Guslar and *Aoidos*: Traditional Register in South Slavic and Homeric Epic*

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For us Homer lives only in manuscripts and fragments of papyrus. We cannot record his songs, interview his colleagues or pupils, or even "page through" a sound archive of his or peer poets' disembodied performances. Thus, however much scholars may be able to derive analytically about the oral tradition in which those textual remnants are rooted, there has long been a need to consult a living witness, one that can testify firsthand about the real-life workings of this unfamiliar technology of communication. It was for this reason that Milman Parry and Albert Lord first journeyed to the former Yugoslavia, in an attempt to test Parry's *textual* theories about Homeric oral tradition in the living laboratory of South Slavic *oral* epic, to learn about the ancient *aoidos* through on-site study of the *guslar*. From that pioneering effort has emerged a comparative field of vast proportions, affecting scores of cultures all over the world and throughout history, and shedding new light on longstanding problems of genesis, transmission, structure, and interpretation.[1] At the same time, there have also been reasonable objections raised—most fundamentally to the very applicability of the "Yugoslav analogy" itself, and therefore to all that stems from it.

The present essay seeks to embrace not just one but both sides of the argument by carefully considering what the analogy can—and also what it cannot—tell us about Homer's and his tradition's epics. Our particular focus will be the distinctive poetic language employed by the South Slavic *guslar* and his

[1]For a history of the so-called Oral Theory and its spread, see Foley 1988; for bibliography, Foley 1985, with updates in *Oral Tradition*, now available electronically at http://www.missouri.edu/~csottime. With specific reference to Homer, see Edwards 1986, 1988, 1992.

epic tradition, and the extent to which it mirrors the equally distinctive Homeric *koinê*. We will, in other words, be concerned with examining these special idioms as what linguists call *registers*, or "major speech styles associated with recurrent types of situations."[2] To put the matter as directly as possible, we shall be asking: *Is the South Slavic epic register a useful, apposite comparison for the Homeric register?* And, perhaps not surprisingly, the answer will necessarily be: "Yes, it is; and no, it isn't." In other words, the major goal will be to move past the oversimplification of yes or no, right or wrong, all or nothing, to the kind of reasonable calibration and balanced explanation that will support the weight of a serious inquiry into Homeric traditional art.[3]

Toward that end let us proceed by posing a series of questions.

I. Is Homeric formulaic phraseology similar to the formulaic phraseology of South Slavic epic?

II. Does enjambement function similarly in the two poetries?

III. Do metrical irregularities of the Homeric type also characterize South Slavic epic?

IV. Is South Slavic epic composed in an "artificial language" like Homer's? Along the same lines, do dialect variation (IVa) and archaisms (IVb) play a role in the *guslar*'s language as they do in Homer?

Carefully considered answers to these questions will help Homerists to judge the extent to which, and the ways in which, the *guslar*'s epic dialect compares to that of the *aoidos*.[4]

An important caveat must precede our deliberations. Overgeneralization is always a danger in any analytical exposition, especially a comparative analysis, but perhaps nowhere does it loom so threateningly as when that study involves the verbal arts of the former Yugoslavia. Even before the current hostilities

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[2]Hymes 1989: 440. For a discussion of "register" as applied to the special languages of oral traditions, see Foley 1995: 49–53.

[3]On the necessity of Parry and Lord's initial "strong thesis," which had to be generalized, forceful, and substantially unqualified in order to break new ground, and of its equally necessary modification in light of further analysis and reports from the field, see Foley 1996.

[4]We should also note those important related areas that lie beyond the scope of our present focus on the phraseological aspects of the epic register: the two histories of transmission and the various media of preservation; the comparison of typical scenes and narrative patterns in the two epic poetries; the levels of idiolect, dialect, and pan-traditional language within the epic idiom; and, most significantly, the implications of the specialized epic register for meaning (on all of which, see Foley 1990, 1991, 1995).

further fragmented linguistic and cultural groups, the tangled history of the region over many centuries had translated to a forbidding complexity of ethnicities, language groups, and therefore oral traditions. Especially under the present conditions, the term "Yugoslav" no longer has any meaning, and "Serbo-Croatian" is useful only as a blanket designation that may speak to a shared cultural history but obscures many differences in the process.[5] I will therefore limit my remarks to two bodies of collected oral tradition from the South Slavic region: chiefly the Moslem epic songs recorded by Milman Parry and Albert Lord in the 1930s, far the largest available collection of epic performances from the former Yugoslavia; and, in a supporting role, the Christian epic narratives taken down through dictation by Vuk Stefanović Karadžić and his co-workers during the first half of the nineteenth century. Since it is exclusively on the Moslem songs that the comparison with Homer has been based, this focus seems heuristically sound. Additionally, since research has revealed that within the larger epic dialect both regional and individual varieties exist,[6] I will further restrict the sample to songs recorded in the region of Stolac in central Hercegovina.[7] In this way we can be assured of basing our investigation on a reasonably homogeneous sample.

[5] I thus choose to call the language of the epics "South Slavic," rather than "Serbian," "Croatian," or "Serbo-Croatian." Although "South Slavic" is employed by linguists to denote the language family that also includes Bulgarian, Slovenian, and Macedonian, it seems best to err on the side of inclusiveness rather than of parochialism or segregation. Moreover, many of the songs and characters referred to below also populate the unprinted "pages" of other South Slavic oral traditions.

[6] See Foley 1990: 158–200, 278–328.

[7] The unpublished Moslem songs cited or analyzed herein were all recorded in the region of Stolac in 1934–35; italic numbers indicate acoustic recordings, Roman numbers mark oral-dictated texts. They include four performances by Mujo Kukuruzović of the *Captivity of Ograšćić Alija / Alagić Alija* (Parry Collection nos. *6617* [sung, 2180 lines], *6618* [sung, 1422 lines], 1287a [dictated, 1288 lines], and 1868 [dictated, 2152 lines]); three performances by Ibro Bašić of the *Alagić Alija and Velagić Selim* (*291b* [sung, 1360 lines], *6597* [sung, 1558 lines], and 1283 [dictated, 1403 lines]); two performances by Halil Bajgorić (*The Wedding of Mustajbeg's Son Bećirbeg*, *6699*, sung, 1030 lines; *Halil Rescues Bojičić Alija*, 6703, dictated, 637 lines); and a single performance by Salko Morić (*Hrnjičić Omer Rescues His Father and Uncle*, *892*, sung, 727 lines). This amounts to a total of 13,473 decasyllabic lines, with all but Bajgorić's and Morić's narratives belonging to the Return Song subgenre (essentially the story of the *Odyssey*). The examples from Karadžić's collection of Christian epic are drawn from volume 2: Tešan Podrugović's performance of *Marko Kraljević Recognizes His Father's Sword* (no. 56, 141 lines); the same song by an unknown singer (no. 57, 114 lines); and *The Death of Kraljević Marko* (no. 73, 166 lines). I will quote and cite lines from both sources according to performance or text numbers. Translations from South Slavic are my own (with the historical present tense rendered in the usual fashion as a simple past).

Any responsible comparison depends upon an acknowledgment of both similarities and differences, and the special poetic registers of *guslar* and *aoidos* are certainly no exception. In that spirit I turn now to an examination of South Slavic epic diction in terms of a series of questions that must be answered *both* "yes" *and* "no." To settle for either answer alone would be, as we shall see, actively distorting: Homer's poems and the South Slavic performances are indeed very much alike in some ways, and in some other ways they are quite disparate. Hopefully, the process of sorting out differences and similarities in their special languages will help us to gain a clearer idea of how each idiom functions in relation to oral tradition, and to construct a sturdier because more realistic foundation for their comparative study as verbal art.

Question I

Is Homeric formulaic phraseology similar to the formulaic phraseology of South Slavic epic?

Answer #1: *Yes, it is.*

The poetic language of the *guslar* exists in symbiosis with the epic decasyllable (*epski deseterac*) line that shares some features with the Homeric hexameter.[8] Because the meters are similar, so are the phraseologies. The most important of these common metrical characteristics is colonic structure, that is, regular, constituent subunits within the line. This phenomenon leads in both cases to an encapsulated phraseology, a diction consisting of verbatim and substitutable phrases that Parry called "formulaic." Thus both dictions demonstrate systems of noun-epithet and noun-adjective formulas; for example,

πόδας ὠκὺς Ἀχιλλεύς	swift-footed Achilleus
οἴνοπα πόντον	wine-dark sea

alongside

Musa kesedžija	Musa the highwayman
knjiga šarovita	multicolored letter.

