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PARRY-LORD-FOLEY: AND WHAT CAN WE DO WITH THEM

Abstract: Formulae of the South Slavic oral epic songs can be sorted in three categories: 1) the *true formulae*, which are the oldest syntactic patterns that connect epics with other oral literary genres as well as they connect the different layers within one and the same genre; 2) the *rudimentary formulae* which are in fact common places as *white throat* (even in an Arab), *white dawn/day*, *green sword* etc. similar to the homeric formulae; 3) *formulae in the making*, named by Foley as "generic formulas", meaning by that moveable and changeable strings of words that can easily fit to the asymmetric epic decasyllable verse (4+6). Within a given epic body all the three types of formulae can exist at the same time, so it is often possible to track the development of a formula from a string of words to its full, closed form.

Key words: epic songs, epic formula, South Slavs, Christians, Muslims

Due to the huge interest of Milman Parry and Albert Bates Lord for the use of formula in South Slavic oral epic tradition, what started in 1930-ies as a support to the studies of homerology, in the last seventy-odd years developed into an intensive research of all kinds of epics – oral, transitional, and written, classical, medieval and modern. Among the rest, it resulted in such peculiar concepts as the formula density check – for example, which served as a means of appointing the degree of orality in a given text (Lord 1986, 478-481). There were also some inspiring insights on performance and new implementation of performative theories (especially by Foley 1995), as well as on the relationship between the epic and history, and so on. These issues still make the mainstream in the international epic studies, but for the South Slavic oral epic research at

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home they are not particularly useful, because they usually offer either irrelevant or out of point answers to some important questions. This may well be a case of linguistic barrier (the full understanding of a poetry should be based on the first hand knowledge of its language), but more than that it is caused by poor or one-dimensional knowledge of the Balkans itself, its history, culture mix, traditions etc.

In one of his latest works, even Foley - for example - made an unnecessary mistake by suggesting that Muslim epic songs were sung in Ottoman courts before they degraded to the coffeehouse performances (Foley 2010, 350), unnecessary because of the simple fact that this poetry was sung in the local idiom of Serbo-Croatian (or Macedonian or Bulgarian) language which has (either of them) never been a court language of the Ottoman Empire.² On the contrary, Slavic epic poetry, in both long (10 to 16 syllable verses) and short (8 to 10) verse, was sung on the courts from Russia and Moravia to Serbia and Bulgaria all the way long, before the Ottoman arrival to the Balkans. During the multientennial Turkish stay among the South Slavs, while the Slavic courts in the Balkans were no more, the asymmetric decasyllable epic songs became the popular chronicles of the times both old and new. That is where Foley made another big mistake within the same paper: while his definition of the Muslim attitude towards history was globally adequate (even though it could have been more detailed), identifying the historicity of Christian epic songs with the person of Prince Marko was a failure even a beginner should be careful to avoid. There is a huge bibliography on the mythical, legendary, symbolic and other interpretations of Prince Marko among all the South Slavs – Serbs, Croats, Bosniacs, Macedonians, Montenegrins, Bulgarians, and even non-Slavic Balkan peoples like Albanians.³ In the huge repertory of the things connected with Prince Marko in the South Slavic epic poetry, only two biographical details can be presumed as true: his connection with the old Maceodnian town of Prilep (archeological evidence) and the names of his father (king Vukasin Mrnjavcevic) and his

² The only way this poetry could have been played at courts was if the courts were of local character, for example in Bosnia or some other part within the empire. Many Bosnian *agas* and *beys* (local barons and dukes) really were wealthy enough to keep a court of local significance. But even they had to be of the originally Slavic family line, which was very often a case, especially in Bosnia and Lika.

³ Foley was probably misled by the works of prof. Koljevic whose very popular book *The Epic in the Making* (Oxford 1980) is actually a collection of literary essays more than a solid scholarly research. For the significance and importance of Prince Marko in the Balkan context conf. Ivanova 1992, Suvajdzic 2007, Ljubinkovic 2010.

own. Even his title is remembered wrongly: the Young King, his rightful title, is by no means the same as the lesser thing, Prince. Everything else in the songs about him has a mythological background, in Bulgarian songs even more than in Serbian and Macedonian. On the contrary, the songs about brigands (*hajduks*, *uskoks*) in the time of the Ottoman rule, the songs on two Serbian insurrections against the Turks (1804 and 1812), and on the Montenegrin battles for freedom after that are full of recent historical data, in many aspects even more accurate than often controversial and scarce historical evidence. But, those songs cannot be found only in one volume of Vuk Karadzic's collection (the book number two) which Foley consulted - it is really necessary to take them all into account.⁴

