebbe."
(Cronia)³⁵

We immediately notice the difference in the length of the translations: Nikolić's is shorter, while the other two are the same in length and sense and almost even in the choice of words. The initial formula is conveyed in practically the same way, apart from the inversion *di Cossovo fanciulla* [of Kosovo the Maiden] employed by the two translators in order to render the original word order. It is also a construction typical of the Latin style, which probably was an equally important motivation for Tommaseo. Cronia tends to always maintain the same constructions, even when the bard himself employs variation, while Tommaseo sometimes opts for variation, translating even the omnipresent epithet in South Slavic epic poetry *beli/bijeli* [white] (cf. Detelić 2008) as *bianco*, *candido*, *biancheggianti* without any perceptible regularity. In fact, this may be observed in the poem analysed here. Tommaseo maintains the formulaic value of the epithet in its sequence of three, by always repeating the same adjective and in the same position. The only exception is the inversion of two adjectives *svom bijelu dvoru*: Tommaseo, instead of translating it as *sua bianca casa*, offers the inversion that is much more similar to the Italian literary style than to the Serbian epic expression, *bianca sua casa*. However, only three lines above, he offers *candida casa* for the same noun phrase. It is difficult to find a reason for this variation, as we cannot call upon the metrical laws, of which Tommaseo's translation, as I have already mentioned, is intentionally stripped. The only possible explanation that can be offered has to do with Tommaseo's literary

³⁵ Pavle Orlovich then spoke and said: / "O my dearest sister, Maid of Kosovo! / Do you see, dear soul, those battle-lances / Where they're piled the highest over there? / That is where the blood of heroes flowed / In pools higher than the flanks of horses, / Higher even than the horses' saddles / right up to the riders' silken waistbands. / Those you came to find have fallen there; / Go back, maiden, to your white-walled dwelling. / Do not stain your skirt and sleeves with blood." / When she has heard the wounded hero's words / She weeps, and tears flow down her pale face; / She leaves the plain of Kosovo and walks / To her white village wailing, crying out: / "O pity, pity! I am cursed so utterly / That if I touched a greenly leafing tree / it would dry and wither, blighted and defiled."

formation and interests, which were both classical and popular. He could find the same literary values and strength in Dante and in the Illyrian epics (Tommaseo 1968: 1062), both of which represented an encounter of the popular and the sublime.

Within these final lines, it is also interesting to observe various returns of anadiplosis and tautology, both of which are italicised. Tommaseo offers a perfect transposition of both; Nikolić's fondness of the neoclassical style and traditional *variatio* leads to his decision not to convey either of the two; while Cronia even amplifies the parallelistic value of anadiplosis by repeating two prepositions instead of only one. Once again we can notice that Nikolić is not only altering the style, but also the meaning, since he does not insist on the omnipresent white colour in the poem, nor does he mention the green pine, an important symbol of life and hope. It is interesting to find these two colours at the end of a poem that began with the symbolism of the Holy Communion:³⁶ the white as a symbol of chastity and holiness and the green as a symbol of life that triumphs over death. The complete absence of hope expressed by the picture of a withering green pine is not to be found in Nikolić's translation and this omission does affect the meaning.

Despite the differences, and the entirely different approach in the case of Nikolić, one can hardly say that the discourse that Maria Todorova named "Balkanism" can be applied to any of these three translators, as they all came from Dalmatia and were in direct contact with Illyrian culture and the language from which they were translating.³⁷ Quite the contrary: their translations had a mediating character in approaching one culture to another. In the case of Tommaseo, we may say that the same union of the Italian and Illyrian worlds that we can find in his commitment to the "multi-Adriatic movement", as ably portrayed by Reill, is also discernible in *Canti popolari illirici*,³⁸ particularly in

³⁶ Along with the third colour in this poem (red), they symbolise the three theological virtues. In this way, the circle of religious *motifs*, present in the initial lines as well, is closed.

³⁷ Yet, one cannot help noticing that many of Cronia's theoretical and critical observations are made in relation to the Western literary tradition. This tradition is interpreted by Cronia as a sublime poetical expression which oral poetry is only occasionally able to match.

³⁸ Moreover, it is interesting that Tommaseo even had the opportunity to criticise others for their prejudices and different expressions of "Balkanism". M. R. Leto reports Tommaseo's ironical criticism of Fortis's understanding of Illyrian folklore (1992), and similar examples may be found in Reill's work (2012), especially with regard to Tommaseo's relationship to his protégé Francesco Dall'Ongaro. Dall'Ongaro's play *I Dalmati* (1845) was, according to Tommaseo, "a story that reinforced age-old stereotypes belittling Slavic speakers, their language and their culture" (Reill 2012: 103).

the translation of epic formulas, which are commonly regarded as the essential stylistic (and metrical) characteristic of the source text. This analysis has highlighted the modern relevance of the solutions adopted by Tommaseo in his Illyrian collection of translations. In his time, translating epic verse into “prose” was quite unimaginable, and Tommaseo paved the way for others to follow. Another aspect of his modern approach is certainly his accurate reproduction of the original word order and of the majority of the formulaic expressions. Nevertheless, his translation cannot be defined as entirely source-oriented, as it was also influenced, although to a lesser extent, by the Italian literary tradition. The Italian rhetorical prescription of “non-repeating” also left an imprint on the style of Tommaseo’s translating work. For this reason, it is difficult to find identical noun phrases in contiguous verses in the Illyrian collection. Tommaseo recognised and praised the stylistic value of repetition, but he distinguished between repetitions that have a relevant stylistic function and those that are a mere reporting of direct speech or stylistically and semantically unnecessary, and sometimes even erroneous³⁹ repetition of an epithet. Thus, it is not difficult to claim that Tommaseo would not have shared all the ideas of Parry-Lord’s oral theory.

In contrast to Tommaseo, Nikolić does not even consider formulaic diction, as his translation is entirely target-oriented. In fact, his translation method may be identified as the italianization of the original, and this process is carried out on a number of levels – phonetic, morphosyntactic, metrical and above all rhetorical. Nikolić’s translation expresses the need of subliming the original text and raising it to a higher stylistic level. In this sense there is not much left of the original oral style in Nikolić’s translation, but its epic character is maintained.