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[8]To the question of priority of meter or formula I plead agnosticism, recognizing the persuasive arguments from diachronic analysis (espec. Nagy 1990: 48–51). All that is necessary for the present comparison is to recognize that formulaic phraseology and meter are inextricably linked in both Homeric and South Slavic epic. In the examples used below, Homeric quotations are taken from Monroe and Allen (*Il.*) and Allen (*Od.*). For the source of the South Slavic quotations, see n. 7 above. In order to emphasize their traditional nature, I do not restrict formulaic phrases from Greek or South Slavic by assigning them a single citation.

Both traditions also show a large number of phrases that can vary by one or more words, providing compositional flexibility in these specialized languages. Examples include certain introductions to speeches; for instance, consider the following partial lines, each of which is completed with a variety of subjects:

τὸν δ' ἀπαμειβόμενος προσέφη	But answering he addressed him
τὸν δ' ἄρ' ὑπόδρα ἰδὼν προσέφη	But looking darkly he addressed him

alongside

I besjede	And [he/she] spoke
A besjede	But [he/she] spoke
Ali reče	But [he/she] said
I reče mu	And [he/she] said to him

Many more illustrations could be of course summoned from both poetries, along the whole range from exact to highly variable repetition, but the point is that encapsulated phraseology, a reflection of colonic meter, is typical of them both.

One way to underline this basic correspondence is to let the *guslari* themselves contribute to the discussion. Time and again during conversations with Nikola Vujnović, Parry and Lord's native assistant, the singers construed their performances in terms of *reči*, "words." But these were not at all words in our sense of lexical entries or root morphemes, a presumption that has caused serious misinterpretation of what the singers were saying about their art and craft. What they meant by a *reč*, it becomes clear from repeated exchanges, was an increment that satisfied two major requirements: (1) it must be at least a metrical unit in length (a minimum of a colon or line) and (2) it must constitute a speech-act.[9] In fact, singers used this ethnolinguistic term *reč* to designate units of utterance as extensive as speeches, scenes, and even whole tales. The necessary quality of *reči*, whatever their size, seemed to be their identity as complete, unitary speech-acts. At the level of phraseology, this has the effect of raising the threshold on what a "word" could be.[10] For example, when pressed to subdivide

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[9]On speech-acts in Homer and oral poetry, see espec. Martin 1989 and Reynolds 1995: espec. 207–12.

[10]I employ the convention of "word"—in quotation marks—to distinguish the South Slavic singers' *reč*, a unit of utterance, from our own morpheme- and typography-based concept of a word. With this distinction in mind, we should note that the singers' frequent claim that they composed a given song "word for word" (*rečima po rečima*, pl. in original) is fully justified. *Pace* Kirk (1960: 100), e.g., they did proceed on each occasion one traditional unit of

the *reč* to take account of its constituent parts, singers resisted doing so, maintaining in effect that the special language of epic performance had its own rules and definitions. Thus, when challenged to explain how a four-word poetic line could actually be a single "word," Mujo Kukuruzović responded: "It can't be one in writing. But here, let's say we're at my house and I pick up the *gusle*— 'Pije vino lički Mustajbeže' ['Mustajbeg of the Lika was drinking wine']—that's a single *reč* on the *gusle* for me."[11] Kukuruzović was describing an entry not in *LSJ* but in the lexicon of traditional idiom.

Another *guslar* from the Stolac region, Salko Morić, responded to the challenge of defining a singer's "word" in a similar way. Here is a series of questions posed by Parry and Lord's native informant Nikola Vujnović (himself a singer), together with Morić's answers:[12]

N: For example, "pije vino" [he/she was drinking wine]—is that a *reč*? *S*: Yes.

N: So then is "Salko," "Salko," is that a *reč*? *S*: Yes.

N: It too? *S*: Yes.

N: But what would this be—"Na Hudbini u pjanoj mehani / Sjede age, redom pije vino" [At Udbina in a drinking tavern / Sat the agas, they were drinking wine one after another]? What is this?

S: "Svi ukupno redom piju vino" [They were drinking wine all together, one after another].

N: So that's a *reč* too? *S*: Well, it's also a *reč*, yes.

This exchange provides telling evidence of how a *guslar* views the special language of epic singing from an insider's perspective. To begin, Vujnović asks whether an extremely common formula can be construed as a "word." Morić says that it can. Next the interviewer-singer selects an example from outside the epic register, where the rules for "words" are different. Is "Salko," the *guslar*'s own name, a "word"? Yes, he is told, although we should emphasize that the target has shifted: the context is now everyday conversational language, and not the epic

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utterance after the next, moving along a story-pattern via deployment of typical scenes and formulaic phraseology and expressing themselves through an idiomatic way of speaking. The fact that a textual transcription of any two performances reveals discrepancies based on our own sense of word-for-word literality is irrelevant to the dynamics of the traditional register.

[11]Parry no. *6619*. For similar remarks by the Stolac *guslar* Ibro Bašić, see Foley 1990: 44–45.
[12]Parry no. *6612*.

koinê. On these grounds "Salko" qualifies. Finally, Vujnović poses what is for us the most interesting of the three questions. He recites two common formulaic lines from the South Slavic epic tradition and asks Morić whether this entire phrase—fully two decasyllables and a total of ten lexical units in the original language—is also one "word." Morić responds not only by confirming that these two poetic lines amount to a single "word" or speech-act, but also by translating the two decayllables into a single line of his own. By rendering the two-line *reč* with a "word" of his own, he illustrates the pliability and multiformity of the epic language.

From an internal, "emic" point of view Kukuruzović, Morić, and their colleagues from the Stolac region were articulating something very similar to what Parry and Lord discovered through external, "etic" analysis. The South Slavic epic language, as opposed to the everyday idiom in which four words were still four words, featured phrases in capsule form, both exact repetitions and variable patterns, that functioned as larger "words."[13] Singers did not think of them or utilize them as collections of parts but rather as indissoluble units, much in the same way that we learn to interpret lexical entries as meaning-bearing wholes rather than collections of phonemes. Because Homer's formulaic "words" seemed very similar to these *reči*, it was natural to compare, and even to equate, the poetic languages they constituted. Homeric formulaic phraseology is in some ways quite similar to South Slavic epic phraseology.

Answer #2: *No, it isn't.*

Although the hexameter and decasyllable share a number of properties, they are far from identical, and their differences are reflected in the two phraseologies. Most basically, the *deseterac* is made up of only two possible cola, one of four and one of six syllables, according to the following scheme:

$$1 \ 2 \ 3 \ 4 \quad 5 \ 6 \ 7 \ 8 \ 9 \ 10$$

$$s \ s \ s \ s \quad s \ s \ s \ s \ s \ s$$

The caesura occurs between syllables 4 and 5 with virtually absolute regularity, dividing the line into two unequal parts. Thus only four- and six-syllable cola are

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[13]Cf. also the opening *reči* in Avdo Medjedović's 1935 performance of *The Wedding of Smailagić Meho* (*SCHS*, vol. 4, lines 1–2): "Prva riječ: 'Bože, nam pomozi!' / Evo druga: 'Hoće, ako Bog da'" ["The first *reč*: 'O God, help us!' / And the next: 'It will be as God grants'"].

permitted.[14] On the other hand, the hexameter comprises four cola per line; with variable caesura positions, cola can take a total of twelve different individual shapes.[15] This disparity alone means that formulas and formulaic phrases can be encapsulated in significantly more ways in the *Iliad* and *Odyssey* than in South Slavic epic. Or, to put it another way, there are more different kinds of metrical sites in ancient Greek epic.

Other consequences of the decasyllable's simpler constituent structure include the segregation of syntactic features and a complete lack of metrical "thrift" in the *guslar*'s diction. The first segment in the line is customarily devoted to short verb phrases, adverbial and prepositional phrases, echoes from the latter part of the preceding line, and the like. A good rule of thumb is that this opening colon, limited to only four syllables, houses the syllabically shorter grammatical increments of the sentence, including function words and proclitics. The second colon, by contrast, offers a roomier six-syllable capsule, and therefore serves as the natural site for longer verb and noun phrases, including all but a very few noun-epithet combinations. To borrow the *guslar*'s own term, different kinds of *reči* tend to occupy the first and second cola in the decasyllable.

