

ИНСТИТУТ ЗА СРПСКОХРВАТСКИ ЈЕЗИК

ЈУЖНОСЛОВЕНСКИ ФИЛОЛОГ

Уређивачки одбор:

др *Ирена Грицкай*, др *Милка Ивић*, др *Павле Ивић*, др *Радослав Кайиџић*,
Блаже Конески, др *Александар Младеновић*, **др Берислав Николић**, др *Асим Пецо*,
др *Мишар Пешикан*, др *Живојин Сјанојчић*

Главни уредник

МИЛКА ИВИЋ

XXXII књ.

БЕОГРАД

1976

THE ANTIQUITY OF SERBO-CROATIAN VERSE¹

There are according to Jakobson (1952, p. 56), „four recitative forms of Common Slavic versification“. All of these have survived into modern Serbo-Croatian. We have the epic decasyllable (4/6) and octosyllable (5/3) on one hand and on the other the short line (4/4) and long line (4/4/4) of laments.

Jakobson (1952, pp. 25—7, pp. 62—5) has convincingly shown that the epic decasyllable (xxxx/xxuu-x) matches the Greek proverb-meter, the paroemiac (uu-u/u/-uu-x).² It also matches the Vedic decasyllable, xxxx/x/ /x-u-x, which occurs as a variant of the much more common 11-syllable line, or triṣṭubh-line, xxxx/x/xx-u-x.

Jakobson presented evidence that the quantitative close of the 10-syllable line was uu-x. This has been confirmed by the edition, in 1953—4, of transcriptions of tapes in the Parry-Lord collection. Thanks to the work of Professor Gojko Ružičić it is possible to compare the conversational style of Salih Ugljanin, a guslar whom Professor Parry met in Novi Pazar, with his style in singing. There are, in his conversational style, 230 longs out of 1291 syllables, or just under 18%. When he sings, however, there are, out of 196 lines of verse, only 16 longs (8%) in position 7, 6 longs (3%) in position 8, but 100 longs (50%) in position 9. For example, from his performance of *Pjesma od Bagdata* we have the following (Parry-Lord, 1954, p. 8):

Sprêmi š njima pãše i vezire,
Pã sidõše do grãda Bagdáta.

¹ This paper owes a great deal to the friendly encouragement of my colleague, Wayles Browne. The extent of my debt to Professor Roman Jakobson should be apparent in every paragraph.

² It should be noted that in Greek and Vedic a light syllable is any syllable ending in a short vowel, all other syllables are heavy. Boundaries between syllables for these two languages are defined as V—CV and VC—C(C)V.

Bijo Bagdāt dvādēset gōdina
 Bez prōmena dānjem i po nōci,
 Nīt' mu vāra nade jo' duvāra,
 A deljātīm da učini kvāra.

And from his performance of *Ropstvo Đulica Ibrahima* (Parry-Lord, 1954, p. 55) we have

A dovōdu lj' kosātē Mađārke
 Žēnū lj' āge Tūrke Krājišnike
 A dovōdū lj' kōnje sedljenike
 Ja donōsū lj' na tojāge blāgo³
 Kāka igbāl sāde ju Turākā
 A pōtlje, češ, slūgo Rādovāne;
 Sedi lj' mōja kūla na cénāru

This compares well with the paroemiac or proverb meter, Bergk's (1854) oldest Greek verse form.⁴ In its oldest, purely syllabic form, uu-u/u/-uu-x, it shows the same closing and caesura adjoining the fifth foot. Thus (from Meineke, 1856)

κολοφῶνα κακῶν ἐπέθηκας uu-u/u-uu--

'you have put on the summit of evils = you have done the worst thing imaginable' or

ἐπιχώριοι οὔρον ἴσασι uu-uu/-uu-u

'the inhabitants know a fair wind'

In Vedic, also, one has the decasyllable with caesura adjoining the fifth syllable, thus *R.V. V. 41. 10^b*:

vṛ̥ṣno astoṣi bhūmīāsya gārbham	-u--u/-u-u--
tr̥itó nápātam ap̥āṃ suvr̥ktī	u-u-u/u-u-u
gṛ̥ṇitē agnīr etāri ná śūṣaīḥ	u-u-u/uu-u--
śociśkeṣo ní rināti vānā	----/uu-uu-

³ *Na tojage blago* is, according to Lord (1953), vol. 1, p. 341, a conflation of *na tojage glave* and *na toware blago*.