As the last important Italian translator of Serbo-Croatian popular poetry and a remarkable scholar, Cronia was not only a passive reader, but also a meticulous student of his predecessors. His admiration for Tommaseo is perceivable in his own translation choices, which often echo Tommaseo’s. In regard to method, Cronia’s translation is to a great extent a continuation of Tommaseo’s work, becoming entirely source-oriented. With his modern approach and a profound understanding of popular poetry, Tommaseo paved the way for others to follow. The great influence he had on his contemporaries and the generations that came afterwards is yet to be fully valorised.

³⁹ In reference to the formulaic noun phrase *bijelo grlo* [white throat], attributed to the *black Arab* from the poem Marko Kraljević i Arapin (Vuk II, 66), Tommaseo annotated “Qui dice bianco, senza rammentarsi dell’Arabo nero. Ma sarà sbaglio del cantore” [Here the text says white, without remembering the black Arab, but it must be a mistake made by the poet] (Tommaseo 1973: 199).

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GENERIC LACUNA IN THE EPIC POEMS USING THE FOG FORMULA

Abstract: This article is about the modellative potential of a genre, i.e. about one of the main theoretical questions connected with the poetics of oral literature. This is exemplified here by Serbian oral decasyllabic epic poetry, more precisely by the modelling of the epic formula the “appearance of the horseman/hero from/in the fog”.

Keywords: formula, epics, small forms of folklore, fog, horseman, hero

One of the most attractive theoretical questions connected with the modellative theory of literary genres¹ poetics is the question of the relationship between a literary text and its cultural environment or, to be more precise, the relationship between the modellative potential of a literary procedure and the material which is being processed. In oral tradition, the material can come both from the mundane reality itself and from the so called “non-literary models” of a given culture, i.e. from its rituals (wedding, burial, building), cults (of the saints, for example), magic practices, etc. As they themselves are – by definition – modellative systems of the second degree, the literary procedure itself gets an extra potential, which upgrades it to the third degree of modelling (the first-degree modellative system being the language itself).² Thus the literary work appears to be a model of a model.

The literary modelling – especially in the case of formulas – usually begins from many nuclei which differ in origin, generic preferences and measure of abstraction. In the special case of the formula “horseman/hero in/from the fog”, some of them proved to be so strong that they failed to adapt to the new literary surroundings and remained intact even as a part of a completely new (i.e. epic) genre. Recognizing these intrusions as a material much older and

¹ Russian semiotics is taken here as a referential theory.

² In that case gradation goes as follows: spoken language (first), ritual language (second), literary language (third) degree modellative systems.

more important (from the standpoint of traditional culture) than literature in general, the “epicity” of the poem withdraws, thereby making room for an alien content. In that sense, from the perspective of the epic poem, we can speak about a *generic lacuna*, which is the subject of this paper.

All through the presentation of the proposed research, two basic definitions important for the theory of the formula should be kept in mind: 1) the epic formula itself is a text whose position in the poem is marked by its form and function; and 2) within the epic as a genre, formulas simultaneously exist on many different levels of fixity.

As it is the case, the formula “a horseman-hero in/from the fog” never occurs in the liminary positions in a poem (at the beginning or at the end), but always somewhere within it, which makes it the so-called “inner formula”. Its pointed variant (hero in the fog) is only one of the six types of the formulaic appearances of fog in the epics and we shall pay some attention to all of them. Those are: (1) natural fog³ (Vuk IV, 62; VII, 9; SANU III, 25, 75); (2) gun smoke (Vuk IV, 2, 28, 33; VIII, 11; SANU III, 10, 56; SM 12); (3) steam “from horses and warriors” (Vuk III, 42; VI, 20; VII, 14, 22; SANU III, 6; ER 131; SM 32, 62); (4) the appearance of a horseman from the fog (Vuk II, 39; III, 39; IV, 8; VI, 10; VII, 3; SANU, II, 71, 85, 86; MH IX, 5, 20, 25; SM 79, 145, 148); (5) an army appearing as a fog in a prophetic dream with interpretation (Vuk VIII, 36; SANU III, 74; MH I, 60, 78; ER 116); (6) and the fog seen in a prophetic dream without interpretation, i.e. appearing as its own self (Vuk II, 25, 62). For example:

Natural fog (1)

Srbima je sreća pomagala,	Luck was on the Serbian side
Kukutnicu magla pritisnula	Upon Mount Kukutnica a fog lay
[...]	[...]
Pa ne znadu niti vide Turci,	So Turks can neither see nor know
Otkud Srbi biju iz pušaka.	Whence Serbian guns are firing.
(Vuk IV, 62)	

³ There is only one word for fog in Serbian, which – compared to the English range of words: mist, haze, vapour, steam, etc. – is a very narrow choice indeed. Here, and wherever possible in the text, we tried to make a distinction, to define as nearly as possible the kind of phenomenon we are dealing with. The readers are invited to use their imagination in this matter because: 1) in Serbian folklore, fog is a demon (the same as smoke); and 2) consistent with the local climate, the Serbian language does not make a distinction between that which goes up from the earth and that which comes down from the sky. There is only one folkloric expression for it: A fog fell from the sky to the earth.

