Chapter 4, Selected Papers on a Serbian Village: Social Structure as Reflected by History, Demography and Oral Tradition

Joel Halpern
University of Massachusetts - Amherst

Barbara Halpern
University of Massachusetts - Amherst

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Background Remarks

Remnants of a versatile and once highly developed traditional oral culture persist in many South Slav areas. Heroic epics, as the apex of oral expression, have been collected and analyzed intensively, notably by Matthias Murko in the early 20th century, then by Milman Parry's innovative hypothesis that the Iliad and Odyssey were not written but were oral literature, a stunning theory he tested by recording Serbian bards and analyzing their songs, and later by Albert Lord's outstanding contributions. Of particular interest to studies in linguistics and to structural analysis of poetry has been Roman Jakobson's work on the comparative metrics of Slavic epic verse.

The present paper draws on this background of impressive scholarship and the work that continues on oral theory and process. But it is not the heroic epic, per se, upon which our concern is focused. Based on these works and others, and on original field data, I wish here to present evidence for an oral genre not previously isolated or described: recitation of genealogy (rodoslovlje). By reproducing part of a real genealogy, abstracting the underlying metrics and analyzing its structure, I will demonstrate how complex data can be recollected and will suggest that the prosodic characteristics of the recitation (the South Slav epic decasyllable), in consonance with the socio-cultural values of the society in which it occurs, make possible the preservation and oral transmission of detailed and complicated genealogy in Serbian peasant society.

My data are from Sumadija, a strongly patriarchal, patrilocal and culturally homogeneous area in central...
Serbia. The population is Christian (Serbian Orthodox); their language is the *štokavski* dialect of Serbo-Croatian (based on a lexical determinant, use of the interrogative pronoun *što* [*what?*]) and is further identified as the *ekavski* sub-dialect, a phonological variant.

Serbo-Croatian distinguishes by length two falling and two rising tones. This tonal system is related to stress (long vowels usually carry stress, but a short stressed syllable may precede a long unstressed one). Stress never occurs on a final syllable; the first syllable in a disyllabic word therefore takes stress. In polysyllabic words stress is on the antepenultimate. This information is pertinent to detail here because, while the metrics of epic verse incline toward trochaic pentameter, it is clear that, given the common occurrence of trisyllabic proper names in genealogical recitations, dactyls will also appear frequently. Therefore, the tone-length-stress rules do not coincide invariably with what Jakobson calls the rhythmical impulse of the epic metrics.

In the course of the initial field research (in 1953-54) considerable information was elicited on kinship and social structure. Many older village men had a remarkable ability to orally recall their ancestry back eight or nine generations, to the founder of the clan from which the lineage took its name. In 1968, after most of the social structure data had been worked up and published, I returned to Šumadija specifically to check certain aspects of the genealogical materials. The focus was still on kinship data, not on oral transmission. That time, however, equipped with printed diagrams of previously elicited data, and without the 'interference' of open-ended interviewing, I was able to initiate genealogical recollections and then to concentrate on receiving the responses aurally.

Later, proceeding to match kinship data, I checked the new orally transmitted information from Grandfather Mileta Stojanović (#47 on the original kinship diagram) against data he had given orally fourteen years earlier. Some 105 male individuals had been named. To avoid confusion and as an aid in keeping the generational levels in order, I found myself repeating the data aloud, thereby unconsciously recreating (or in effect performing) a version of the oral presentation.
Two striking facts began to emerge: firstly, the data from 1954 and 1968, spanning seven generations and covering more than 100 men, were essentially identical; secondly, clearly Grandfather Mileta was recollecting the history of his lineage in poetic stichs.

Analysis of the Serbo-Croatian Epic Decasyllable

Before presenting evidence that the recitation of genealogy, under conducive contexts and when performed by particular elders, may be a special manifestation of South Slav epic tradition, it will be useful to define the characteristics of the epski deseterac, the traditional Serbian epic ten-syllable line.