The last, but not the least – because it is also the most common – mistake which also occurs in the earlier mentioned paper of John Miles Foley (2010) is the analysis of Muslim and Christian epics in the reverse order. Probably because of the huge Harvard collection of Muslim epic songs at their disposal, the American scholars always start with what they have close at hand and then compare it with the Christian collections if they know of them and as far as they can read them. In a way, it is as if the Doric style in architecture would be reconstructed on the basis of "The historic Cincinnati Gas and Electric Co. building" in Cincinnati - Ohio, instead of on the authentic, still standing monuments of Greek antiquity, like Parthenon in Athens, for example.⁵ So, when analyzing the generic formulas of Muslim epic songs (p. 353) *nerodjena majka* (lit. "non-birthing mother") and *kukavica crna* (lit. "black cuckoo"), Foley inevitably loses their original, pan-Slavic meaning brought to the present day through many centuries, from the times long before Islam was even born: *nerodjena, kao i rodjena* (not by birth, but as by birth) is what is missing in the first formula which is usually said not only for a mother, but for every sort of virtual (not by blood) kinship – brothers, sisters and fathers as well. As for the cuckoo bird, it is usually grey – *sinja kukavica* – where the adjective *sinja/*

⁴ They are, actually, quite a few. The Leipzig edition counts them three (vols. II, III, IV), the state edition four (vols. VI, VII, VIII and IX), and the SANU edition from the manuscripts in Vuk Karadzic's legacy also three (vols. II, III, and IV). All in all - 10 volumes, and this is only the Karadzic collection numbered here because it really is the best.

⁵ The same goes for the length of Muslim songs which usually does not exceed 2000 or 3000 verses in the 19th century collections, probably because they were recorded by the local enthusiasts who did not pay to their *guslari* unless it was in certain quantities of *rakija* (strong alcoholic drink). Parry and Lord offered to pay by length and everybody was only too happy to oblige. It is a common knowledge that every good *guslar* can sing all the songs he knows one after another, without any breaks, as long as he sees a professional pride or some personal interest in it.

sinji is an archaism spoken in South Slavic area only in connection with this bird and the sea (*sinje more*). Turning grey into black in Muslim songs is an additional interpretation of an ill omen, which the cuckoo bird always brings in Slavic tradition.

So, to avoid any further discussion and to make a starting point in the undoubtedly great work of Parry and Lord, we should focus on one of the great ideas which Lord, unfortunately, did not have time to work out to details, but anyway marked as the broadening of formula concept from "the metrical milieu, the line ... [to] the syntactic milieu, the sentence, which often went beyond the boundaries of a line" (Lord 1986, 481). This syntactic function of formula was developed as an answer to the lack of transparency of sacral "milieu" in the deepest layers of South Slavic epic poetry. To understand it better, let us – very briefly – compare classical Homeric epics with medieval Slavic one, and let us do it from the standpoint of their "population".

In Homer, gods, demons, heroes, supernatural beings, and ordinary people mingle and exist together - mortals living, fighting and dying, immortals participating in their own way - but all at the same time and in the same place. Within that context there is no reason a formula should perform anything but a figure of style, poetic ornament, an introductory element (like leitmotif in Wagner's music), or an idiosyncrasy of a distinguished personality (Hera with bovine eyes, Iris with rosy fingers etc).

In South Slavic epic poems the only population are humans and a few supernatural beings (winged horse, three-headed man, dragon or snake, *vila* - close to fairy, but not quite the same), with only a few candidates for status of true hero (Prince Marko, Relja with wings, Musa the Robber with three hearts, and a handful of knights of Draco order, falsely identified with dragons proper). It is so much so that even the generic name – *junačke pesme* – can hardly be translated as *heroic poetry*, "junak" being closer to a warrior or a knight than to a full meaning of hero.⁶ A kind of Christian interpretation of heroic features can be recognized in personalities like holy kings and princes of Nemanjić dynasty⁷, in one and only Serbian emperor (tzar Dushan), and during the Ottoman

⁶ For that reason, professional translators usually choose *chivalric* poetry for the name of this genre.