Gun smoke (2)

Pade magla od neba do zemlje, Nit' se vidi neba ni oblaka, Viš' njih jarko pomrčalo sunce Od pušćanog praha i olova. (Vuk IV, 28)	The fog fell sky to earth, Neither sky nor clouds could be seen, Above them the bright sun is darkened By gun smoke.
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Horses and warriors (3)

Pramen magle polje pritiskao, Ne bijaše magla od daždica, No od pare konjske i junačke. (Vuk III, 42)	A wisp of fog fell on the field, It was not a natural fog, But the steam from the horses and war- riors.
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Hero in the fog (4)

Livadu je magla pritisnula, Iz magle se junak namolio Na njegova golema labuda, Po imenu Alaj-beg-Čengijću. (Vuk IV, 8)	The fog lay on a meadow, From the fog a hero appeared On his giant horse, His name was Alaj-bey-Cengic.
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Army as a fog (5)

Što je magla pala do Drežnika, To je vojska Mamul-kapetana. (Vuk VIII, 36)	This fog that lay around Dreznik, This is the army of Captain Mamul.
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Fog in a dream (6)

U magli se, ljubo, rastadosmo, Rastadosmo, pak se ne sastasmo. (Vuk II, 25)	In fog, my beloved, we parted, We parted, and never met again.
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The usual function of inner formulas is to connect two neighbouring narrative segments of a poem when one of them signifies the end of the previous and the other the beginning of the next part of the plot. Thus division between the segments opens to what is coming, and the fog, neutral in itself, becomes either static or dynamic, depending on what is being announced. Accordingly, if it marks the transition from idleness to action, the formula appears at the beginning of a sequence where it needs additional fixing (usually a temporal formula) because it heralds change:

Ciglu jednu noćcu konačili Pa u jutru svati uraniše [...]	They spent one night there And in the morning they got up early [...]
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Nešto im se dade pogledati,
 Dje se polje maglom pretvorilo,
 A kroz maglu sijevaju munje,
 Konji vrište, pjevaju junaci,
 A viju se po polju barjaci.
 Punu vjetar, magla se razgali,
 Ugledaše kitu i svatove,
 Medju njima na konju djevojku.
 (Vuk VII, 22: 295–306)

Something caught their eye,
 The field turned into fog,
 And through this fog lightning was flashing,
 Horses neighed, warriors sang,
 Banners fluttered all over the field.
 The wind blew up, the fog cleared,
 They spotted the bedecked wedding guests,
 And among them the mounted bride.

In the opposite case, naturally, no addition is needed because the formula is the ending of the previous segment, whence the function of the beginning of a new sequence goes to the plot itself:

Nož sijeva, krv se proljeva,
 Ne vidi se od mene do tebe,
 Po podrumu magla uvatila.
 Boga moli Plavša arambaša:
 “Daj mi, Bože, vetra sa planina
 Da rastera maglu po podrumu,
 Da ja vidju ko je zadobio,
 Ali Turci ali odmetnici!”
 Bog mu dade, sreća donijela,
 Vetar punu posred Sarajeva,
 Te isćera maglu iz podruma.
 (SANU III, 10: 230–240)

The dagger flashes, the blood is spilt,
 Nothing can be seen from me to you,
 The cellar is filled with fog.
 Plavsa, the arambaša,⁴ prays to God:
 “Give me, o God, a wind from the mountains
 To dispel this fog from the cellar,
 So that I can see who won,
 Whether Turks or outlaws!”
 And God gave him, his luck was strong,
 The wind flew through Sarajevo,
 And dispelled the fog from the cellar.

As long as it “works” this way, the fog will not tend to take the final, unchangeable form to which we are accustomed whenever a cliché is involved. At this stage, its function is subordinate to the fabulation and composition of the epic poem, which means that the formula itself merely has the significance of a shifter.⁵ The information it conveys is only relational, so the form of its appearance is usually very simple: “pramak se je magle zadjenuo” (a wisp of fog passed); “sve jednako magla od pušaka” (the fog from rifles, i.e. gunpowder smoke, keeps rising); “al’ se ravno polje zamaglilo” (the flat field is full of

⁴ Arambaša, a Turkic term (from *harami başı*) meaning the leader of a band of outlaws or brigands.

⁵ The term “shifter” has been introduced to Serbian literary theory by Novica Petković, especially in his book *Ogledi iz srpske poetike* [Essays on Serbian Poetics (Belgrade 1990)]. Shifters, as well as everything else belonging to the Lotmanian “aesthetics of identity” (Lotman 1970), bring to the surface generic norm(ativity), i.e. data about the literary genre, while the individual, the author’s, characteristics (his voice) recede into the background. This type of informativeness (which provides information about the type of event and not about its individual characteristics) is termed *relational informativeness*.

fog); “sve je polje magla pritisnula” (the whole field is sunk in fog); “Kukutnicu magla pritisnula” (Kukutnica is immersed in fog); “pade magla od neba do zemlje” (the fog fell from sky to earth); “al’ se diže magla iz oblaka” (the fog from clouds suddenly lifted); “od Budima magla se podigla” (the fog lifted off the city of Buda), etc. Every narrative genre, especially if it is oral, has a need for simple expressions like these. Their significance is always equal to their own meaning, and so they should be accepted like this, as a different way to say: it dawned, it rains, the evening came, and the like. Relational information of these formulas is a structural element of a poem in its own right, and its true significance is formed within that context.

Except for the inevitable influence of versification, in this phase modelling is neutral and inconspicuous, even if form is a little more sophisticated, as in:

Pramen magle polje pritiskao; Ne bijaše magla od daždica, No od pare konjske i junačke. (Vuk VI, 20: 25–26)	A wisp of fog fell on the field; It was not a drizzly fog, But the steam of the horses and their riders.
Nije magla da bi magla bila Nego para konjska i junačka. (Vuk III, 42: 135–136)	It was not a fog as God made it But the steam of the horses and their riders.

The first step towards stabilizing form is made when the fog enters the system of equivalences basic to the frame formulas such as the Slavic antithesis, for example, and a prophetic dream, where it always signifies the same: “the conquering army”:

SLOVENSKA ANTITEZA Sinule su do dvi magle sinje: Jedna pala kraj mora sinjega, Druga pala kraj vode Sitnice. To ne bile do dvi magle sinje, Već to bile do dvi vojske silne: Jedno turska, drugo je kaurska. (MHI, 60: 1–6)	SLAVIC ANTITHESIS Two grey fogs flashed: One fell by the side of the grey sea, The other fell beside the river Sitnica. Those were not two grey fogs, But those were two mighty armies: One Turkish, and the other Christian.
PROROČKI SAN Što je magla do Drežnika pala, To je pala ćesareva vojska; Što kroz maglu gora prolistala, Ono su ti krstati barjaci; Što iz magle tri košute riču, Ono su ti ubojni topovi. (SANU III, 74:15–20)	PROPHETIC DREAM The fog that fell near Dreznik, That is the emperor’s army; The trees coming into leaf in that fog, Those are the Christian flags; Three does that roar from that fog, These are deadly cannons.