Furthermore, disparity in colonic structure makes for one of the sharpest divergences between the two traditional phraseologies. Among Parry's strongest arguments for the utility of Homeric diction was the doctrine of thrift, the considerable degree to which the language of the *Iliad* and *Odyssey* tends to be "free of phrases which, having the same metrical value and expressing the same idea, could replace one another" (1971: 276). In respect to noun-epithet formulas, he showed, Homer usually has only one phraseological solution for each metrical problem.[16] Poets were thrifty, Parry argued, because they were composing orally in performance; more than one solution to a problem would only prove a hindrance to fluent composition. Significantly, however, since virtually every noun-epithet formula in South Slavic epic must be precisely six syllables long, exactly fitting the second colon in the line, no such feature as metrical thrift can exist. Different appellations for a character cannot be selected by differing

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[14]On colonic structure in the decasyllable, see Foley 1990: 94–106; on hypersyllabism and hyposyllabism, 88–94, 104.

[15]On colonic structure in the hexameter (theories from Fränkel onward), see Foley 1990: 73–84, with the twelve cola diagrammed on 84. It should be emphasized that the decasyllable reveals other kinds of complexities not a part of Homeric prosody (Foley 1990: 85–106), and that it would therefore be reductive to describe the South Slavic line as "simpler than the hexameter."

[16]On the extent of Parryan economy, cf. Shive 1987.

metrical extent, since they all occupy the same slot.[17] On this point Homeric epic and South Slavic epic are wholly at odds, with thrift plainly a feature of hexameter diction in particular rather than of "oral poetry" in general.

In summary, if we are willing to view each formulaic phraseology on its own terms, remarking differences alongside similarities and avoiding generalizations not supported by analysis, a truer analogy will emerge. Both the hexameter and the decasyllable are founded on colonic structure, and their dictions are therefore comparable. But comparable does not mean identical, and they diverge on a number of points, most significantly the nature of that colonic structure and the issue of thrift.[18]

Question II

Does enjambement function similarly in the two poetries?

Answer #1. *Yes, it does.*

The additive nature of the South Slavic line, which is well marked by syllabic definition and a typical closing rhythm,[19] makes for enjambement much like that found in the *Iliad* and *Odyssey*. Just as Homer tends to avoid periodic (necessary) enjambement, wherein the sentence is incomplete at hexameter's end and must be finished in the following line, so the *guslar* shows a marked preference for either unperiodic (unnecessary) or no enjambement. Lord's and my analyses of songs by three different singers from two regions—Salih Ugljanin from Novi Pazar and Mujo Kukuruzović and Halil Bajgorić from the region of Stolac—measured that preference at between 85% and 93%, respectively, leaving only 7–15% of the *deseterac* lines that overran the end of the verse by necessity.[20] If anything, the

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[17]*Pace* Lord (1960: 52–53), I do not find "acoustical context" a consistent basis for thrift in South Slavic epic. Note that acoustic patterning in the decasyllabic diction is an occasional aspect of prosody rather than, like colonic structure, a fundamental and defining feature of each line.

[18]The differences in colonic structure—at the level of *product*—are traceable to a difference in the rule-governed *processes* that underlie the two registers. On the traditional rules for ancient Greek epic phraseology, see Foley 1990: ch. 4; for South Slavic epic phraseology, ch. 5. In lieu of explaining formulaic elements as a systemic inventory of items (Lord 1960, etc.), as "flexible" structures (espec. Hainsworth 1968), or as quantitatively significant combinations (Sale 1989, 1993), I advocate understanding such structures as manifestations of a rule-governed *language*, as a mathematics rather than a collection of integers.

[19]On syllabic definition, see Question III below; on the "quantitative close," see Jakobson 1952: 25 and Foley 1990: 95–96.

[20]See Foley 1990: 163–64.

tendency to avoid necessary enjambement is somewhat stronger in South Slavic epic than in Homer; Parry's and Carolyn Higbie's figures for the *Iliad* are between 73% and 76% with either unperiodic or no enjambement.[21] Although the *guslar* very often does continue his thought beyond line-end in a supplementary clause, there is seldom the absolute syntactic need to do so. This paratactic style of South Slavic epic goes hand in hand with the vocal and instrumental dimensions of performance: the two melodic lines, described as "heterophonic" by George Herzog, reveal a regular formularity and whole-line integrity of their own that reenforce the decasyllabic diction.[22] The primacy of the line as a self-contained, additive unit is evident in both traditions.

Answer #2: *No, it doesn't.*

Of course, the precise figures for enjambement preference are in part a function of the individual tradition and thus not subject to some universal, archetypal ratio. The tendency toward completeness within a single line may well be characteristic of many oral traditions, but once again linguistic diversity should caution against expecting absolute quantitative equivalence. Likewise, exactly how and under what conditions the thought and sentence are continued beyond a single line varies from one tradition to the other.[23] In South Slavic various kinds of appositive constructions regularly serve as vehicles for incremental, unperiodic extension. Such constructions may entail iterations of nouns, verbs, or other elements:

1. Oj! Rano rani <u>Djerdjelez Alija</u>,

   vEj! <u>Alija</u>, careva gazija,   (*6699*: 1–2)   Noun

   Oj! <u>Djerdjelez Ailja</u> arose early,

   Ej! <u>Alija</u>, the tsar's hero,

2. Kad sve beže knjige <u>rasturijo</u>,

   <u>Rasturijo</u> na četiri strane,   (*6699*: 369–70)   Verb

   When the beg <u>sent out</u> all the letters,

   <u>Sent</u> them <u>out</u> in the four directions,

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[21]See Higbie 1990: 82, Table 3.1. More generally, see her ch. 1 for a helpful history of enjambement studies.

[22]Herzog 1951. On musical dimensions, see espec. Erdely 1995; also Bartók 1953–54, Lord 1960: 37–41, and Bynum 1979: 14–43.

[23]See Higbie 1990: espec. chs. 2 and 5 for an excellent analysis of the various types of enjambement and their interplay with other aspects of Homeric diction. On other poems and traditions, cf. the sources cited by Higbie (14); on Old English, Foley 1990: 204.

3. Mor*e* biti neko <u>v̬od Stambola</u>,

<u>v̬Od Stambola</u>, stojna Carigrada.   (*6699*: 165–66)   Prepositional phrase

It must be someone <u>from Istanbul</u>,

<u>From Istanbul</u>, Carigrad the capital city.

In addition, each of these examples features the typically South Slavic characteristic of *terracing*. Also called pleonasm, this rhetorical and tectonic figure involves partial or complete repetition of a phrase from the preceding line: *Alija* for the full noun-epithet formula *Djerdjelez Alija* in #1; *rasturijo* for the full verb phrase "sent out letters" (*knjige rasturijo*) in #2; and the entire prepositional phrase in #3. None of these continuations is syntactically necessary; rather each one of them glosses what precedes with what amounts to an optional enrichment of the main thought.[24] From the point of view of traditional poetics, both the style and the individual phrases used as optional continuations have the effect of slotting the particular instances along familiar expressive tracks.[25] In such cases the function of enjambement is not to fill out incomplete syntax, nor simply to conform to a stylistic or compositional desideratum, but to invoke traditional referentiality.

Question III

Do metrical irregularities of the Homeric type also characterize South Slavic epic?

Answer #1: *Yes, they do.*

The *epske pjesme* contain numerous instances of so-called metrical irregularities, some of them similar to phenomena that Parry observed in Homer and linked to compositional style as early as his supplementary doctoral thesis (1928b). Far the most common such phenomenon is vowel hiatus, which may occur in as many as 25–50% of the lines in a given *guslar*'s performance and occasionally more than

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[24]Although the South Slavic epic uses pleonasm more frequently than the Homeric, it is of course not unknown in the *Iliad* and *Odyssey* (see Higbie 1990: 34–35). Note that in these examples and elsewhere the relationship between successive lines in South Slavic epic is not always well symbolized by conventional punctuation, which is after all intended for textual deployment. This amounts to an interesting problem in ethnopoetics, according to which the transcription of oral narratives must be tailored to represent the non-textual reality of oral performances.