⁷ The Nemanjić dynasty did not last long: it started in 12th century and ended with the Ottoman invasion in 15th. Its main representatives with a 'holy' as an attribute were: great zhupan Nemanja, later St. Simeon; prince Rastko, later St. Sava; duke and martyr Lazar Hrebeljanović etc. About the holy dynasties in medieval Serbia cf. Popovic 2006; Marjanovic-Dusanic 2007.

domination in rebels⁸ and leaders of two Serbian uprisings. Although the latter are all recent historical figures engaged in 19th century battles - but battles fought for national liberation, they fit the same model because their epic profiles are made strictly according to the ancient patterns. Gods and demons, together with the really supernatural beings (like semi gods, giants, monsters and similar), were successfully replaced by the Christian God, invisible, silent, immaterial, but omnipresent. In that context epic formula became a token of continuity, a vessel for ancient, pre-Christian motives and practice, which would otherwise have been long forgotten. It goes without saying that those "motives and practice" come from the sphere of sacral which in archaic times belonged to Pantheon gods and numina before them, or even older.⁹

As an example, the motive of "death in the forest" will do. On the surface level, it appears as a strange rule: whoever dies an unnatural death in a forest (either silent by a numen, or violent by men), is doomed to stay there forever. No matter how close a friend, how dear a relative or how passionately beloved bride or groom, they are all left in the forest, buried on the spot of their death. The reason is the sacral impurity of the place, which prevails over anything that concerns the dead and the dying. As such, the impure dead would not be allowed a proper Christian burial, they would even be denied a place in the cemetery, same as other of the kind (hanged, executed, suicides etc). So, to bring them back to a civilized, inhabited place would make no difference to their final fate. In South Slavic traditional culture a forest is a place of passage, a gate to the "other" world, natural habitat for nameless demons and charms, the only place the impure dead could hope for.¹⁰ In there, they are never ultimately dead, even if buried, they can talk to their beloved living, even send them messages asking for help etc. When such a motive occurs in an epic poem, the plot and fable do not leave that much place and time – as here is used – to explain why some decisions are made or not. Both the singer and his audience share that knowledge as a part of their mutual cultural "milieu" and the only thing a poem really needs is a signal, a shifter to redirect the audience's attention to the new turn of the story. Those shifters are in fact formulas, and for the motive of such importance there are quite a few of them, as shall be easily

⁸ Haiduks (Turkish for brigands): Baba Novak, Grujica Novaković, Mijat Tomić etc.

⁹ On this see especially good works about the epic formula of two ravens (*polećela dva vranava gavrana*) by Schmaus 1937 and Loma 2003. For a more general case of the white city epic formula cf. Detelic&Ilic 2006.

¹⁰ On this, cf. Radenkovic 1986, Detelic 1992.

seen in case of the burial of the bride to be in *The Wedding of Milic the Banner Stander*, one of the most important (and most beautiful) epic poems in collections of Vuk Karadzic (Vuk III, 78)¹¹:

- passage through the forest (*kad su bili gorom putujući / when they were passing through the forest*),
- way of dying (*dole leže, gore ne ustade / she lied down, but rose no more*),
- digging a grave (*nadžakom joj raku iskopaše / they dug the grave with swords*¹²),
- positioning the corpse (*ka istoku | otkuda se jarko sunce radja / facing East instead of West, as it should be in proper burial*),
- burial gifts (*posuše je grošim i dukatim / they covered her with silver and gold coins*),
- setting a grave (tree or a rose by the corpse's head, running water, bench for a tired passersby),
- conversation with the dead (*da li ti je crna zemlja teška, crna mi je zemlja doteščala / is the black earth too heavy for you, the black earth is too heavy for me*) etc.

It is hard to believe that any archaic epos should need all that strategy to express the same thing. In the archaic world all numinous doings were transparent and dead people conveniently went directly to Hades, good as well as bad, pure and impure alike. Their further destiny was then decided upon by the god of the other world, Hades himself. The only reason for a dead to suffer, to get lost and stray between this and the other world was improper funeral, and that is something quite different.

A direct consequence of the lack for this "transparency" is the hierarchy of oral epic formulas in South Slavic material¹³: the oldest are proper formu-

¹¹ An elaborate analysis of all different layers in this poem in Detelić 1996, 95-103.

¹² *Digging a grave with swords* could be a matter of convenience for shovels must be very scarce in the forests. It is also a part of ritual burial of a distinguished warrior/knight, together with sacrificing his armaments, horse, and enemies as burial gifts, usually left on the grave itself. As funerary customs, these are very old and belong to an ancient form of society known as "junačka družina" (warrior community). However, digging a grave with swords is a challenge to interpretation, for its appearance is sometimes full of ambiguity, like in the cited poem on Milic the banner stander. Later in the poem, when the groom comes home alone and dies there from despair, his grave is again dug with swords, although his funeral is not exceptional, he was not killed in battle, and the grave is regularly situated within the graveyard.