The next (and final) step begins when the formula gets fixed to the action and the actant,⁶ and becomes stable. After that, it is always recognized as the “appearance of a horseman-hero in/from the fog”. This formula is self-sustainable in any context and independent of the aforementioned frame formulas. The image from which it originates, though, does not come *ex nihilo*, but derives from the previous forms. This makes the epiphany of a horseman-hero naturally connected with the “fog/steam of horses and warriors”, although he is actually a new figure in the formula:

<p>Pramen se je magle zadenuo Preko polja od Sijenja bela, Pravo ide moru na zakuke. [...]</p> <p>Ta se magla primaknula blizu; <i>Tek iz magle junak iskočio,</i> Baš na vrancu mladi Marijane. (Vuk III, 29: 78–93)</p> <p>Nešto im se dade pogledati, Pogledati poljem niz primorje – Dok se pramen magle zapodio, <i>A iz magle junak iskočio!</i> (SANU II, 85: 35–38)</p> <p>Malo bilo dugo netrajalo, Pramakse je magle zadjenulo, Po pržini po kraj mora slana; <i>Iz magle je junak izletio</i> Na vrančiću konju velikome. (SM 145: 21–26)</p> <p>Dok se magla bliže primicaše, <i>Dok iz magle junak izletio</i> Na kulašu na belogrivašu – A kakav je Banović Sekula, Golu sablju u visinu tura, U bijele dočekuje ruke! (SANU II, 71: 110–115)</p> <p>Taman oni u riječi bili, Al’ se mala magla zapodjede Uz Kosovo od belog Mramora,</p>	<p>A wisp of fog flew Over the field from the white city of Senj, Straight to the sea. [...]</p> <p>This fog came near; <i>And a hero popped out of this fog,</i> Young Marijan on a black horse.</p> <p>They happened to look, To look over the field by the seashore – And then a wisp of fog came, <i>And out of the fog a hero popped!</i></p> <p>It did not take long, Before a wisp of fog fell, Over the sandy shore by the salty sea; <i>From the fog a hero rushed</i> On a big black horse.</p> <p>While the fog was drawing near, <i>From the fog a hero rushed</i> On his white-maned red horse – And what he is like, Banovic Sekula, His naked sabre he hurls up in the air, And catches it with his white hands!</p> <p>And as they were talking, A wisp of fog fell Along Kosovo, from the white Mramor,</p>
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⁶ The bearer of action, the active agent.

<p><i>A iz magle junak izletio</i> Na doratu ko na gorskoj vili. (SANU II, 86: 20–24)</p> <p>Kad se polje maglom zamaglilo, <i>A iz magle junak ispanuo</i> Na malinu, konju od megdana, A to bješe Osman barjaktare. (MH IX, 5: 126–129)</p>	<p><i>And from the fog a hero rushed</i> On his brown horse like on a forest fairy.</p> <p>When the field got blurred by fog, <i>And from that fog a hero fell out</i> On his battle horse, And that was Osman, the standard-bearer.</p>
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As soon as the epic fog gets in touch with a mounted warrior (a horseman-hero), it starts to condense and to emit signals strange to the earlier, simple examples. First indications of the kind come:

(1) from the context itself

<p>Livada se maglom zamaglila, Od brzine konja i junaka, Strah je mene, neće dobro biti. (MH IX, 25: 100–102)</p> <p>Tako Vuče u riječi bio, Kad kroz maglu junak ispanuo, Vas u krvi crnoj ogreznuo: Nosi desnu u lijevoj ruku. (MH IX, 20: 31–34)</p>	<p>The meadow gets immersed in fog, The fog of fast horses and riders, I fear the worst.</p> <p>While Vuk was talking, A horseman fell out from the fog, All covered in blood: Carrying his right arm in his left hand.</p>
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(2) from the demonic epiphany of a horseman in the fog

<p>Čudan junak, a na čudna konja:⁷ Iz oči mu živi ogranj sipa, Iz nozdrva modar plamen suče, Sve se polje jednak zamaglilo Od njiove sile i brzine. (Vuk VI, 10: 77–82)</p> <p>Iz magle je Turčin ispanuo, Na Dundulu konju velikome, Sieda mu brada do pojasa, U glavi mu zuba djavoljega, Krvave mu oči obadvije, Golu sablju nosi u rukama, Pod njime se crna zemlja trese. (SM 79: 85–92)</p>	<p>Wondrous hero, on a wondrous horse: Raging fire bursting from its eyes, Livid flame shooting out of its nostrils, The whole field gets foggy at once Because of their mightiness and speed.</p> <p>A Turkish warrior fell out of the fog, On Dundul, his very big horse, His white beard down to his waist, Not a tooth in his head, Both of his eyes bloody, Unsheathed sabre in his hand, The black earth is trembling under him.</p>
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⁷ On demonic connotations of wonder, miracle/wondrous, miraculous, cf. Loma 2000.

and finally

(3) from the doing of the fog itself which – identified with the darkness and coloured in black – swallows horses and men, covers them, and brings about an unknown danger.

U magli se, ljubo, rastadosmo,
Rastadosmo, pak se ne sastasmo.
(Vuk II, 25)

Lov lovio Banović Sekule,
Pored Save i krajem Dunava,
Al' Sekulu loša sreća bila,⁸
Pala magla od neba do zemlje,
Gusta magla kano oblačina,
Da nevidi on pod sobom djoga,
Anekmoli da ulovi lova.
Al' iz magle dobar junak viče.
(SM 148)

In the fog, my beloved, we parted,
We parted, and never met again.