Jakobson called attention to the features of this tradition, maintaining that an abstraction of the underlying metrics must deal with certain rhythmic tendencies as well as with formal metrical constants.11

(1) Each line contains ten syllables

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XXXXXXXXXX
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(2) There is a compulsory syntactic break between lines

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[|]| |
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(3) There is a compulsory word boundary between the fourth and fifth syllables

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XXXX XXXXX
```

(4) Syllables three and four belong to one 'word unit,' as do syllables nine and ten

```
XX XX XXXX XX
```

or

```
XX XX XX XXXX
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(5) Disyllabic word units ideally occur in syllables one-two, three-four, five-six, seven-eight or nine-ten
Syllables seven-eight-nine bring the line to what Jakobson called a quantitative close, with syllables seven and eight ideally avoiding vowel length (and therefore usually stress), in order to build up to stress in the ninth syllable (here ideally avoiding a stressed short vowel).

Within a stich both stress and alliteration of initial sound favor odd-numbered syllables. What is important here is that the metrical constants as well as the tendencies correspond to phonological features inherent in the language itself. Moreover, while we may talk about word, word boundary and word unit, the peasant-narrator is not conscious of syllabification, word boundaries or stress (the word for 'word,' reč, means both word and utterance in Serbo-Croatian). Within the constraints of the ten-syllable line the village elder employs intuitive knowledge of the workings of his language to put together strings which follow the traditional epic pattern. When necessary he freely uses elision, drops an auxiliary verb, takes a non-grammatical inflectional ending or borrows an extra syllable from the ije kavski sub-dialect. As he recollects his genealogy orally, he is not aware that he is composing a narrative u stihovima, in lines of verse. The sense of epic verse, self-motivated, is generated at some deeper level. The impetus for this traditional mode of creativity appears to be related to regard for his genealogy as his own personal epic, and thus he intuitively selects the appropriate form for the re-telling. In turn, this epic form, both metrically and structurally, enhances his ability to reconstruct and relate that which is so important to him.

The Stojanović Genealogy

Presented below is the first part of the genealogy recollected orally by Grandfather Milet, with a transliteration faithful to the original word order.
Blago dedi, ti ćeš tuna sredi
Sredi dolje da ti svemu prisam.
Davno došli oni naši preci;
Doš'o Stojan čak i pre ustanka.

** Stari Stojan im'o tri sinova:
Ti su Petar, Mijoje, Mihajlo.
Od sinova im'o Petar četiri:
Mišo, Uroš, Nikola i Stevan.
Znazi ti, čero, Nikola moj deda?
Od sinova im'o tri Mijoje:
Ti su Vučić, Matija i Lazar.
Isto tako im'o tri Mihajlo:
Radivoje, Radovan, Nadoje.
Onai Mišo, im'o on dva sina:
Ti su bili Milutin i Andrija.
Potom Uroš, im'o sina troji:
Tanasija, Vladimir, Đordje.
Eto, čero, najstarij je Đordje,
A najmladij nije ost'o živ.
Moj Nikola, im'o on četiri:
Antonija, Svetozar i Mišo,
A trećega, Ljubomir moj otac
(Neka mu Bog dušu prosti).
Stevan, pazi, od sinova nema.
Ad' sad Vučić: on je im'o troji
Radolic, Andrija, Ljubomir.
A Matija samo jedan imao,
Koji zv'o se Blagoje...

**
E. Radovan, taj od trećeg brata
Im'o Petar, Mijoje, Radimir.
Sad Raduje: Dragomir jednoga;
Radivoje: Velimir i Branko.
Pazi sada, brojim moja braća!
Te trojica im'o stric Milutin:
Živomir, Pavle i Velimir.
Nema od njih potomaka ništa!
Sad Andrija: Svetozar, Vellsav.
Pa kod Đordje i Tanasije
Samo Veljko ost'o k'o maturan.
Dragoljub, Svetislav i Dragoslav,
Svi su bili poginuli u ratu
Kod Svetozara isto nema ašu:
Ni Živomir, ni Mišo, ni Vitomir,
Kod njih uopšte muška daca nema.
Ad. Dragiša, hvala Bogu, ima.
Adje gada, tu sam ja, Miletai.
Potom moj brat, Milosav rođeni.

**
I la, k'o stari, pijem malo raki
I polako, aho, čekam smrt...
Grandpa's dear, you will there sit!
Sit down so I can you everything relate.
Long ago came they our ancestors:
Came Stojan even before the Uprising.