¹³ It is not necessarily the case with any medieval epics (conf. Kalevalla, Nibelunglied, Laxdaela saga etc. which show no lack of transparency in that respect).

las, the most important and most valued poetic and analytic means for inter-layer connection of epic poetry. Next, of a bit lesser poetic value but still very necessary, there are so called "partial, rudimental formulas", commonplace attributives like *white throat* (even in an Arab), *black earth*, *green sword*, *white day/dawn* and so on, very similar to Homeric formulas quoted earlier. Finally, there are "formulas in the making", changeable and moveable strings of words formed to fit either four or six syllable unit of the asymmetric decasyllabic oral epic verse (4 + 6). The latter is what Foley calls "generic formulas" and what Parry's and Lord's theory is mostly about, for they were presumably looking for mnemotechnic tools of lengthy oral performance. *The Singer of Tales* proves it in abundance, but it also points – very discretely and only in one short passage – at the importance and semantic depths of the formula proper, which Lord found in connection with the epic locus and formula of *drunken tavern*:

The tradition feels a sense of meaning in the epithet, and thus a special meaning is imparted to the noun and to the formula. ... For it is certain that the singer means on the surface 'drunken tavern' to mean a tavern in which men drink and become drunk, but it could well be argued that the epithet is preserved in the tradition because it was used in stories where the tavern was the symbol for an entrance into the other world and the drinking involved is the drinking of the cup of forgetfulness, of the waters of Lethe, and that the drunkenness involved is not that of the ordinary carousel, but is itself a symbol for consciousness in another world, perhaps even death. This meaning comes to it from the special, peculiar purpose of oral epic song at its origin, which was magical and ritual before it became heroic (Lord 1981, 65-66).

It really is pity Lord did not return and elaborate this optics on formula later.

"Formula in the making" is a poetic device with significant amount of dynamism, in direct connection with the formulaity of epic language, due to the given meter of its verse. Its metric characteristics are caesura after the fourth syllable, and the quantitative closure, a device first mentioned by Roman Jakobson (1933), and defined as a rule of trochaic downfall intonation: there can be no stress on the last syllable, so the one before the last has to be either long or stressed. In that context it might be of importance to have a reserve of ready-made strings of words fitting to either of two asymmetric verse units, sometimes alternately as in *zora bela* (white dawn – 4 syllables) and *zorica bijela* (the same in diminutive and different accentuation – 6 syllables).

The colloquial language works in pretty the same manner, as confirmed by works of Stolz & Shanon (1976), Chomsky (1986), MacKenzie (2000) and

others. Their point is that an ordinary sentence is always made of some kind of patterns – lines, strings, patches, even frames of words that make an operational part of our ability to speak our mother tongue with competence, idiomatically. Under the restrictive circumstances – and versification can be qualified as such – the manipulation of formulas becomes essential, for it performs the same operational role.

It is obvious, therefore, why the study of South Slavic oral epic formula largely exceeds its original context of homerology. At their best, oral epic formulas in Slavic tradition are the vessels of coded information of great cultural value, the most important key to reconstruction of an ethnic history and its cultural, social, and poetic past. As Malycev said in 1989, the fundamental cultural values cannot be communicated directly; they need a code and the decoding devices.

Such a significant role in matters of cultural and social memory oral epic poetry can satisfy mainly because the asymmetric decasyllable epic verse is very old, practically ancient. According to Gasparov (1989), it survived almost unchanged from Pra-Indoeuropean times as one of only a few types of verse that Slavs used in their ancient homeland, and continued to use wherever they went and settled anew. It became standard for South Slavic epic poetry in the Balkan area (Croatia, Bosnia and Hercegovina, Serbia, Monte Negro, Macedonia, Bulgaria). Because of its antiquity, it was an equal means of expression for both pre-Christian and Christian population. This did not change during the times of Ottoman domination, because Islamized local people were not forbidden their indigenous poetry and the way it was performed. In time, they even formed their own, Muslim style of epic singing, but most certainly not before 16th century when Islamization began to gain pace.