Banovic Sekula went hunting,
By the Sava river and the river Danube,
But his luck was bad,
A fog fell from sky to earth,
Thick fog like a cloud,
So he could not even see his horse under him,
Let alone catch anything.
And from that fog a worthy hero shouts.

Although it might not seem so, this is not the same formula any more. First of all, the desired model is no longer iconic but metaphorical: the image of dust, steam, general mayhem, which was part of the action producing the effect *similar to a fog*, withdraws now before the *image of a fog* which draws its meaning from some other, non-iconic source placed without the poem. The influence of many different connotations of such an image is no more linear, spread over the surface of poetic communication. Its source is now deep down in the layers of tradition we know so little about. The text itself allows some secondary readings, such as a suggestion of death, sorrow, danger, punishment, enmity, revenge and the like. Nevertheless, all these denotations belong to the poem and its plot and therefore are not enough to provide an answer to the main question: why the fog came and where it came from.

The associative field of the “appearance of a horseman-hero in/from the fog” is both too narrow and too wide at the same time. As far as we know, no mythical tradition (Slavic or other) is fixed to a person, an event or a performance pictured as a horseman in/from the fog in any relevant way: by attribution, epiphany, transposition, whichever. Fog as such, an indefinable state of latency (neither light nor darkness), carries quite a few connotations even without all possible contexts. Even its traditional image is always the same: the fog is that something in which nothing can be heard or seen,⁹ a blurry shadow

⁸ On bad luck in the epic hunt, cf. Detelić 1992; 1996.

⁹ Cf. Sikimić 1996: 90, 221.

enveloping the netherworld,¹⁰ a phenomenon whose abode is in hell, which means in the farthest north,¹¹ etc. Like the uroboros, this line of research always comes back to where it started, so it seems best to abandon it.

There is yet another path rarely used in epic studies, a kind of intergeneric analysis which seems promising in this respect. It is all about the so-called “short forms of folklore”, which usually means the folkloric texts for children (tongue twisters, quiz questions, counting rhymes), for enchanting, the occasional (often formulaic) texts (e.g. road/travelling songs, songs for lighting a fire, beside-the-fire songs, etc.) and similar forms that can hardly be classified properly.¹² The common characteristic of all these texts is their antiquity, especially in the case of charms and enchanting, from which derives the general hypothesis about their archaic and magic origin. It is possible to extricate a group of texts in some way connected to the fog as a lesser demon, whether they are used to drive the fog away (examples 1–2 below), or they depict the fog as either a passive (example 3) or an active (examples 4 and 5) element of enchanting:

1	Bježi magla s magličima, eto popa s popičima, nosi žigu na ožegu, dje te stignu da ožegu, dje počineš, da pogineš. ¹³	Run, fog, with your spawn, Here comes the priest with his children, He brings weevils on fire tongs, Where they catch you, they will scorch you, Where you rest, you will perish.
2	Bježi maglo s magličim', eto babe s kabličim', pobiće ti magliče, strpat' ih u kablice. ¹⁴	Run, fog, with your spawn, Here comes granny with buckets, She will kill your fog children, She will put them in the buckets.
3	M'gle biju na nebo, petli poju na zemlju. Dojde glas, da sečemo ras. ¹⁵	Fogs fly to the sky, Roosters sing on earth. Word came, We should cut the ras.

¹⁰ Cf. Benoist 1976: 72. Nodilo (1981: 523) thinks that fog and hell are one and the same.

¹¹ Graves & Patai 1969: 32. Cooper (1986: s.v. Fog) adds: “The state of delusion and chaos. Mystery religions use the symbolism of fog for initiation; a soul must come from darkness and chaos to the clear light of brightness.” It is clear now why we cannot use this kind of interpretation.

¹² They should not be confused with the “simple forms” of Joles, although some similarities inevitably exist.

¹³ Momir 1890: 268.

¹⁴ Zovko 1898: 743.

¹⁵ Radenković 1981: 273 (a charm against the illness called ras).

4	Razvi se po gori, Ka' riba po vodi; Razvi se po vodi, Ka' magla po gori. ¹⁶	Spread over the forest, Like the fish in water; Spread over the water, Like fog in the forest.
5	Adama zaboleta glava: Adam dade Jevi, Jeva dade moru, More dade magli, Magla dade suncu, Sunce magle isuši. ¹⁷	Adam got a headache: Adam gave it to Eve, Eve gave it to sea, Sea gave it to fog, Fog gave it to sun, The Sun dried the fog away.

Lots of information are offered by these verses: on the quantity and position of the fog; on the general tendency of demons to make family connections (fog, fogs, fog with fog children); on the person who is able to cast it out (with the same tendency of familial connecting: priest with priest/hell children, grandfather with grandchildren,¹⁸ grandmother/granny; in an example below, a she-bear with her cub); on the instruments of attack that one needs (tongs, live coals, knife, stake; or, in other examples: sabre, needle, trident/harpoon); on the purpose of the noted actions (to kill you, to make you stay, to slaughter, to poke, to dry away). The repertoire of the means of casting out a demon, basically coming down to three – wood, fire and metal – may be enlarged with examples from similar texts for casting out a smoke (and a lesser demon), adding bone to some of them (6, 8, 9):

6	Tamo, dime, karadime, tamo su ti vrata, i pečena jaja, i s maslom pogača, i dedove kosti, čim ćemo te bosti. ¹⁹	There, smoke, black smoke, There's the door, And fried eggs, And a loaf of bread made with butter, And grandfather's bones, With which we shall poke you.
7	Biži, dimi, karadimi, tamo su ti vrata i pečena jajca. Doći će ti gosti, pa će tebe bosti iglicom, bumbaricom, boc, boc. (to obično dica govore) (Lovretić 1902: 185)	Go away, smoke, black smoke, there's the door and fried eggs. Guests will come, they will Poke you with the needle, poke, poke. (this is usually said by children)

¹⁶ *Ibid.* 477 (against any illness).

¹⁷ *Ibid.* 512 (against spells).

¹⁸ This example is not given in the table, but it exists in folklore (Zovko 1898: 742). *Grandfather's child* here is a special term for a grandfather's favourite grandchild.