** **

Old Stojan had three sons:
These were Petar, Miloje, Mihajlo.
Of sons had Petar four:
Milos, Uroš, Nikola and Stevan.
Know you, daughter, Nikola my grandfather?
Of sons had three Miloje:
These were Vušić, Matija i Lazar.
The same had three Mihajlo:
Radivoje, Radovan, Radoje.
That Miloš, had he two sons:
These were Milutin and Andrija.
Then Uroš had sons three:
Tanasija, Vladimir, Djordje.
Like so, daughter, the eldest is Djordje,
And the youngest did not remain living . . .
My Nikola had he four:
Antonija, Svetozar i Miloš,
And the third, Ljubomir my father
(May him God his soul forgive).
Stevan, look here, of sons had none.
Come now, Vušić: he had three:
Radojica, Andrija, Ljubomir.
And Matija only one had,
Who was called Blagoje . . .
Ej, Radovan, that one from the third brother
Had Petar, Miloje, Radomir.
Now Radoje: Dragomir only one;
Radivoje: Velimir i Branko.
Pay attention now, I'm counting my brothers!
Well, a trio had Uncle Milutin:
Živomir, Pavle and Velimir.
Exist not from them descendants none!
Now Andrija: Svetozar, Velisav.
And by Djordje and Tanasija
Only Veljko remained as a mature man.
Dragoljub, Svetislav and Dragoslav,
All were killed in the war.
By Svetozar also there is no luck:
Nor Živomir, nor Miloš, nor Vitomir,
By them in general male children are not.
But Dragiša, thank God, has.
Come now, here am I, Mileta!
Then my brother, Milosav [biological brother]

** **

And I, as the old man, drink a little brandy
And slowly, so, wait for death . . .
Analysis of the Language and Structure of this Genealogy

The existence of a prilev (lines 1-4), a prologue to the narrative, is of much interest. Linguistically it is not bound by the content restraints inherent in transmitting genealogical information. As in traditional oral epic recitation it functions as a means of establishing a bond between narrator and listener. This is a crucial condition; speaker and hearer(s) form a collectivity, one responding to stimuli from the other.15

A fictive kin tie is posited immediately. Grandfather Mileta addresses the listener as

Blago dedi (Grandpa's dear.)

The tie is reinforced in the body of the recitation, in lines 9 and 18: znas ti, cero (know you, daughter) and etc., cero (like so, daughter).

Another epic function of the prilev is to provide a temporal frame and initiate the action of the personal narrative which is about to unfold:

Davno došli oni naši preci;
Doš'o Stojan čak i pre ustanaka.

Long ago came they our ancestors;
Came Stojan even before the Uprising.

These lines were uttered spontaneously. Certainly they were never before spoken by the narrator. Yet line 3 is an ideal epic decasyllable line in every way. Structurally it exhibits the exemplary pattern of VP, caesura, NP:

Davno došli oni naši preci
XXXX XXXXX
VP NP

Here, in the best epic mode, the VP, advancing the action, precedes the six-syllable epithet.

With regard to meter and stress, it is a perfect line of trochaic pentameter:

XX XX XX XX XX
In accord with Jakobson's analysis, the heaviest stress is on the ninth syllable. The line also displays consonantal alliteration word initially and internally (davno/došli; došli/naši; oni/naši) as well as vowel assonance, succeeding segments bearing the pattern a-o, o-i, a-i, e-i.

Line 4 illustrates stress shift when a proclitic occurs before a noun. Nominative ustananak has stress on the antepenultimate. Adding a proclitic results in

\[ \text{pre + ustananak} \rightarrow \text{pre ustánka} \]

thereby rendering the entire string to the right of the censura in trochaic, and again creating an ideal quantitative close on the ninth syllable, with stress and vowel lengthening:

\[
\begin{array}{ccccccc}
5 & 6 & 7 & 8 & 9 & 10 \\
\text{Nak i pre u stan ka}
\end{array}
\]

It is interesting to note that the opening two lines of this spontaneous prologue compare favorably to the opening lines of a 'real' pripev:

Blago dedi, ti ćeš tona sedi! 1
Sedi dole da ti svemu pričam. 2
Grandpa's dear, you will there sit!
Sit down so I can you everything relate.