[25]I would distinguish this phenomenon of slotting from conventional anaphora and epiphora, which privilege the linear correspondence of individual instances over the resonance of traditional referentiality.

once per line.[26] Most often, vowel hiatus coincides with the break between lines or, as in Homer, with the juncture between formulaic phrases, which in the *deseterac* always occurs between the fourth and fifth syllables. Consider the following examples, drawn not from the Stolac songs but from a transcribed and edited text, *The Death of Marko Kraljević*, collected and published by Vuk Karadžić in the mid-nineteenth century (vol. 2: no. 73), with points of hiatus underlined:

1. pokraj mora Urvinom planinom   (3)
on Mount Urvina beside the sea.

2. posrtati i suze roditi   (6, 14)
to stumble and to shed tears.

3. što je njima ostalo od Marka   (85)
which was left to them by Marko

All three first cola and all three second cola recur with alternate partners throughout the tradition, in some cases avoiding and in some cases engendering hiatus. Thus it appears that Parry's theory—namely, that hiatus marks points of linkage between phraseological units that have lives of their own in the tradition at large—certainly applies to the *epske pjesme* as well. As in Homer, hiatus indicates compositional seams where smaller words have been combined to form larger "words" within traditional diction.

Answer #2: *No, they don't.*

Unlike the manuscript records of traditional oral poetry from the former Yugoslavia or ancient Greece, however, acoustic records of South Slavic epic reveal a compensating strategy for handling vowel hiatus. As part of the specialized language of verse-making, the *guslar* in performance is able to deploy a selection of non-lexical and otherwise meaningless consonantal sounds that bridge the gap between vowels and thus avoid interruption by an intervening glottal stop. Here are some examples of hiatus and its bridging from Halil

[26]The only other metrical irregularities encountered with any frequency at all in the Stolac songs are hypersyllabism and hyposyllabism of the line as a whole. But these are still extremely rare: within the performances examined, 11- or 12-syllable lines amount to 1.2% of sung performances and 0.13% of oral-dictated texts, while 8- and 9-syllable lines account for only about 0.5% in both categories. See further Foley 1990: 88–94.

Bajgorić's *The Wedding of Mustajbeg's Son Bećirbeg (6699)*, with the inserted consonants italicized:[27]

> # 1. Prije zore *v*i bijela dana—   (4)
> Before dawn and the white day—
>
> # 2. Samo sebe *j*i svoga dorata.   (18)
> Only himself and his horse.
>
> # 3. Ćebe preže, bojno sedlo bači,
> *v*A po sedlu četiri kolana,
> *h*I peticu svilenu kanicu.   (30–32)
>
> He hitched the blanket, threw on the war-saddle,
> And on the saddle four girths,
> And the fifth a woven sash.
>
> # 4. Dok se svane *v*i sunce *v*ograne,   (6)
> When it dawned and the sun rose,

As we can appreciate visually, Bajgorić uses [v], [j], and [h] to smooth the aural pathway over these few lines, most often at the main caesura between formulaic line-parts or cola (example # 1 above, from *zore* to *i*; also examples # 2 and 4). The same device is also enlisted to avoid hiatus between whole lines (example #3) and even within cola (example #4, between *sunce* and *ograne*). As would be expected, the interlinear bridges appear only when a line both begins with a vowel and immediately follows a line that ended with a vowel.[28] The reason for such "performatives," as we may call these bridging consonants, is simply to allow the *guslar* to maintain a steady stream of vocalization as he sings the melodic phrase. Instead of having to interrupt the flow of song with a glottal stop,

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[27]Bajgorić employed an unusual variety of consonants (*h*, *v*, *j*, *m*, and *n*) as hiatus bridges. The repertoire of actual sounds, though not the placement or frequency of their deployment, varies considerably even within the group of Stolac *guslari*.

[28]Not all of the Stolac *guslari* employ interlinear bridges, presumably because the vocal rest after the ten-syllable line (an instrumental interlude usually equivalent to two syllables in duration) provides enough of a break that hiatus is not sensed as acutely. See further Bartók's transcription (1953–54).

he can maintain spoken and sung continuity from the end of one unit to the beginning of another.

At least three characteristics of such performatives should be emphasized. First, they tend to mediate breaks between cola or whole lines; hence the instances of hiatus they mark are usually diagnostic of formulaic phraseology. To put it another way, performatives very often delimit a metrical and phraseological unit of utterance, a "word." Second, they are features of performance—created for fluent sung delivery and meaningful only within that context. For this reason they translate poorly if at all to textual transcriptions, and indeed virtually all published collections of South Slavic epic silently eliminate them from the textual representation.[29] Taken together, these first two characteristics beg the question of whether Homer and his tradition might have employed a similar phonological strategy to bridge hiatus between formulaic elements that, like the *guslar*'s larger "words," also had lives of their own in the poetic tradition at large. The question is probably unanswerable, since we cannot reconstruct the editorial history of the Homeric poems with any certainty,[30] but it does suggest how much can be lost when we move from the aural experience of a performance to the silence of a textual libretto.[31] Third, performatives are one of the tell-tale signals that the

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[29]The publications of the Milman Parry Collection (*SCHS*), committed to representing epic performances as they actually occurred, are the exception to this rule. Interestingly, Nikola Vujnović, Parry and Lord's native assistant who transcribed many of the sung performances and took down most of the dictated texts in 1933–35, omitted most of these non-lexical elements. These omissions are the more intriguing in view of the fact that Vujnović was himself a *guslar*.

[30]Although evidence exists of the Alexandrian scholars' interest in metrical structure and editing principles, it is impossible to say precisely how that interest affected the actual transmission of the text that has reached us (see further Foley 1990: 20–31, Janko 1992). For that reason I refrain from attempting to estimate the contribution of editorial manipulation to the metrical structure of the received Homeric text. Two lines from the *Iliad* illustrate the range of metrical irregularity beyond vowel hiatus (cf. also Parry 1928b) and its solution by ancient and modern critics: 3.172, where ἑκυρέ represents an original σϝεκυρέ (the aspiration deriving from a geminated digamma and initial sigma [Kirk 1985: 289]) and thus makes position for the preceding φίλε; and 9.394, with Aristarchus' widely adopted emendation from γαμέσσεται to γε μάσσεται, which occurs in none of the manuscripts but avoids compromising Hermann's Bridge (the emendation made more justifiable by the collocation of γυναῖκά plus enclitic [γε/τε] at four additional sites [*Il.* 3.72, 3.93, 24.58, *Od.* 14.123; cf. γυναῖκα μὲν at *Il.* 7.362] and that combination's colonic form u - u u] at position 8 in the hexameter, a 95.6% word-type localization by O'Neill's figures [1942: 143; cf. Foley 1990: chs. 3–4]).

[31]Cf. the role of the (transcribed) nu-moveable and the (untranscribed) digamma; see espec. Horrocks 1996: section F.

poetic transaction is taking place in a special register, a dedicated *koinê*, and therefore that a certain kind of composition and reception are mandated.

Question IV

Is South Slavic epic composed in an "artificial language" like Homer's?

Answer #1: *Yes, it is.*

Like the *aoidos*, the *guslar* employs a specialized idiom marked not only by formulaic phraseology and metrical irregularities but also by multiple dialects (IVa) and archaisms (IVb). Together such features alert the audience or reader that the singer is using a particular version of the South Slavic language devoted solely to the performance of epic poetry, one among a sizeable cultural repertoire of registers. I have measured these dimensions of the epic register in South Slavic by contrasting the song-performances of four singers from the Stolac region (Mujo Kukuruzović, Ibro Bašić, Halil Bajgorić, and Salko Morić) against the speech they employed during their conversations with Parry and Lord's native assistant Nikola Vujnović. By this measurement, the traditional epic register departs significantly from the unmarked conversational standard.[32]

Answer #2: *No, neither of these specialized languages is "artificial."*

As compared to registers used by individuals for casual conversation, scholarly exchange, or reading and writing in modern media like newspapers, books, and most other printed sources, the *guslar*'s language may sound "artificial," just as Homer's distinctive, multi-dialectal, archaized language has often been characterized.[33] But South Slavic epic diction is no more inherently artificial than those other registers; it is simply differently configured because it has a particular history and social function. In fact, one could say with as much justice that, from the viewpoint of the epic phraseology, many of the quotidian registers seem artificial. The truth is that each idiom plays its own role in the overall ecology of

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[32]Especially in the mid-1990's, with fragmentation of the former Yugoslavia on an unprecedented scale, the notion of an "unmarked conversational standard" must be understood as no more than a convenient generalization that allows us to highlight certain unusual aspects of the poetic register. This is the logic behind measuring the *guslars*' epic language against their own conversational registers instead of a (mythical) regional or national standard.