⁴ Bergk (1854, p. 396) claimed that the basic form was

--uu-uu-x

which yielded, by resolution,

uu-uu-uu-x.

The second form, however, is older. This yielded the first form by contraction. For the most recent treatment of contraction, see Nagy, 1974, pp. 49—50.

^b The translation is entirely dependent on Geldner, 1951, and Renou, 1959.

'I praised the new born of [the earthly steer] = Agni, [as] Trita [praised] Apām Napāt with lovely praise. Agni is praised by hymns (as a race-horse?); the flamehaired one destroys the woods.'

Lines one and three are 5/6, line two 5/5 and line four 4/6.

The closing of the Vedic line (-u-x) is not quite the same as the closing of the Greek paroemiac or Serbo-Croatian epic decasyllable (uu-x). This however is explained by Meillet's observation (1923, p. 45) that, 'Le rythme du védique est nettement iambico-trochaïque.' Furthermore, Watkins (1963, p. 210) claims that 'the paroemiac is indeed present [in Vedic 10 and 11 syllable-lines], and it occupies a pivotal position.' This pivotal position, however, is only marginal; the normal structure of the 10 or 11-syllable line in Vedic is xxx/x(x)x-u-x.

If one considers the Greek and Vedic evidence, one may wonder what has happened to a line breaking 5/5 in Serbo-Croatian. The answer is supplied by Jakobson (1952, pp. 56—7). Symmetry is used for laments, asymmetry for epics. The division 5/5 would result in a symmetrical break into two pentasyllabic cola. Since this line was used for epics an asymmetrical break was required; thus 5/5 is disallowed on the basis of genre.

Turning next to the dodecasyllabic line of laments, xxx/xxxx/xxxx, there are a number of people⁶ who view it as coming from an eight-syllable line. In Serbo-Croatian this would mean from the short line, xxx/xxxx, of laments. It seems that there are only three places at which a tetrasyllabic colon may be added to the eight-syllable line to form a dodecasyllable. (Additional material is indicated in parentheses). These are at the beginning 1) 4+4 > (4+) 4+4, in the middle 2) 4+4 > 4(+4)+4, or at the end 3) 4+4 > 4+4(+4). Now one way of checking dodecasyllables for syntactic pauses will give us figures to work with: checking punctuation. Out of 663 lines in Šaulić, 1929, and Karadžić, 1867, there are 640 examples of a comma or other mark of punctuation after syllable eight, i.e. 97%, whereas after syllable four there are only 63 cases, i.e. 8%. Furthermore after syllable eight it is frequently another (and presumably stronger) mark than a comma, while after syllable four it is only once a mark other than a comma.

On the assumption that there is some reflection of its origin in the dodecasyllable, possibility one seems to be eliminated. Numbers two and three are still possible, although with number two one would expect a syntactic pause after syllable four. However when we realize the great frequency

⁶ R. Jakobson (1952), H. S. Anathanarayana (1973), G. Nagy (1974) and J. F. Vignora 'The Indo-European 12-syllable Line' (forthcoming).

with which the last tetrasyllabic colon is a vocative or a lament, it seems that possibility three is the correct solution. For example, we have from Karadžić (1867, p. 180):

U raju je mjesto tebe, mudra glavo!
 A divan ćeš prolaziti divna diko!
 Naše stare pregledati, moj ugledu!
 Braću Srbije naoditi, Srpska glavo!
 Sve knezove i kmetove, stavni kmete!
 I od mora vlasteline, moj vlastelu!