Compare

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{Brčo moja, sokolovi moji,} & \\
\text{Čujte pesmu da vam čica broji.} & 17
\end{align*}
\]

My brothers, my falcons,
Listen to the song that to you Uncle is recounting.

Each uses fictive kin to establish a tie with the listeners. Each displays rhyme, the former internally (dede/sedi) and the latter interlinearly (moji/broji). Syntactically the two second lines are parallel, opening with an imperative verb (Sedi/Čujte), followed after the break by a da clause (connective) and ending with an imperfective verb, indicating that the process of narration is to be ongoing (pričam/broji).
The local example therefore is strong evidence that for Grandfather Mileta and many ordinary village men like him a subliminal epic pulse must be generating the epic mode so clearly marked in various manifestations at the surface. He "knows how" to do it.

Turning now to the genealogy proper, some of the more salient linguistic features are noted below (although almost every line invites comment):

(1) Line 5 is not grammatical. In Serbo-Croatian, numbers two through four are inflected with genitive singular endings, and numbers five and over take genitive plural:

*EJl Stari Stojan im'o tri sinova: 5
EJl Old Stojan had three sons

* tri sinova (gen. pl.)
tri sina (gen. sing.)

But here the genitive plural fits the metrical requirements. It is also possible that the narrator may have been composing his line in terms of thoughts of all the progeny of the clan ancestor. Interestingly, an exact reverse analog was found in a line of a published epic narrative:

* Hrani majka devet milih sina
Nourished a mother nine dear sons

Here the ungrammatical form is especially interesting since its modifier, milih, dear, is correctly inflected for genitive plural.

(2) Lines 7 and 9 demonstrate selective elision and word order switching:

im'o Petar Set'ri 7
Had Petar four

im'o tri Miloje 9
had three Miloje

Each of these procedures results in achievement of the required metrics (word switching also results in rhyme at the end of lines 9 and 13 (Miloje/Radoje); is this by intent or chance?). Now compare the last segments of lines 7 and 20:
(3) Lines 5, 16 and 34 illustrate alternate ways of saying 'three': tri, troj, and trojica, again selected according to need (the first is 'three,' the second form is a colloquial modifier for three males and the third a collective numeral meaning 'trio').

(4) Line 28 is three syllables short of the decasyllable. Even so, the verb is elided and the auxiliary dropped, thereby forming a perfect predicate string before the break:

Koji zv' o se Blagoje
Who was called Blagoje

The individual's name, Blagoje, completes the line minus half the required syllables; there is nothing more to say. There is, however, marked phonological compensation, with stress on the antepenultimate and highly exaggerated length on the (unstressed) final syllable.

(5) In lines 13, 17, 21 and 26, all lines composed of series of names, the strings before the caesura are occupied by four-syllable proper names—Radivoje, Tanasija, Antonija and Radojica. 'Radivoje' happens to have main stress on syllable one and secondary stress on syllable three, thus fitting the trochaic pattern. The other names provide an example of what happens when reality conflicts with the ideal: in these cases stress is on the antepenultimate, and pronunciation is not contrived to accommodate to the pattern.

With the name 'Ljubomir' two situations can be observed: in lines 22 and 26 the name appears to the right of the break (referring in each case to a different man named Ljubomir).

A trećega, Ljubomir moj otac
Radojica, Andrija, Ljubomir
In the first instance stress is acceptable, since it falls on the antepenultimate, with secondary stress on the final syllable of the name, a compound proper name meaning 'he who loves peace,' thereby permitting the line to work itself out normally. In the second case, the same pronunciation is used, thus giving stress to the eighth syllable and causing syllables nine and ten to be 'wrong.' This is balanced, however, by the utterance 'Ljubomir' being a metrical repetition of the dactyl 'Andrija.'

Now turning to a consideration of the structure of the recitation of genealogy, a grammar with these ordered rules can be abstracted:

1. The base point is the naming of the lineage founder.

   \[
   S \quad (S = \text{Stojan})
   \]

2. Each generational level is recollected collaterally, that is, chronologically from the first born male along the line to the last born.

   \[
   S
   \]
   \[
   1 \quad 2 \quad 3 \quad 4
   \]
   \[
   5 \quad 6 \quad 7 \quad 8 \quad 9 \quad 10 \quad 11 \quad 12 \quad 13 \quad 14
   \]

3. Only after the entire generational level has been recollected does the narrator proceed lineally to the succeeding generation.