¹⁹ Radenković 1981: 625 (against smoke).

8	Idi gore, dime, Kostantine, tamo su ti vrata, kuda valja proći, ovamo su kosti, pa ćemo te probosti, buf! ²⁰	Go up, smoke, Kostantine, There's the door, For you to pass through, Here, here are bones, With which we shall stab you, puff!
9	Tamo dime, karadime! Tamo su ti vrata i šarena jaja; tamo su ti kosti, čim ćemo te bosti! (Momir 1896: 201)	Go there, smoke, black smoke! There's the door and coloured eggs; There are bones, With which we shall poke you!

As far as spatial references are concerned, the charms observe fog in heights (in the sky, over the mountains),²¹ and the children's charm downwards (in meadows). This does not matter much, however, because neither of them names the place where the fog is supposed to go. That place appears in the following examples:

10	Biži, biži, maglina, Jakov teče z Pazina sa šakami soli, s pikastimi konji, da će te nabosti na jelove osti; da će te ponesti v onu črnu jamu. Kade je ta jama s trnjem zgračana? ²²	Run, run, fog, Jacob comes from Pazin With handfuls of salt, With his skewbald horses, He will impale you On his fir leister; He will take you To that black hole. Where is that hole Fenced with thorns?
11	Oj ti maglo, maglenice, beži, maglo, uz potok, niz potok eto mečka s mečičima za tobom. Svako meče po iglicu da te bude u guzicu da te guči, da te muči, da te sturi u rupčinu, da ti sipa suručinu.	Oh you, fog, little fog, Run away, fog, up the stream, down the stream Here comes she bear with her cubs after you. Each cub has a needle To poke you in the buttocks To squeeze you, to torment you, To put you in the hole, To pour the whey over you.

²⁰ Miodragović 1914: 167.

²¹ This is regular in enchantments. In the anthology compiled by Ljubinko Radenković, fog is always in heights: on the hills (422, 123, 191, 542, 181, 505), down the hills (563), up the mountain (168, 368, 557), on mountain tops (175, 189). This fits the general image of demonic "up and down" movements.

²² Miodragović 1914: 167.

Chasing the fog “up the stream, down the stream” (which is a motion characteristic of demonic beings), and into “a black hole”, finally is a relevant information because it fixes the place the fog should permanently stay in. This is also a definition of its domain which is common to demons of illnesses and impure forces in general – as can be seen from the examples of enchanting against disease:

12	<p>Pogana poganice! Balava balavice! Napratna napratnice! Kojim si putem došla, onim se putem i vrati; jer je, evo, došla baka bajalica, koja će te travom prebacit', riječima prebrojit', i nožem preporit', i iglom zbost', a vatrom pregorit'. [...] Tu ti više nije mjesto! Eno tebi 'tice vrapca, pa neka te jami pod desno kriošće, nek te nosi nebu pod oblake, nek te vjetar raznese na sve četiri strane, pa da padneš u duboke jame, u mutne vode.²⁴</p>	<p>You impure poganica!²³ You snivelling snivel! You violent napratnica! The same way you came, Go back; Because the granny enchantress is here, And she will throw grass over you, She will count you out with words, And she will rip you open with a knife, And poke you with a needle, And scorch you with fire. [...] There is no place for you here! Here is a sparrow bird for you, So let it take you under its right wing, Let it take you to the sky, Let the wind cast you To all four corners of the world, So that you fall in deep holes, In murky waters.</p>
13	<p>Ovdjen ti mjesta nije, nego u goru pustinju, u jamu bezdanu, dje se glas zvona ne čuje, dje kokot ne poje, dje munje sijevaju, dje gromovi udaraju, dje vukovi zavijaju, i zle duše urlakaju.²⁵</p>	<p>There is no place for you here, But in a deserted forest, In a bottomless hole, Where bells cannot be heard, Where no rooster sings, Where lightning flashes, Where thunders clap, Where wolves howl, And evil souls roar.</p>

It is obvious, therefore, that to burn, poke, and cut with pointed objects (ritual or ordinary knives and needles, bones, leisters and stakes) are regular

²³ Folklore name for a disease, as well as *napratnica*.

²⁴ Radenković 1981: 343 (against the illness called “poganica”).

²⁵ *Ibid.* 451 (against a wound of any kind).

actions for casting off the demons of illnesses, and that the procedure for fog and smoke is quite the same. Within the same context, they even receive the same offerings and are threatened with the same animals, as can be seen from the following examples (14 and 15 are incantations against an illness, and 16 and 17 for casting smoke away):

14	Izlazite iz srce u kosti, iz kosti na vlakno, iz vlakno na Stambol kapiju, tamo vas čekaju mladi pilići, meki dušeci i mlaka kafa. Nožem ću vas izbosti, sekirom iseći, a metlom izgrebati. ²⁶	Go out of the heart to the bones, From the bones to the thread, From the thread to the Istanbul Gate, There young chickens wait for you, Soft pillows and warm coffee. I will stab you with a knife, Cut you with a hatchet, And scrub you with a broom.
15	Beži, Elo, Eliko! Iz Niš idu osamdeset i os'm bivolice, s jezik će te odmetu, s kopite će te ubiju, s rozi će te ubodu. ²⁷	Run Ela, Elika! From Niš there come Eighty-eight she-buffalos, They will sweep you with tongues, With hoofs they will kill you, With horns they will poke you.
16	Tamo, dime kadime; tamo su ti vrata, tamo su ti jaja, tamo ti je kvočka sa piladima, i tamo se niti vamo ću te biti. ²⁸	There, smoke, black smoke; There is the door, There are eggs, There is the hen with chickens, There you stay Here I will beat you.
17	Salih kola od olova, Pa upregnuh sto volova: Ća, Galeša, ća, Rameša! Stade vola rijnjavina, Stade kola škripnjavina. ²⁹	I cast a cart of lead, And yoked a hundred oxen to it: Ha, Galeša, ha, Rameša! The oxen started to roar, And the cart to squeak.