The two styles shared many features: type of verse, geography, some heroes, most of the formulas, most of poetic elements and crafts. However, because the epic poetry by definition has a very strong ideological kernel, the differences in ideology – minor from the point of poetics - became crucial for either of them: the Muslim was poetry of the rulers, people whose empire was huge and prosperous; the Christian was rebellious, poetry of martyrs who lost their empire and of fighters against the infidels. They both formed a complete picture of knighthood, but for Muslims it was a picture of non-working, daring gentlemen robbers whose life in leisure was supported by constant and regular

plunder of the Christian neighbors,¹⁴ and the other one was a picture of daring, life risking, relentless and even fanatic fighters for national independence and liberation.¹⁵ Even from the standpoint of literary criticism, Muslim epic songs - although they are crafty and often very elaborate – are of lesser poetic value comparing to the Christian, because they lack *pathos* and *catharsis*, two great tragic categories to which the epos comes close only if it sings about an elevated subject, like the struggle for freedom. That is the "must" of this genre.¹⁶

Because they were after one – and only one – specific feature of oral epic performance, Parry and Lord did not pay attention to the quality of verses they collected. Lord, afterwards, revised his Slavonic corpus, but the most influential epic formula criticism and his magnum opus *The Singer of Tales* were all based on poetically feeble, second rated texts sung by a few Muslim singers.¹⁷ They actually were very good craftsmen, but by the time they came to the focus of world's interest in epic formula, the very tradition they participated was decadent and poor, both with Christians and Muslims alike. Lord himself was well aware of this notorious fact, but it seems he never realized the importance of making difference between Muslim and Christian epic singing. It is quite easy to imagine why it did not seem to matter to him very much, for even to

¹⁴ As an illustration, a Muslim song *Konjević Muiaga opens the roads to Kotari* (MH III, 14) may serve: after they were forced by Christian neighbours to live for nine years only on crops of their own farms, Muslim gentry and warriors are so impoverished (because they are not used to work), that they consider leaving their homeland for good: *ovde s' vako ziviti ne more; / ako vako bude na Udbini, / nami valja Liku ostaviti, / iz nje, djeco, pa se raseliti* (we cannot live here like this; / if that is what our life will be here, in the city of Udbina, / we should leave Lika for good, / and disperse, my children, all over the world - 274-277; translated by author).

¹⁵ In the famous song about the uprising against Turks in 1804 *The start of the revolt against the Dahiyas* (Vuk IV, 24), when rebels with their leader Karadjordje Petrović come to the gates of major towns and ask dahiyas to surrender, they reject Turkish try to negotiate in following verses: *te gradove raja nacinila, / gradila ih po devet godina, / kadra ih je za dana oboriti / i sa carem kavgu zametnuti; / a kada se s carem zavadimo, / da ustane svi sedam kraljeva / da nas mire, pomirit nas nece* (Remember who it was that built your towns! / the common folk took nine years building them / the common folk can smash them in a day, / and stand their ground in battle with the Turks. / For we are all prepared and fit for war / and if the seven kings all rise at once / to pacify us, they will find no peace – 580-586; translation Locke 1997).

¹⁶ In the *Iliad*, which in theory of literature is taken as a model of classical epos, the sympathies of both the singer and the audience are on Trojans and the greatest of all the heroes – Hector who is defending his country, city, and family. Greeks are represented as winning but frivolous: arguing about the concubines, sacrificing their own daughters, mutilating the corpse of a hero etc.

¹⁷ This was observed relatively early (cf. Smith 1977). Among the later texts see Ljubinkovic 1991.

the most scrupulous observation the basics of epic tradition appear the same. Divergences, though, start with the influences from without – from the Church, *Bible* and apocrypha with the Christian singers and from the *Arabian Nights* and *Koran* with Muslims. But the most important difference between the two is the antiquity and continuity of the Christian, and a certain "newcomer" rootlessness of the other. Choosing only the latter, and thus excluding the other side of the existing epic tradition, Parry and Lord made an exceedingly homogenous corpus of songs, which actually was not even the faintest picture of the real, long lasting and still living epic tradition on the spot.

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ABBREVIATIONS:

Vuk III, IV – Вук Ст. Караџић, *Сабрана дела Вука Караџића, Српске народне њјесме II-IV*, издање о стогодишњици смрти Вука Стефановића Караџића 1864-1964 и двестогодишњици његова рођења 1787-1987, Просвета : Београд 1987.

MH IV – *Junačke pjesme muhamedovske*, knjiga četvrta, uredio Dr Luka Marjanović, Matica hrvatska, Zagreb 1899.