[33]For an elegant presentation of the major features of Homer's dialect, see Horrocks 1996. I owe the following perspective on artificiality to a question posed by Kurt Raaflaub during a paper session at the 1995 meeting of the American Philological Association.

discourse, as reflected in their divergent combinations of verbal signs.[34] Each way of speaking is a viable linguistic instrument in its own right, and to understand any of them as artificial or eccentric is to dilute its expressive force. If the South Slavic and Homeric epic registers demonstrate features atypical of dialectally and chronologically streamlined versions of the language, then their very linguistic constitution is making a statement about how they are to be interpreted. Within the specialized arena designated by these "unusual" varieties of language, a certain kind of transaction is licensed. Homer and the *guslar* speak to their audiences in a uniquely empowered idiom, not an artificial dialect.

As both South Slavic and Homeric epic illustrate, the traditional nature of this kind of register—its usage over time and place as a dedicated expressive medium—exerts at least two trademark influences on a system of diction. First, it acts as a selective brake on linguistic change within its domain.[35] Indeed, both archaic features themselves and analogical adaptations or extensions based on archaisms characterize these two traditional registers. Second, they tolerate, preserve, and, at least in the case of South Slavic epic, even promote dialect mixture, which is also the result of a register's life-history. On the one hand, South Slavic shows that a conversational standard used in a given area, for example, or even one of the perhaps more cosmopolitan registers of novel-writing or scholarship, participates in a feedback loop of usage that continuously "updates" the phonology, morphology, and lexicon, subject to the requirements of the genre. On the other hand, both epic dictions demonstrate that traditional idioms necessarily harbor individual words and forms that either have long passed out of everyday currency and are therefore perceived as obsolete, or which cannot be justified in terms of a homogeneous, synchronically defined dialect. These features of the two dictions could be seen as symptomatic of an artificial language, something unreal or aberrant. But oral epic tradition does not share our frame of reference. What we choose to call "wrong" dialect and "archaic" or "borrowed" words and forms (basing our judgment on impertinent standards) are simply verbal signs that perform a function; indeed, their continued usage is the

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[34]For another example, cf. the specialized idiom employed in performing Serbian charms, which depend on "nonsense language" as well as multiple dialects, archaisms, and lexical borrowings. See further Foley 1995: 110–15.

[35]Witness the Homeric-Mycenaean correspondences discussed by Horrocks (1996: section D). Speaking of tmesis in Homer, Horrocks had earlier observed (1980: 5): "It can now be demonstrated that the preservation of these archaic rules of syntax in the language of the Epic is due entirely to the fact that they are absolutely fundamental to the art of oral composition of dactylic verse."

clearest possible evidence for their full partnership in a highly idiomatic medium, in what Maximilian Braun, referring to the language of the *guslar*, has called "eine Schriftsprache für Analphabeten" (1961: 49). Regardless of their currency outside the epic, these forms and words are uniquely functional within it.

In questions IVa (dialect) and IVb (archaism) immediately below, I concentrate chiefly on the South Slavic register in an attempt to familiarize Homerists with some parallel (but not absolutely congruent) features in the specialized language of the *guslar*.

Question IVa

Are the South Slavic and Homeric epic registers actually mixtures of geographically defined dialects?

Answer #1. *No, they aren't.*

I begin in this instance with the negative response, in order to emphasize that within the epic register *guslari* keep *mainly* to the geographical dialect they use for everyday speech transactions. Nonetheless, departures from the usual home dialect, although much less numerous than "appropriate" words and forms, are both recurrent and systematic: they participate crucially, as we shall see, in the creation and maintenance of formulaic phraseology. This situation seems directly parallel to Homeric diction, wherein "Ionic provides the predominant dialect base and the Aeolic forms appear routinely only where they offer an alternative metrical shape to their Ionic equivalents."[36] Once again, we gain a true perspective not by referring to lexicons and grammars that epitomize a historically and geographically thin version of the language, but by focusing on the special dynamics of the epic *koinê*.

Answer #2. *Yes, they are.*

For a start, consider the analogous mixtures of geographically defined dialects that constitute the poetic diction. Just as Homer's mainly Ionic language also draws from Aeolic Greek to answer compositional needs, so the *guslar*'s idiom combines two more or less distinct dialect sources to meet the challenge of composition in performance. When making their songs, as opposed to undertaking any other speech-act, South Slavic singers use both ijekavski (chiefly Bosnian and Croatian) and ekavski (chiefly Serbian) forms, not seldom in the

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[36]Horrocks 1996: section F. On Ionic and Aeolic forms, and the various theoretical models for explaining their sequence and deployment, see sections F and G of the same essay.

very same line.[37] The major phonological difference between these dialects amounts to the ijekavski preference for *ije* where ekavski favors long *ē*, and *je* for short *e*. Thus, the ijekavski word for "child," for example, is *dijete* as opposed to ekavski *dēte*. Another such pair would be the words for "milk": *mlijeko* as opposed to *mlēko*.[38] The two dialects are of course mutually intelligible, since neither this nor any other difference between them constitutes a true impediment to understanding. But although native speakers normally use only the forms appropriate to their particular geographical context in most registers, South Slavic singers customarily and systematically have recourse to forms and syntactic features from both dialects when they code-switch to the traditional performance idiom. Moreover, trying to explain the diction used in their songs as either ijekavski or ekavski runs roughshod over the inescapable fact that, strictly speaking, it is neither.

In many cases, as with the examples of *dijete/dēte* and *mlijeko/mlēko* cited just above, one form is a syllable longer than the other—a negligible consideration in everyday spoken or written language but often a crucial matter within a diction that cooperates symbiotically with a ten-syllable poetic line.[39] From a synchronic, compositional perspective, the flexibility afforded by being able to turn to either form (here *dijete* or *dēte*) can be very useful to poets employing a metrical idiom. From the complementary diachronic perspective, an encapsulated formula that depends on either *dijete* or *dēte* is unlikely to substitute one dialect form for the other, since the new unit would immediately become unmetrical. One is reminded of built-in Homeric options like the genitive singular *-oio* ending for o-stem nouns, once understood as an Aeolicism but now shown to have a parallel in the Mycenaean dialect of the Linear B tablets.[40] This two-syllable inflection provides an option for the monosyllabic *-ou* and thus a

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[37]Magner (1972: 245) furnishes this basic breakdown of geographical dialects in South Slavic: "In general, ekavski is spoken in Serbia, while ijekavski (also referred to as jekavski) is spoken in Montenegro, Herzegovina, Bosnia, Croatia, Southern Dalmatia and Lika; ikavski dialects are spoken in Western Bosnia, in Slavonia (Posavina), in northwestern Dalmatia and in the archipelago north of Pelješac." The ikavski dialect does not enter the picture to any appreciable extent with the Moslem epic collected by Parry and Lord, our major focus here. See further Braun's similar remarks on the general South Slavic "epic dialect" (1961: 47–49).

[38] On this phonological contrast and its history, see espec. Vuković (1974: 66–85).

[39]There are of course other contrasts between these two dialects, and between Serbian and Croatian at large—in accent, noun gender, word formation, syntax, meaning, alphabet, and other phonological features (see Magner 1972: 247–50)—but none of these seems to have any systemic effect upon the constitution of the epic diction. Differences in lexicon, which do have such an effect, are treated below in IVb.