Jakobson was aware of this syntactic pause (1952, p. 34), but viewed the greater trochaicity of the final colon as decisive in determining (*loc. cit.*) that the short line was the long line minus the middle colon. It is possible, though, that we have here, in both the shorter line (xxxx/xxxx) and longer line (xxxx/xxxx/xxxx) of laments, an attempt to indicate that the line is ending by the greater trochaicness of the final colon.

If we turn now to the short line, there is a claim made by Jakobson (1952, p. 53) that the asymmetrical octosyllable (5/3) shows a tendency toward 'the lengthening of the final syllable, if accented.' However, I should like to quote from a letter I received several years ago from Žarko Ružić, 'ali kad se uzme u obzir svih 888 nesimetričnih osmeraca iz I Vukove knjige (beograd. izd. od 1953), onda izlazi da kvantitet na osmom slogu ne obuhvata ni trećinu stihova' (his emphasis).

Thus far I have added nothing new. My claim, now, shall be that in the short lines (4/4 and 5/3) of Serbo-Croatian there is a new scheme imposed, by the opposition between symmetrical and asymmetrical verse in Slavic, on what were originally two variants of the short line. In Vedic it appears, on the basis of internal metrical reconstruction, that the iambic gāyatrī-line (xxxxu-ux) is later than the trochaic gāyatrī-line (xxxxxu-x). It is later because more of the closing has been fixed.⁷ Now, out of 1.000 iambic gāyatrī-lines only 82.5% show word end after the fourth or fifth syllable, whereas in trochaic gāyatrī-lines, in 328 lines with a heavy penultimate, there are a full 97% which show word end after either the fourth or fifth syllable. Furthermore, to refer to it as a trochaic line is in a way misleading as the following quotation will show: *R.V. VIII. 2. 31—33:*

31) evéd ešá tuvikūrmih	---u/uu--
vājāñ éko vájrahastah	----/-u--
sanád ámrkto dayate	u-u--/uu-

⁷ Nagy, 1974, p. 35. 'In the most archaic phases of Rig-Vedic composition, ... sporadic rhythmical irregularity is sanctioned even in the closing of the verse.'

32) hántā vṛtrám dáksinena	----/-u-u
índrah purú puruhūtáh	--u-/uu--
mahán mahībhiḥ śácibhiḥ	u-u--/u--
33) yásmín vísvás carṣaṇáyah	---/-uu-
utá cyautná jráyāmsi ca	u---/u-uu
ánu ghén mandí maghónah	uu---/u--

'Thus indeed this one mightily working, with club in hand, of old uninjured, alone distributes the prizes of victory. Indra kills Vṛtra with his right hand; Indra the very much called upon, the great with great powers. On whom all men and mighty deeds and (fields? or onsets?) [depend]. When he is drunk, he behaves like the freely giving lords.'

It strikes me that iambic cadences are much more common in trochaic gāyatrī stanzas than are trochaic cadences in iambic gāyatrī stanzas.⁸ In any event the situation reflects Watkins' observation (1963, p. 209) that, 'For the Vedic poet, iambic and trochaic cadences were different, yet recognizable as variants of the same verse.'

It is possible to imagine the same archaic eight-syllable line, with caesura after syllable four or five, surviving into modern Serbo-Croatian. At some point, then, the opposition between symmetrical and asymmetrical short lines (Jakobson, 1952, p. 56) became important. This then resulted in the splitting up of what had originally been a single verse into on the one hand an asymmetrical line (5/3) which became the short line of epic and on the other a symmetrical line (4/4) which became the shorter line of laments.