It is generally plausible, then, to consider fog, as well as smoke, a demonic being. It is not yet clear which particular demon it is, or to what type of demons it belongs. In Bulgarian folklore there are some examples which may be useful in that respect:

²⁶ *Ibid.* 67 (against the illness called “izdat”).

²⁷ *Ibid.* 112 (against the illness called “wind”).

²⁸ *Ibid.* 623 (against smoke).

²⁹ *Ibid.* 624 (against smoke).

Паднала е гъста мъгла На Софийско равно поле. Не е било гъста мъгла, Но е било сура ламя Да си аде бяла пшеница И да зобе бяло грозде. ³⁰	A thick fog fell On the field in front of Sofia. It was not a thick fog, It was a grey dragon Who came to eat white wheat And to pick the white grapes.
Пропеднала тъмна мъгла, Не е била тъмна мъгла, Но је била лоша ламіа, Лоша ламіа с девет глави, Диха, диха, мъгла издава. ³¹	A dark fog fell, But it was not a dark fog, It was a bad dragon, A bad dragon with nine heads, It breathes and breathes, and gives out a fog.

But they cannot be found anywhere else in the short forms of folklore in the Balkans. In the fairy stories, though, the dragon appears as a demon, one of whose manifestations can also be a fog.³² Without any concern for their origin, the context in which fog appears here is closer to the epic than to anything mentioned before. The breath of a nine-headed dragon is not too far away from the “steam of horsemen and horses”, especially if it comes from the horse with livid eyes and fiery breath, and from the hero “with no devil’s tooth in his head”, with bloody eyes and under whom the earth is trembling. This really provides a good opportunity to point to one of the most important issues in epic poetics: the way the epic influences and changes the material in order to give it a new, adaptable form.

Let us suppose, then, that the epic fog also has its roots in the magical image of the world where its characteristics are understood as demonic, and its being (“fog with infant fogs”) enters the broad field of “impure forces”. Of all different elements that perform such a profile of fog, in the process of literary modelling, *the epic does not take any one of them alone*. What really enters that process is the totality of them all, the general picture of the evil force which can change its shape at will, while never abandoning the original one, and thus has many faces at the same time. Abiding by this logic, the epic genre itself accepts reduplication as a method of choice, and to a demonic being in its original form, it adds an image from its own repertory, that of a horseman which – from the perspective of the poetics of the genre

³⁰ Marinov 1994: 60. According to Marinov, in Bulgarian folklore fog could also appear as a shepherd (“Нойко овчар”) with a big flock of grey sheep, followed by a ram (“Югич”) with a golden bell around the neck.

³¹ Попов 1889: 12.

³² Čajkanović 1927: 366–368; *Bulgarski folklorni prikazki* [Bulgarian Folklore Stories]: 226.

– overpowers everything else. Given that epic modelling is not an evolutive process, so it is not possible to talk about development and progress (from lower to higher and from older to newer forms) in that context, the demonic appearance of a horseman in/from a fog is not the only acceptable solution for epic poetry. On the contrary, depending on what it sings about, at whom it is aimed and for what purpose, a song is free to choose from among the formulas the one that fits best, no matter how complicated and in which phase of fixity it may be. This is why the fog formula in epics has all three of its forms (neutral, iconic and metaphoric) equally operative and equally unamenable to any kind of aesthetic or poetic evaluation. What lends itself to such an evaluation is only the appropriateness of its use, which brings quite new parameters into discussion.

On the other hand, a horseman – as an equivalent to the demonic being of fog – is not only a suitable invention, but also a generic *sine qua non*. The epic, more than other narrative oral genres, is subordinate to a hero, and this marks its attitude towards the most important constants: space, time, event, etc. In choosing from among the beings suitable to be the opponents of a hero, the epic has to correlate their appearances only as much as it takes to make their encounter (when it takes place) seem heroic. In modelling such an antagonist, the epic is free to choose from among many different originals. Which one will be chosen depends on many elements, but one thing is certain: whenever it is possible, whenever the circumstances permit, the choice will fall on an already existing model, on a ready-made form which will take most, if not all, of its own, recognizable connotations to a new environment. In the epic context, they will be more or less changed, because they will have to adapt to different functions and needs, but they will never be lost completely. Sometimes they can even prevail, and then generic lacunae emerge, the rare and tiny but effective manoeuvring spaces where the “material” communicates with the audience directly, without a go-between. From such a lacuna emerges even a fourth type of the epic fog which, in its purest demonic character, “swallows horses and men”, the same as the dragon, or death itself, does on another occasion. It is surprising that, of all examples we have already given, fog only appears in this form in a prophetic dream, consequently in the poems about the duke Momčilo (type “Wedding of king Vukašin”):

<p>Ja sam noćas čudan san usnio, “Dje se povi jedan pramen magle “Od proklete zemlje Vasojeve, “Pak se savi oko Durmitora,</p>	<p>Last night I had a strange dream, That a wisp of fog arced From the cursed lands of Vasoje, And wrapped around Durmitor mountain,</p>
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<p>“Ja udarih kroz taj pramen magle “Sa mojijeh devet mile braće “I dvanaest prvo-bratučeda “I četrest od grada levera, U magli se, ljubo, rastadosmo, Rastadosmo, pak se ne sastasmo. (Vuk II, 25:138–147)</p>	<p>I set off through this wisp of fog With my dear nine brothers And my twelve cousins And my forty soldiers from the town, In the fog, my beloved, we parted, We parted, and never met again.</p>
<p>Ja sam noćas zločest sanak usanjao, Poteže se silan oblak magle, Iz dubljine iz sinjega mora I odnese devet braće moje, Ja ih u snu potražiti podjō. (Kordunaš 26)</p>	<p>Last night I had a bad dream, That there was a mighty cloud of fog, Coming from the deeps of the grey sea And it took away my nine brothers, And in my dream I set out to look for them.</p>
<p>San sanjao vojvoda Momčilo, San sanjao, ljubi kazivao: “Gdje se povi jedan pramen magle Sa onijeh zelenih jezerah I savi se na dvore njegove: Čini mi se, dobra biti neće.” (Herdvigov VII)</p>	<p>The duke Momcilo dreamt a dream, Dreamt a dream, and said to his beloved: “A wisp of fog arced From these green lakes And wrapped around his³³ castle: Seems to me, nothing good will come out of it.”</p>
<p>Тежка ме е дремка одремала и у дремка санак си санувах. Излезнал съм на Разбой планина, се планина магла нападнало и ви сички низ маглу изгубих. (SbNU 53: 487)</p>	<p>I fell into a deep sleep And I dreamt a dream. I went to Razboj mountain, The whole mountain was immersed in fog And in that fog I lost you all.</p>