4. With the exception of the clan's founder every individual is mentioned twice, first as a son of his father and then as a father of sons.
(5) In this manner the narration reaches the generational level of the narrator and proceeds regularly along it.

(6) The narration then moves collaterally and linearly through all successive generations, concluding with the line at which there are no further descendants.

An optional rule is employed by Grandfather Mileta in his recitation:

(7) Data retrieval terms are employed for the second recollection of an individual. This may be in the form of opening segments: Onaj Miloš, That Miloš (line 14) or Potom Uroš, Then Uroš (line 16), or an entire line can be a retrieval string:

Ej, Radovan, taj od trećeg brata
Ej, Radovan, that one from the third brother

(8) Gapping or horizontal progression terms, which advance the action along the generational level, from the descendants of one brother to the descendants of the next brother: Ajd' sad, Come now (line 26), indicates that the recitation has gone through all the four sons (#'s 5, 6, 7 and 8) of Petar (#2 on the kinship diagram) and is now moving across to the sons of Miloje (#3), starting with his first born, Vušić (#9).

(9) Affirmation of identity and direct descent within the larger structural frame. This is achieved by personal reference:

Nikola moj deda
Nikola my grandfather

Ljubomir moj otac
Ljubomir my father

Pazi sada, brojim moja braće
Pay attention now, I'm counting my brothers

Ajdje sada, tu sam ja, Mileta!
Come now, here am I, Mileta!

In the last example the gapping term moves the action from the sons of Svetozar (#21), who left no living male descendants (Kod Svetozara isto nema sreću)
The powerful cultural motivation in this society, combined with a structural tree in the narrator's head and a metrical model readily available from oral epic tradition, all incline toward the conclusion that the ability to recollect and transmit genealogy orally is indeed, for some village men, a true oral genre.

Afterword

A Serbian literary critic upon discussing the foregoing with me remarked, "The old man must have read it in a pesmarica (songbook)—peasants don't talk that way!" Contrary to his expectation, this reaction delighted me: it corroborates the point of this paper.

I take this opportunity, therefore, to present additional evidence that Grandfather Mileta is not unique; villagers do "talk that way." In fact, sometimes even the most ordinary conversations may display epic features. This powerful pulse appears to manifest and maintain itself over time, over the switch from oral to literary modes, over changing life styles, across ethnic and national boundaries and, poignantly (because identity and perpetuation of self are so important in this culture), even when the informant is forced to recognize himself as the last of his line.

A family history prepared in the 1920's by a prominent Yugoslav diplomat begins with what he perceives as his logical beginnings, in 1613! Written records were used for this detailed compilation by a distinguished intelektualac. Two factors are immediately salient: the account reads like an oral recitation and it starts with the highly culturally significant opening line

Svi su Smoljake seljakškog porijekla,
All the Smolakas are of peasant origin,

The contemporary urban statesmen, lawyers and physicians of this lineage immediately acknowledge direct kin ties to a common rural ancestry and strongly feel the collective pull of such ties. The line quoted is clearly epic in mode. The fact that the cola each bear an extra syllable is merely the result of the particular family name and, in the second colon, use of the iJekavski dialect.
Ej sad! Jel'ti hočeš od deda Luke da počnemo, da znamo?

Well now! Do you want to start with Grandfather Luka, so we know [along which branch to reconstruct]?

The line is in epic mode although it does contain more than ten syllables, plus extrametrical expressions preceding and following it.

As an example of epic features in ordinary conversation, following is a fragment from a casual exchange on child-rearing between two village mothers:

Deca danas! Pokvareni su svi!
Jest'! Boga mi! Čak i oni malri!
Padneš na trn, padneš Bog zna gde,
I hu-ha, odmah kod lekara!

Children today! They're all spoiled!
Yes, by God! Even the little ones!
Fall on a thorn, fall God knows where,
And hu-ha, right away to the doctor!