[40]On which, see Chadwick 1958, Palmer 1962: 99, 108; Janko 1982: 50–53; Horrocks 1996: section D.

compositional flexibility. In fact, a well-known formula in the epics and hymns that features this option alongside a quite different ending memorably illustrates the principle of metrically selected forms: πολυφλοίσβοιο θαλάσσης ("of the loud-sounding sea"), which combines an earlier adjectival ending with an Ionic noun ending.[41]

To illustrate a similar kind of mixture in the South Slavic register, consider two examples, both of them drawn from the Stolac singers' performances. The first involves the deployment of the doublet *dijete/dēte*, the ijekavski and ekavski forms of the word for "child" discussed above. Within the sample of six epic songs, Kukuruzović has occasion to use this word 14 times, and the dialect form he employs depends strictly on the metrical environment. That is, when he is naming the hero Halil, he turns to the ijekavski form *dijete*, fashioning a six-syllable noun-epithet formula, *dijete Halile* ("child Halil"). This *reč* or larger "word" thus consists of the three-syllable version of "child" accompanied by the vocative inflection of Halil, constituting a relatively common phrase that can serve as either a pseudo-nominative or the vocative that it is.[42] In all other instances, however, Kukuruzović resorts to the two-syllable ekavski *dēte*, as in phrases like "A sjede mu dēte besjediti" ("But the child began to address him") or "Dēte, si mi rezil učinijo" ("Child, you have shamed me"). None of these phrases, neither the six occurrences of *dijete Halile* nor the eight occurrences of various other patterns, will tolerate substitution of the alternate form. The singer speaks the poetic language fluently by speaking it multidialectally, and according to the metrical rules.

The second example involves the other of our doublets, *mlijeko/mlēko*. In this case Kukuruzović employs only the shorter, two-syllable form within his recorded repertoire. But alongside the ekavski *mlēko* he uses adjectives inflected as ijekavski forms, as in the following two lines:

Ovčijem te zadojila mlēkom   1868.1279

She began to nurse you with sheep's milk

A tvojijem mlēkom zadojila   1287a.638

But you nursed [him] with your milk.

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[41]*Il.* 1.34, 2.209, 6.347, 9.182, 13.798, 23.59; *Od.* 13.85, 13.220; *h. Merc.* 341; *h. Ven.* 4; cf. also Hesiod, *Op.* 648. The combination of θαλάσσης with *πολυφλοίσβου would make this hemistich phrase unmetrical and dissolve its identity and usefulness as a formulaic element.

[42]As explained below (this section), the vocative can serve as a bi-form for the nominative in order to eke out a colonic length.

Although one would never find such concatenations as *ovčijem...mlēkom* or *tvojijem mlēkom* in conversational speech or any other register of South Slavic, they are perfectly natural and unartificial in the epic diction. Indeed, because the variant dialect forms occur in the very same line, as partners in a single noun phrase, there can be no question of "different sources" or imitation of an alternate geographical dialect.[43] In both lines, and in epic performance as a whole, the dialect that the *guslar* speaks is neither true ijekavski nor ijekavski with occasional ekavski forms, but rather the traditional register.

Of course, such "decisions"—as well as other kinds of adjustments like those examined below—are based on options inherent in the register and are thus no more "conscious" or strategic than making subjects agree with verbs. It is a matter of what linguists call "competence,"[44] or simply fluency in the *koinê*. What is more, many such combinations come to the *guslar* as encapsulated phrases—as *reči* or larger "words," in the singers' own conception of the items that constitute their register. Especially given the contemporary political situation in which ethnicity has become cause for outright war, it must be stressed that the South Slavic epic register can and does supervene ethnic or geographical affiliation. While ekavski or ijekavski speakers naturally favor their "home" dialect to a large degree, traditional phraseology always and everywhere entails a utilitarian mixture of forms, sorted not according to the singer's individual speech habits but rather *metri causa*.[45]

Closely allied to the matter of dialect is the set of syllabic adjustments used by the *guslar* and his poetic tradition to mold and maintain the ongoing symbiosis between prosody and phraseology.[46] These adjustments do not stem from

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[43]One could argue that *tvojijem* represents a formation by analogy with ijekavski inflection, rather than an example of that inflection itself. But the point remains, and is perhaps even strengthened: the poetic language provides a metrical bi-form as necessary, and within the poetic register there is no absolute dividing line between naturally occurring and analogous forms.

[44]Cf., e.g., Briggs 1988.

[45]Thus Braun observes (1961: 48) "dass Sänger, die an sich eine andere Mundart sprechen, beim Liedvortrag diesen 'epischen Dialekt' nachzuahmen suchen"; cf. Palmer (1962: 98), who understands the Homeric register as "the product of a long tradition of oral poetry." This was of course Parry's basic argument (1932) about the Homeric language as the language of an oral poetry. Cf. also Horrocks 1980: 4–5; 1996. Although it is beyond the scope of the present essay, I should like to emphasize that ultimately I agree with those who view Homeric and other traditional registers not *metri causa*, but rather *artis causa*; for supporting evidence, see espec. Foley 1991, 1995 forthcoming.

[46]These are synchronic adjustments used by the Stolac *guslari* and can be distinguished, in theory if not in practice, from the dialect-based alternative forms discussed immediately above. Given the uncertainty of the editorial history of the Homeric texts, it would be difficult to locate unambiguous examples of the same (performance-based) phenomenon in our *Iliad* and

alternate dialect forms, but they do provide the same kind of compositional flexibility. For descriptive purposes, and again basing our distinctions on the language used by *guslari* in conversation, we can separate strategies that "subtract" from those that "add" syllables to the expectable form.[47] On the subtraction side of the ledger we list those features that entail compression: aphaeresis, dropping an initial syllable; syncope, suppressing a medial syllable; and apocope, deleting a final syllable. Common examples include:

Aphaeresis—ovako > 'vako [thus]:

> Pa mu 'vako mlada govorila (*6617*.134)

> Then the young woman spoke to him thus

Syncope—obećao > obeć'o [promised]:

> Obeć'o sam nebrojeno blago (*6617*.404)

> I promised uncounted wealth

Apocope—evo > ev' [here]:

> Ev' zemana dvadeset godina (*6617*. 73)

> Here it's been twenty years' time.

Adjustments like these can become institutionalized features of the epic register for an individual singer, for a region, or more widely. Some are linked to specific words, such as *ovako* and *evo* in the first and third examples above, and some affect a whole class of words or forms, like the generalized reduction of the masculine past inflection from the disyllabic *-ao* to monosyllabic *-o* in the second example.[48] These and many other elements, like the personal pronouns and function words that can occur as disyllables, monosyllables, or unvocalized phones,[49] offer compositional plasticity. Diachronically, many of these reduced words and forms are already part of encapsulated phrases learned as *reči* by the

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Odyssey. Note, however, the opinion of G. Edwards, who observes that "Hesiod is not averse to eking out a word artificially with an extra syllable" (1971: 104).

[47]Of course, this descriptive convenience privileges the unmarked language, viewing the epic register as somehow aberrant—wanting in regularity, unstable, and so forth. The present essay aims at a more democratic view of registers and speech-acts.

[48]Other frequent reductions of this type include *išao/iš'o* ("[he] went") and *dao/d'o* ("[he] gave"). In South Slavic epic the past participle is very often used without the copular auxiliary typical of the standard language to express a simple past action. This is another feature of the epic *koinê*.

[49]For example, the genitive singular of the second person singular pronoun can be *tebe*, the enclitic *te*, or the elided *t'*; this last possibility is effectively zero syllables long, since it must cooccur with a following vowel to yield even a single syllable.

singers, so that metrical accommodation has become part of a unit that functions
at a higher level. Additionally, a *guslar* may apply the principles of variation
derived from "regular" syllabic reduction to a "new" situation, thus generating a
form that may not already be common coin in the traditional register. Aphaeresis,
syncope, and apocope greatly smooth the singer's—and the tradition's—
compositional path, providing malleable constituents with which to construct
encapsulated formulas as well as set phrases that exist within the register as
larger "words."