“Seems to me, nothing good will come out of it” [Čini mi se, dobra biti neće], an evil imposing formula which – although cited only once – occurs in all examples, makes a balance to the famous epic formula: “The dream is a lie, the truth is with God only [“San je laža, a bog je istina”],³⁴ a statement

³³ The interchanging of speaking persons is not a mistake here. Whenever an epic singer has to cite someone’s direct speech and to use a possessive pronoun in the first person (*moj* / “my”), he shifts to the third (*njegov* / “his”) to avoid inactivating (unwillingly) the spell of the word. Here, Momčilo should say “my castle”, but the change into safe “his” should prevent a bad luck catching with the singer himself.

³⁴ San je klapnja, sam Bog je istina, / U san nigda nije vjerovati [The dream is a lie, only God knows the truth, / One should never believe a dream] (Bogišić); Al’ govori ljuba Vidosava: / “San je laža a Bog je istina” [And then spoke lady Vidosava: / “A dream is a lie and only God knows the truth”] (Herdvigov; Vidosava is the name of Momčilo’s treacherous wife); San je laža, a Bog je istina / Sve san laže, bog istinu kaže [The dream is a lie, only God knows the truth, / the dream lies about everything, God says the

that in our corpus has no connotations other than either a deliberate or an unconscious fraud, treason, lie. In that (and so darkly defined) frame comes a prophetic dream without interpretation, which largely diverges from the epic norm. It is usually incorporated into a song only to enable a developed and symbolic comparison to depict some trivial (non)historical event. The absence of interpretation, from the perspective of epic poetics, can mean one of two things: either the song has nothing to draw a comparison with, or the picture in the dream does not need any comparison.

In the case of the songs about the duke Momčilo's death, both options are viable. The songs have something to draw a comparison with, although not in the place where the dream is mentioned, but towards the very end of the plot, when the hero loses his retinue while hunting in the mountains, and his life at the gates of his city (due to his wife's betrayal). Then, and only then, is the death of his cousins/friends compared with their perishing in the fog and the dream proves to be right. The fog still remains equal to its own self, without any epic substitution or embodiment. This procedure is not usual, but it is regular.

As far as the other option is concerned, the fog really does not need any interpretation. It comes from the surroundings which is not epic but demonic, it does not belong to the real world from which epic modelling usually starts (the city of Pirlitor/Periteorion, hunting party, seigniorial feud, the looks and origin of the hero's adversary, etc.), and it functions as a superior category in the epic world, as it really belongs to numinous manifestations and beings of whatever class. The epic norm withdraws before it, it goes to the backstage (thence a generic lacuna), which is the epic method of choice whenever numinous chronotopes are of great importance for the plot (forest + word charm in "The Wedding of Milić the Standard-Bearer", forest + curse in "The Bride of Lazo Radanović", a road through the forest + black lamb/child in "The God-fathering of Manojlo the Greek", etc.). Stronger and older, the ancient basis of these interventions truly does not need any explaining to anyone. But, if it is used improperly or mischievously, it could lead to nothing but a bad or wrong poem, as may be seen in this example from Bogišić's collection:

<p>“Moja braćo, čudan sanak vidjoh, Dje se povi jedna sinja magla Od Njemačke od bogate zemlje, A iz magle ljuta zmija pade, Te se meni savi oko srca Ljubi zovem, da me oslobodi</p>	<p>“Oh my brothers, I had a strange dream, A grey fog arched From Germany, the wealthy country, And from this fog a fierce snake fell, And it coiled around my heart I cried for my lady, to rid me</p>
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truth] (Kordunaš); Dobar junak dobar san usnio; / San je laža, a Bog je istina [A good hero had a good dream; / The dream is a lie, only God knows the truth] (Vuk).

Od ljutice od zmije proklete, Moja ljuba za me i ne hajje.” (Bogišić 97)	Of this fierce and cursed snake, But my lady cares not for me.”
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Compared to other examples – where the fog comes from where it should: from the cursed country, from the deeps of the grey sea, from the green lakes and from the mountain – in Bogišić’s collection its origin is a wealthy country (Germany), and the fog is embodied in the snake that falls from it. Wrapping around the hero’s neck (very well known in the songs of quite a different kind – cf. “Prince Marko and Holy Sunday”; MH I, 40) and the wife’s wrong reaction are actually a reduplication of the standard transcending of fog from numinous to material being (snake). Thus also the indefinable threat with the impure force is degraded into a concrete treason (wife), which disintegrates its demonic nature, and the formula loses the strength it derived from the numen. Damaging the song, of course.

Information about the corpus (with abbreviations)

The epic corpus presented here is composed of both Muslim and Christian classical printed collections, published in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century (during the last wave of romantic revival of interest in the national oral tradition). In making that choice, I obeyed only the linguistic criteria, which is the same language, and for that reason I set aside other South Slav epic songs (Macedonian and Bulgarian). The corpus consists of 1357 poems (from eight major collections in twenty-two volumes), sung and recorded in what now are four independent countries: Serbia, Croatia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, and Montenegro. The oldest records of “pevanja na srpsku” [singing in the Serbian way] are published in the collection of Valtazar Bogišić in the late nineteenth century, and in the *Erlangen Manuscript* dated to the beginning of the eighteenth century. All other sources are various collections of children, occasional, and ritual folklore of different genres.

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