My ultimate argument to the literary critic, then, is that even a speech act as innocuous as this is poetic, a potential genre of sorts. If the exclamation hu-ha is given its full vowel lengthening this spontaneous four-line utterance exhibits classical epic features. The metrics are consistently decasyllabic. Line 1 alliterates in both cola; line 2 has vowel assonance in the second colon (a-i, o-i, a-i); line 3 picks up the reference to God and also repeats the verbal pattern, and line 4, which one hears often in the village nowadays, has become an almost gnomic expression.

Finally, I will close this exposition of genealogy as genre with another example from Orašac. In this instance the informant, an elderly villager, saddened at having had no surviving sons, begins his recollection with bitter line,

Nema ko' da primi to od mene.

There's no one to receive this from me.
He then commences to recall his direct ancestor five generations back and recollects the ascending generations lineally by proper names. Then he pauses, reverses the process, and, starting with himself, moves back through the descent line, this time using kinship terms in place of the already named individuals. A sigh, an extrametrical expletive and then the final line, a repeat of the first.

Ej sad, nema ko' da primi to cd mene. Eh, now, there's no one to receive this from me.

If represented diagrammatically this particular genealogy, in effect a beautifully balanced poem, looks like this:

The account has come full circle. There is no further tale to tell.
NOTES

1 I wish to express particular appreciation to my colleague Robert P. Creed, specialist in Anglo-Saxon oral tradition, who first suggested to me the notion that analysis of the recitation of genealogies in contemporary rural Serbia might yield interesting structural and metrical features. Indeed, the present paper was motivated by this challenge.


3 The content of genealogies are not memorized; rather they are retrieved and recollected according to abstract rules in the head of the narrator. I am grateful to John Foley for calling my attention to the distinctions in Old English, Classical Greek and other languages important in studies of oral tradition similar to English remember/recall and Serbo-Croatian pamititi/ spomenuti.

4 Examples of somewhat analogous 'preserved' genealogies in traditional poetry come to mind: in "The Iliad," Book II (lines 483-493, prologue, and lines 494-877, catalog of ships) and of course the Biblical 'begats' in the Book of Genesis.

5 The ancestors of Grandfather Mileta settled in then-wooded Šumadija as pioneers in Turkish-held territory. I suggest that the epic tradition, operating on a subliminal as well as surface level, was instrumental in keeping alive both ethnic and personal identity.
The singers in the Parry-Lord Collection are mainly Moslems; that is, Slavs whose ancestors accepted Islam centuries earlier, following Turkish conquest of the area, and they therefore represent a different cultural tradition: for Moslem singers and audiences in the coffee-houses of South Serbian market towns, epic songs and recitations functioned as entertainment; for Christians in scattered pioneer settlements they functioned as a crucial means of instilling pride and preserving heritage.

There are regional sub-dialectal distinctions, particularly phonological ones related to pitch. These are not directly pertinent here.

Although perceiving some sort of structure to the recitation, the investigators were (unfortunately) at all times in the earlier field work period more interested in the data than in the manner of presentation. J. Halpern stimulated the flow of information while B. Halpern transposed the oral material to paper by means of conventional social anthropological kinship notations.


Such aural perceptions were not yet sensitive enough to encourage taping complete genealogies (see also footnote 22), or indeed to aural retention of orally transmitted material. Fortunately, small battery-operated tape recorders were by then coming into common use as field tools, and I do have fragments of several genealogies on tape, which reinforce the evidence presented in this paper. Other informants, however, even those taped, did not display the epic impulse of Grandfather Milet.

For the genealogy presented here, I rapidly jotted verbatim what I received aurally. My notebook shows the informant’s utterances separated by regularized pauses which I marked as dashes between strings. Despite preoccupation with content, therefore, I was clearly conscious of metrical pattern and rhythm.

Here reproduced on p. 147.


13 The strings he generates, therefore, often are not those of the Chomskyan so-called ideal speaker (who functions in a communicative vacuum).