The same is true of strategies for syllabic flexibility that "add" to standard,
expectable forms. Of the corresponding modes for syllabic expansion—
prosthesis, epenthesis, and proparalepsis—only the last occurs with any
regularity. That is, at least within the Stolac songs syllables are never added to
the beginning of a word in the South Slavic *koinê*, and very seldom do they
expand a word from within. But proparalepsis is a relatively common adjustment
that as a rule operates on the level of the *reč*, or larger "word," adding a syllable
to the end of a colonic or linear unit. A case in point is the frequent and systemic
strategy that substitutes a vocative for a nominative inflection, with no change in
overall sense or syntax. Since the vocative of many nouns, especially proper
names, is one syllable longer than the nominative, the alternate inflection provides
a metrical bi-form, just as "foreign" items from the Aeolic dialect conventionally
offer alternative metrical bi-forms for the basically Ionic dialect of Homer. This is
the situation with two of the most famous, and infamous, heroes in South Slavic
epic, Mustajbeg of the Lika and Prince Marko. The simple nominative forms of
these names, *lički Mustajbeg* and *Kraljević Marko*, both produce five-syllable
increments, one syllable shy of fitting the assigned slot for noun-epithet formulas.
One of the tradition's solutions to such quandaries—and the regularity of the
"irregularity" ensures that it is genuinely a property of a register shared by many
individuals—is to press the vocative inflections into service as the conventional
subjects of sentences: thus the six-syllable forms *lički Mustajbeže* and *Kraljeviću
Marko*. To these vocative names, which function precisely as if they were
nominatives, the singers customarily prefix four-syllable verb phrases, with
results like the following:[50]

Sejir čini lički Mustajbeže   Mustajbeg of the Lika gazed around   *6699.532*

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[50]Another way in which the Parry-Lord singers from the Stolac region eke out Mustajbeg's
name into a six-syllable form is by repeating the *beg* morph contained in his simplex name and
reversing the order of the other elements: thus, *beg Mustajbeg lički*, an apparently redundant
phrase that nonetheless proves more popular than the vocative expansion in our sample of
Stolac performances (46 to 18).

Progovara lički Mustajbeže	Mustajbeg of the Lika spoke forth	*6703*.417
Kad to začu Kraljeviću Marko	When Prince Marko heard this	57.90
Poranio Kraljeviću Marko	Prince Marko arose early	73.1

Question IVb

Does the South Slavic epic register, like that of the Homeric poems, depend upon archaisms?

Answer #1: *No, it doesn't.*

Far the greater part of the traditional register, both lexicon and morphology, is coincident with the speech used by the Stolac *guslari* in their conversations with Nikola Vujnović. In that sense the words and syntax used by the singer in performance are largely "contemporary."

Answer #2: *Yes, it does.*

Because the *koinê* used by South Slavic singers operates according to traditional rules, it includes phrases inherited from earlier times, phrases with features that have not survived in more streamlined, thoroughly contemporary registers. Again like the *aoidos*, the *guslar* thus depends upon a certain number of archaisms, both words and grammatical forms, that are no longer a part of the singers' conversational language but remain an integral feature of their traditional register.[51] In most such cases "modernizing" the lexicon or morphology would destroy the integrity of the unitary phrases so vital to fluent communication between singer and audience. Even when modernization does not simply render the "words" unmetrical and thus compositionally useless, it reorganizes or replaces their internal architecture. In those cases where archaisms are constituents of *reči*, they are unlikely to be replaced.

One of the most common sources of archaic words in South Slavic Moslem epic is the extensive inventory of Turkicisms. During the 500-year Ottoman reign over the Balkans, from the fourteenth century onward, Turkish words entered the general language in significant numbers, and many of them became part of the specialized poetic language still employed by the Stolac singers in the 1930's and

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[51]In addition to lexicon and morphology, the decasyllable prosody itself has been shown to be of considerable antiquity; see Jakobson 1952, Vigorita 1976.

beyond.[52] Today some of these earlier borrowings remain part of the singers'
conversational register, but most seem to be confined to the epic register. For
example, Turkish terminology associated with wedding ceremonies persists in the
highly conventional scenes of ritual bride-stealing and procession traditionally
associated with marriage in the epic (*6699*.549–56, 563–67):

Kad su bili dobro podranili,	When they had risen early,	
Sve naprijed careva <u>gazija</u>,	The tsar's <u>hero</u> was ahead of them all,	550
νEj, <u>gazija</u> Djerdjelez Alija,	Eh, the <u>hero</u> Djerdjelez Alija,	
Pa za njime Silan Osmanbeže,	And after him Osmanbeg the Powerful,	
νOsmanbeže starosvat svatovim',	Osmanbeg eldest witness among witnesses,	
Pa za njime Mujo <u>buljubaša</u>—	And after him <u>commander</u> Mujo—	
<u>Buljubaša</u> bješe <u>selambaša</u>—	The <u>commander</u> was the <u>greeter</u>—	555
Pa za njima <u>paša</u> sa Budima....	And after them the <u>Pasha</u> of Budim....	
Kad su bili do Kanidže bil*i*,	When they were at white Kanidža,	
ν A dobro *ji* tamo dočekaše,	They awaited them there for a while,	
Dočekali kanidžk*i* ν<u>ajane</u>	Awaited the <u>leaders</u> of Kanidža	565
Na ν<u>alaju</u> i turskom <u>selamu</u>,	With a <u>troop</u> and a Turkish <u>greeting</u>,	
Poglavare na gornje ν<u>ahare</u>.	Chieftains in the upper <u>rooms</u>.	

Aside from the sheer density of Turkicisms in this passage, most of them not in
common usage in everyday vocabulary, their fossilization in larger phraseological
"words" provides an interesting parallel to archaisms in Homeric diction. For
example, fully ten of the seventeen occurrences of *gazija* ("hero") in the Stolac
sample are lodged in the colonic formula *careva gazija* ("tsar's hero"), and the
remaining seven all participate in figures of leonine rhyme.[53] When one adds the

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[52]Turkicisms are numerous enough in the South Slavic epic songs, especially but not
exclusively the Moslem epics, to require a special lexicon (Škaljić 1979). In the Stolac songs
many of the Turkicisms are lodged in a second-colon formula, "X *učiniti*," where X = the
borrowed Turkish word; frozen within this general-purpose phrase, which means "to do or
perform X," they take on the identity of a larger "word" and resist internal change. Cf. Skendi
1953 on the influence of Albanian language and epic phraseology on South Slavic epic nearer
the Albanian border.

[53]Either with the proper name *Alija* (6) or another Turkicism, *jabandžija* ("foreigner, stranger").

terraced repetition at lines 550–51, it becomes clear that the network of traditional structure makes "updating" of this Turkicism difficult if not impossible. The same is true of the noun-epithet phrase *Mujo buljubaša* in line 554, the rhyming and terraced Turkicisms in 555 (*Buljubaša / selambaša*), and the noun-epithet phrase *paša sa Budima* in 556.[54] Especially telling in this regard is the colonic formula *kanidžki vajane*: although we find four additional instances of the whole phrase in the Stolac performances, the Turkicism *ajan* ("leader") never occurs outside the context of this composite "word." The epic register has constructed a *reč* that contains this archaic item, and in preserving the whole phrase it also preserves this otherwise long-outdated constituent.

But not all archaisms in the South Slavic epic register are lexical. One of the more widespread anachronisms is morphological in nature: the frequent usage of the aorist verb tense, largely outmoded in present-day conversational and written genres.[55] Again our primary comparison is with the Stolac singers' own conversations with Nikola Vujnović, and in this unmarked register—so different on many scores from the epic "way of speaking"—the aorist is almost non-existent. Many instances of the aorist in the Stolac performances clearly reflect the principle of syllabic diversity and metrical bi-forms examined and illustrated above. Here is a set of examples from Bajgorić's *The Wedding of Mustajbeg's Son Bećirbeg* (*6699*.804–9):

*v*A zavika lički Mustajbeže:	And Mustajbeg of the Lika began to shout:
"Svi *j*imami na dovu stanite,	"All you imams start up in prayer, 805
*v*A kurbane sinu *v*oborite."	And slaughter the animals for my son."
Tada njemu <u>padoše</u> kurbani,	Then the animals <u>were felled</u> for him,

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[54]Note that of 69 total instances of *buljubaša* (in various cases) in the Stolac sample, 58 are involved in this same noun-epithet formula, *Mujo buljubaša*, or its metathesized equivalent *buljubaša Mujo*; cp. the cognate formulas *buljubaša Tale* (3) and *buljubaša Ibro* (1). On the rhyme in 555, cf. *6699*.582: "Buljubaša turski selambaša," which amounts to the same line with the (inessential) copula deleted and replaced by the adjective "Turkish."