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PARRY-LORD-FOLEY: I ŠTA ĆEMO DALJE SA NJIMA

Rezime: Proučavanje epske formule, koje je tridesetih godina prošlog veka počelo terenskim radom Milmana Perija i Alberta Lorda u Bosni, tokom poslednjih sedam decenija dalo je raznovrsne i značajne rezultate u oblasti ispitivanja epike svih vrsta – klasične, srednjovekovne, moderne, usmene, pisane ili kombinovane. Na međunarodnoj sceni, ova je oblast dobila svoje naučne zvezde, posebne teorije, sopstvenu terminologiju, razradenu metodologiju. Pa ipak, kada se ukaže potreba da se ovi radovi usklade sa rezultatima domaćih, južnoslovenskih (srpskih, hrvatskih, makedonskih, bugarskih) istraživača, efekti su uglavnom slabi: radovi inostranih stručnjaka ne pogađaju suštinu problema i, čak i kad uspeju da postave pravo pitanje, na njega nude irelevantan ili pogrešan odgovor. Jedan od razloga može biti okolnost da se južnoslovenskom epikom bave uglavnom Amerikanci koncentrisani oko Harvarda i velike zbirke muslimanske epike koju je - kao svoju zaostavštinu – Milman Peri ostavio svom univerzitetu. Zavedeni velikim obimom lako dostupnog materijala, istraživači polaze od njega kao od superiornog izvora prema kome određuju vrednosti i osobine svega ostalog – što je ravno metodološkoj katastrofi, kao kad bi se o dorskom stilu u arhitekturi zaključivalo na osnovu zgrade električne kompanije Sinsinati u Ohaju, a ne na osnovu još uvek postojećih spomenika grčke antike, na primer Partenona na atinskom Akropolju. Upravo zbog toga čak niiskusni istraživači, poput Džona Majlsa

Folija, ne mogu izbeći početničke greške u tumačenju nekih elemenata epske poetike koji za domaće istraživače ne predstavljaju nikakav izazov. U ovom radu se pominje Folijev neuspeo pokušaj tumačenja generativnih formula *nerođena majka* i *crna kukavica* kao posledica zaključivanja na osnovu pogrešnih, odnosno prekodiranih premisa (*nerođeni/nerođena, kao i rođeni/rođena* i *sinja kukavica* su stare slovenske formule koje se ne mogu razumeti ako se konsultuje samo muslimanska epika).

Uporedna analiza i muslimanskog i hrišćanskog epskog korpusa, uz poznavanje epskog jezika kao maternjeg, pomogla je domaćim istraživačima da prošire i koriguju osnovne postavke u teoriji epske formule. U slučaju južnoslovenske deseteračke epike, formule se mogu podeliti na tri glavna tipa: najstarije i potpune – *prave* – formule čija je važnost najveća jer deluju i linearno (povezujući epiku sa drugim usmenim žanrovima) i vertikalno (uspostavljajući vezu među slojevima različite dubine); delimično formirane – *rudimentarne* – formule (opšta mesta kao *belo grlo* Arapovo, *bela zora/zorica, beli dan, crna zemlja, zelen mač* itd.), vrlo slične homerskim; i *formule u nastajanju*, ono što Foli označava kao "generičke formule", a što su zapravo pokretni i promenljivi nizovi reči prilagođeni asimetričnoj podeli epskog deseterca (4+6). U jednom istom epskom korpusu sva tri tipa formula postoje istovremeno te je vrlo često moguće pratiti nastanak i razvoj prave formule od slogovnog niza do njen pune, zatvorene forme. Idući za potrebama unapređenja homerologije, Peri i Lord nisu imali razloga da traže dalje od generativnih formula koje su im pomogle da reše svoje osnovno pitanje: da li ep koji pređe 10 000 stihova može i dalje biti usmen. Muslimanske epske pesme, same po sebi duge i još – pri tom – motivski zgodne za konkatenciju, dale su na to pitanje pozitivan odgovor. Ipak, svestan da je time tek naćeo problem, Albert Lord je u svojoj ćuvenoj knjizi *Pevać prića* (prvi put objavljenoj 1960) postavio temelje i za dubinsko istraživanje formula, u malo zapaženom a neobićno važnom kratkom pasusu o ćudesnoj epskoj krćmi (Lord 1981, 65-66).

Ključne reći: epske pesme, epska formula, Jućni Sloveni, hrišćani, muslimani