In summation, the epic decasyllable (xxxx/xxuu-x) has perhaps the strongest claim to antiquity. It is related to the Greek paroemiac and the rare Vedic decasyllable. The longer line of laments (xxxx/xxxx/xxxx) is probably to be derived from the shorter line (xxxx/xxxx) by a simple process of addition. The opposition between the shorter line of laments (xxxx/xxxx) and the asymmetrical short line (xxxxx/xxx) developed along the lines sketched in the preceding paragraph.

John F. Vigorita

⁸ It is of course obvious that a single line in gāyatrī is identifiable either as trochaic (heavy penultimate) or iambic (light penultimate). It should be remembered, however, that the gāyatrī stanza contains three lines and that these stanzas are very often arranged in groups of three. Thus to determine whether a section is in rising or falling meter, one has three or more often nine lines to examine. Thus in the quotation from *R.V. VIII. 2. 31—33* there are nine lines involved, of which six establish the movement as trochaic, but three lines show a light seventh syllable.

REFERENCES

- Anathanarayana, H.S. 1973 'Basic Metrical Pattern in the Poems of the Rig Veda'. *Acta Linguistica Hafniensia* XIV, 155—170.
- Bergk, Theodor 1854 'Ueber das älteste Versmass der Griechen'. Page references are to its reprinted form in *Opuscula Philologica* II, 1886; pp. 392—408. Halle a. S.; Buchhandlung des Waisenhauses.
- Geldner, Karl Friedrich 1951 *Der Rig-Veda*. Cambridge, Mass.; Harvard University Press.
- Jakobson, Roman 1952 'Studies in Comparative Slavic Metrics'. *Oxford Slavonic Papers*, 3, pp. 21—66.
- Karadžić, Vuk 1867 *Život i Običaji Naroda Srpskoga*. Vienna; Ana Karadžić.
- Lord see Parry-Lord.
- Meillet, Antoine 1923 *Les origines indo-européennes des mètres grecs*. Paris; Les Presses Universitaires de France.
- Meineke, August ed. 1856 *Theocritus, Bion, Moschus*; 'Epimetrum de proverbiiis paroemiasticis', pp. 454 ff. Berlin.
- Nagy, Gregory 1974 *Comparative Studies in Greek and Indic Meter*. Cambridge, Mass.; Harvard University Press.
- Parry, Milman and Albert B. Lord 1953—54 *Serbo-Croatian Heroic Songs*, vols. 1 and 2. Belgrade and Cambridge, Mass.; Serbian Academy of Sciences and Harvard University Press.
- Renou, Louis 1959 *Études Védiques et Parinéesennes, V*. Paris; E. DeBoccard.
- Šaulić, Novica 1929 *Srpske Narodne Tužbalice*. Belgrade; Grafički Institut 'Narodna Misao'.
- Watkins, Calvert 1963 'Indo-European Metrics and Archaic Irish Verse'. *Celtica* 6, pp. 194—249.

Резиме

Џон Вигорита

СТАРИНА СРПСКОХРВАТСКОГ СТИХА

Према Р. Јакобсону постоје „четири облика општесловенског рецитативног стиха“. Сва су четири сачувана и у савременом српскохрватском. То су, с једне стране, епски десетерац и осмерац, а с друге стране краћи и дужи стих у тужбалицама. Јакобсонова тврдња да десетерац, као и грчки „пословички“ стих, има завршетак *и-х* налази своју пот-

врду у објављеним епским текстовима са снимака из Пари-Лордове збирке. Дужи тужбалички стих изгледа да је настао од краћега додавањем још једног четворосложног дела на крају: 4-4 — 4-4-(4). Што се тиче два краћа стиха (5/3 и 4/4), чини се да су се развили од пређашње две варијанте осмосложног стиха, са цезуром после петог, односно четвртог слога. Према Јакобсону се у словенском усталила нова опозиција између несиметричних, прикладних за еп, и симетричних стихова, намењених тужбалици. Тако се за тужбалице употребљавао симетрички (4/4) а за епове несиметрички (5/3) стих.