[55]See Benson (1980: 774). Magner (1972: 322) observes that "the aorist is sometimes used in speech, but its usage is usually limited to storytelling." Other South Slavic folk genres employ the aorist with some regularity, such as the metrical charms, or *bajanje*; cf. Foley 1995: 118, lines 26–28 (version A3), 25–27 (version B1). On usage in proverbs, see below the discussion of proverbial expressions in the epic. Also pertinent is the fact that the literate Montenegrin poet and archbishop Petar II Petrović Njegoš (1813–51), composing his poems pen in hand but also very much in the traditional register of South Slavic epic, makes frequent use of "words" involving the aorist tense and other archaic features. See further Lord 1986: espec. 30–34 and Haymes 1980.

νA na dovu <u>stadoše</u> *j*imami,   And the imams <u>started up</u> in prayer,

Bećirbegu <u>moliše</u> za zdravlje.   <u>Prayed</u> for Bećirbeg's health.

In this brief passage Mustajbeg orders the Moslem priests, or imams, to slaughter the *kurbani*, the sacrificial animals, for his son's sake just as the young man is about to enter a life-or-death duel with a certain Baturić ban. In all three cases the underlined aorist verbs describe the actions taken in response to Mustajbeg's orders, and each occupies a unique phrase in the sample of South Slavic epic from Stolac. Nevertheless, although we cannot point to recurrence of these particular phrases for *prima facie* evidence of traditional character, we can note that the aorist forms offer a metrical alternative to either the historical present or simple past forms that might have been used.[56] Leveling the inflections to agree with the conversational standard would thus make these lines unmetrical and compromise their integrity as larger "words," just as replacing the Turkicisms would have done. It thus seems safe to interpret *padoše*, *stadoše*, and *moliše* as archaic verb forms frozen inside *reči*. The fact that they occur together and in a unifying ritual context, again in parallel with the group of Turkicisms examined above, strengthens that interpretation.

     Aorists can also be frozen into other contexts, one of the more common of which is the leonine or in-line rhyme that matches the two colon-ends in the decasyllable. This aspect of acoustic architecture tends to fix phraseology and limit variation; because the lines it undergirds are more tightly organized, both by sense and by sound-patterning, they tend to resist change even more stubbornly than other "words" in the traditional register. Additionally, in-line rhyme is often the site for proverbial phraseology of one kind or another, maxims that may also be free-standing proverbs outside the epic and that index traditional ideas of wide applicability.[57] Such is the case with the following example, which combines the stabilizing influence of leonine rhyme with a unifying semantic idea (*6699*.519-20):

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[56]The historical present forms would be, respectively, *padnu* (imperfective *padaju* unlikely), *stanu*, and *mole*, all two rather than three syllables in length. The simple past inflection would yield, respectively, *su pali*, *su stali*, and *su molili*. While two of these latter verbs are three-syllable forms, the fact is that the auxiliary *su* is customarily suppressed in the epic register, causing a deletion of one syllable; even if it were not deleted, the auxiliary is enclitic and would cause a revision of order among the constituents of the phrase. In short, modifying the verb from aorist to either historical present or simple past means a major revision of the phrase.

[57]An example from Moslem epic would be: "San usnila, pa se prepanula" ("You've dreamed a dream, so you're frightened"). In addition to offering comfort for a nightmare, this proverbial expression guarantees that the nightmare—customarily dismissed as the silly notion of a young

ѵEj <u>klanjaše</u>, ѵonda <u>večeraše</u>,   E, <u>they prayed</u>, and afterward <u>ate their evening meal</u>,

Pa <u>legoše</u> Turci da spavaju.   Then the Turks <u>lay down</u> to sleep.

The ritualistic connection between praying and eating meshes with the sound-patterning in *klanjaše / večeraše*, and the sleep that follows can also be understood as semantically linked. Like free-standing proverbs, this grouping indexes a cultural idea. The same combination of acoustic design and proverbial meaning underlies another phrase that depends on in-line rhyme of aorist verbs (*6699*: 549):

Tu <u>noćiše</u>, dobro <u>podraniše</u>.   Here <u>they spent the night, they arose</u> early.

It is significant that all other usages of the verb *podraniti* in the Stolac sample employ the simple past to indicate that a certain person "arose early."[58] Only this particular instance, because of the stability imposed by the morphological rhyme of forms in *-iše*, retains the aorist. In short, as these examples illustrate in various ways, the aorist, while moribund in the singers' conversational register and elsewhere, seems alive and well in the traditional idiom.

Conclusion

To summarize, the analogy between the special epic registers employed by the *guslar* and the *aoidos* presents a viable avenue for investigation: upon careful examination their similar features bear out the original comparison forged by Milman Parry and Albert Lord and carried forward by others.[59] At the same time, it would be an error—in both philology and comparative research—to assume simple congruency between the two traditions. As we have seen, each register manifests certain idiosyncrasies; each exhibits characteristic features not found in the other. To put the matter telegraphically, each register constitutes a living, functional variety of language with its own rules for composition and reception. Because these two languages serve parallel compositional and communicative purposes, it can prove profitable to set them side by side and observe how they

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girl—will in fact come true, bringing destruction upon those who ignore her warning. See further Foley 1994: 85–86.

[58]Examples include "Pa je Pero rano <u>podranijo</u>" ("Then [General] Pero <u>arose</u> early," 1868.1642) and "Pa banica rano <u>podranila</u>" ("Then the banica <u>arose</u> early," 1287a.23, etc.). A similar observation may be made of the line examined just above: the only other uses of *klanjati* ("to pray") are the two occurrences of the following line, with a historical present tense: "Pred džamijom dje <u>klanjaju</u> Turci" ("Before the mosque where the Turks <u>were praying</u>," 1287a.866, *6617*.1769).

[59]See the bibliographical materials cited in n. 1 and 4.

mutually illuminate one another. In this way the living tradition can in some ways help us better understand the tradition that survives only as texts. Nonetheless, part of that illumination must always consist of an unblinking awareness of differences as well as similarities. In fact, the entire South Slavic analogy is most helpful to Homerists only when it is properly attenuated, only when we are willing to move beyond reductive claims of absolute congruency or incongruency and toward the kind of detailed, nuanced comparison that both poetic languages and both epic poetries deserve.[60]

More precisely, we have identified a number of similarities, all of which can be traced to the fact that the Homeric and South Slavic epic registers represent *traditional* ways of speaking. Both demonstrate a formulaic phraseology that follows traditional rules for the formation and maintenance of large "words," unitary speech-acts that the South Slavic singers refer to as *reči*. Likewise, we find similar patterns of enjambement and metrical irregularity in the two epic poetries, patterns directly traceable to the incremental nature of their dictions. Finally, while not really "artificial," each idiom juxtaposes archaisms and alternate (geographically defined) dialects alongside expectable forms. But the two registers are by no means wholly congruent. Their formulaic structures differ because of disparities in meter and traditional rules; perhaps the most dramatic consequence of these disparities is the complete lack of thrift in South Slavic epic. Additionally, necessary enjambement is if anything more strongly avoided by the *guslar*, who has his own repertoire of interlinear strategies. Likewise, the major metrical irregularity in South Slavic epic, vowel hiatus, is mitigated by consonantal bridges or "performatives." And, when examined closely, each poetry demonstrates its own particular mixture of dialects and archaisms.

At a functional level, traditional registers enable the *guslar* and the *aoidos* to compose fluently in a coherent idiom. But these specialized languages are extraordinary in another way as well. Both the ancient Greek of Homer and the South Slavic sung and spoken in performance by the Stolac bards depart significantly from the kind of language to which we are accustomed, and indeed from the language used by those same bards in conversations with Nikola Vujnović. It is precisely those regular and expectable departures that serve a crucial function for the audience and later the reader: they signal the nature of the poetic event, prescribing the communicative channel and keying response. Since

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[60]See further Foley 1990 on distinguishing among ancient Greek, South Slavic, and medieval English narrative on the basis of medium or document, phraseology, typical scenes, and story-pattern.

according to Mujo Kukuruzović, Salko Morić, and their peers the "words" they employ are also speech-acts, we may conclude that every act of composition implies a corresponding act of reception.[61] The challenge issued to us by both the *guslar* and the *aoidos* is clear enough: nothing less than fluency in their traditional registers.

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[61]For an attempt to restore the balance between composition and reception in oral and oral-derived traditional verse, see further Foley 1991, 1995.

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