14 I chose to end this exposition with the informant himself (actually with his younger brother (rodjeni brat, biological brother, cf. brat, cousin), this being a unit boundary Grandfather Mileta himself recognized. Along the narrator's generational level the recitation begins to become encumbered, detailing in-marrying brides, wartime service, illness, out-migration from the village and other data non-genealogical in nature. Metrics and structure appear to be preserved throughout, but the material becomes less easy to extrapolate for the purposes of exposition here. Readers of Serbian background or speakers of Serbo-Croatian may note syntactic or lexical inconsistencies or other "incorrect" usage; for example often informants, when naming the sons of a given father, inflect the names in the grammatically more appropriate genitive, but Grandfather Mileta does not do this. We are not confronting an "ideal speaker" in a language lab but a real man in a real situation.

15 This is of course true for any effective performer-audience relationship.

16 The reference here is to the First Revolt against the Turks (1804), a significant turning point in Serbian history. It took place in the precise region of the field work. Stojan in fact was a participant, having arrived in the area about 1790.

17 Opening lines of the well-known epic Kosovka Devojka.

18 This rule is broken in line 17, where the eldest son is mentioned last (because of meter?); however, this is compensated for in line 18. Line 21 has another structural violation, amended in line 22, where the narrator wishes to signal his own father.

19 A genealogy tree is obviously similar to a syntactic structure tree. The concept of node is the exact
equivalent, the Serbo-Croatian term kolena, generation, also meaning knee, joint, node.

20 That is, 'generational level brothers,' in other words, cousins. See also footnote 14.

21 This is another example of "incorrect" usage. The correct form at the end of the line would be the partitive srećе; the narrator, however, said sreću, motivated perhaps by the vowels ending the preceding line (u ratu). See also footnote 14.

22 I must repeat that this particular genealogy is not preserved on tape; Grandfather Mileta unfortunately died before this could be done. A provocative question then poses itself: Did the investigator really hear, for example, the subtle aural distinctions tri/troji, čet'ri/detiři? At the time of transcribing I was still concerned more with the data than with form, as I have been careful to point out. Would it not have been logical to note number words by their symbols? The inevitable answer is yes. But the written field notes are as presented; despite the recitation having been filtered aurally through a non-native speaker, it remains intact. The only conclusion, therefore, is that not only Grandfather Mileta but I, too, on some subliminal level and under some cultural circumstances, must be marching to an epic decasyllable pulse.

23 This interesting question is discussed at length in the following paper in this collection, pp.178 - 184, 192 - 198.

24 For generously sharing this long and fascinating genealogy, currently undergoing kinship and prosodic analysis by the author, I am indebted to Vojin N. Smolioka, M.D., of New York.

25 This is excerpted from an equally detailed genealogical recollection taped on the occasion of a 1969 visit to an 81 year old uncle in the Old Country. The tape is labeled "Razgovor sa Čika Žikom (Conversation with Uncle Žika)." I am grateful to Prof. George Lukić of the University of Pittsburgh for making it available to me.

26 Recorded by the author in Orašac in 1975.

27 Recorded by J. Halpern and J. Foley in Orašac in 1975, on a day when the informant was feeling especially
 deprived of his cultural due as household patriarch. The complete text of the account he gave that day follows.

Nema ko' da primi to od mene.

Slišaj! Maksim je im'o tri sina:
Mihajla, Miloša i Živojina.
Ja sam Mihajlov potomak.
Mihajlo je im'o tri sina:
Stevana, Milan, i Milivoja.
Milan im'o čet'ri sina:
Ljubomira, Sima, Miloša i Dragutina.
Ja sam Milošov.
Dakle, meni je Milan deda,
Mijailo mi je pradera,
A mojega oca, Maksim bio pradera

Ej sad, Nema ko' da primi to od mene.

There's no one to receive this from me.

Listen! Maksim had three sons:
Mihajlo, Miloš and Živojin.
I am Mihajlo's descendant.
Mihajlo had three sons:
Stevan, Milan and Milivoje.
Milan had four sons:
Ljubomir, Sima, Miloš and Dragutin.
I am [descended from] Miloš.
Therefore, Milan is my grandfather,
Mihajlo is my great-grandfather,
And to my father Maksim was great-grandfather.
Ej now, There's no one to receive this from me.

28 This structure is identical to the phenomenon which Homerists have designated as "ring composition." See further James P. Holoka, "Homeric Originality: A Survey," Classical World, 66 (1973), 257-93.