

XIII.—*Whole Formulaic Verses in Greek and Southslavic Heroic Song*

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*οὕτω καὶ τῶν πρόσθεν ἐπευθόμεθα κλέα ἀνδρῶν*

In this essay on the method to be used in the comparative study of early poetries the view is set forth that the essential feature of such poetry is its oral form, and not such cultural likenesses as have been called "popular," "primitive," "natural," or "heroic." As an example of method those numerous cases are considered where we find both in Homer and in Southslavic heroic song a verse which expresses the same idea. The explanation is as follows. Oral poetry is largely composed out of fixed verses. Especially will ideas which recur with any frequency be expressed by a fixed verse. Thus where the two poetries express the same frequent idea they both tend to do it in just the length of a verse. Knowing this common feature in the oral form of the two poetries we can conclude that the extraordinary hold which heroic poetry has on the thought and conduct of the Southern Slavs provides us with an example of what heroic poetry must have been for the early Greeks.

The ancient poetries of Europe—Greek, Saxon, Welsh, Irish, Norse, and German—have lately been studied together as common examples of heroic poetry,<sup>1</sup> and certainly no reader can help being struck by the fact that all these poetries have chiefly to do with the prowesses of men of strength and courage, whom the poets believed to have lived in a more or less distant past when human powers were greater, and whom they called by a special term which we translate as "hero." It is wrong, however, to go on and suppose that heroic poetry, (in this exact sense of the term), is due to any law in the growth of literature. The poetry is heroic only because it is created by people who are living in a certain way and so have a certain outlook on life, and our understanding of the heroic will come only as we learn what that way of living is, and grasp that out-

<sup>1</sup> H. M. and N. K. Chadwick, *The Growth of Literature I, The Ancient Literatures of Europe* (Cambridge, Eng., 1932).

look. We find, for example, that cattle-lifting is a common theme in the ancient European poetries, but it is found there because of no law of poetry, but because these peoples happened to live in a way which led them to the stealing of cattle on the one hand and to the practice of poetry on the other. It may seem far-fetched to say that any one has gone so far as to suppose a law of poetry which makes cattle-lifting a common theme at a certain stage in the growth of poetry, and which results in reaving, but still that is implied by those who study the heroic element in early poetry as primarily a literary problem. Its proper study is even more anthropological and historical, and what Doughty tells us about cattle-lifting among the Bedouins<sup>2</sup> is more enlightening, if we are reading Nestor's tale of a cattle raid into Elis,<sup>3</sup> than is the mere knowledge that the theme occurs elsewhere in ancient poetry.

The critics, groping for the rules by which they should group and separate the varied works of the world's literature, have come to see more or less clearly that literature falls into two great parts, but they have not yet agreed upon the real nature of these two parts, nor upon the terms which should be applied to them. "Heroic" is one of the attempts to find the term for the first part. Others have chosen "popular," or "primitive." "Natural" was one of the first tries, and was given up largely because of the romantic notions of those who sought to apply it, (though it has been revived in a much sounder way in a late study of the psychological processes of poetry).<sup>4</sup> There is surely much truth in each one of these names, but I think that no one of them goes deep enough: in each case there is the failure to see that literature falls into two great parts not so much because there are two kinds of culture, but because there are two kinds of *form*: *the one part of literature is oral, the other written*. Until this is grasped we cannot hope for any sound

<sup>2</sup> *Arabia Deserta*, index s.v. *ghrazzu*.

<sup>3</sup> *Iliad* XI, 670 ff.

<sup>4</sup> M. Jousse, *Le Style oral rythmique et mnémotechnique chez les Verbo-moteurs* (Paris, 1925).

method whereby we could use *Beowulf*, for example, for the better understanding of the *Iliad*.

The "primitive," the "popular," the "natural" and the "heroic," all hang upon a poetry's being oral. This is not only because of the negative reason that the use of writing is the great cultural happening and brings on a new way of life. That does account for the loss of the *primitive*, (though that tells us little, since the term means only the lack of the new way of life). It also accounts for the growth of a new form of society in which there is no longer any place for the old heroic ideal. But there is also the positive reason why the oral quality is more basic than the other qualities named: *oral poetry is formulaic and traditional*. The poet who habitually makes his poems without the aid of writing can do so only by putting together old verses and old parts of verses in an old way. Since the verses, and the parts of the verses, and the schemes by which they are put together, are beyond the power of any one man to make, but must be the common creation of a people who all have a right to them, the poetry can well be called *popular*. The Romantic opinion that the poetry in question was more natural than other poetry was, as we can now see with our greater anthropological knowledge, little more than first fancies about the thought of uncivilized man. When Jousse, however, after dividing poetry into the oral and the written, explains his reasons for thinking the thought of oral poetry the more spontaneous, he is working on much sounder ground: those phrases and verses are kept from one oral poet to another, and from one generation to another, which are most easily remembered and most easily grouped together. In this sense oral poetry really is more *natural* than written poetry.

Not all oral poetry is *heroic*. The careful use of this term must exclude not only a great part of the lyric poetry which we usually find side by side with an heroic narrative poetry, but also such a popular and traditional narrative poetry as the Finnish, which rather is magical. These reasons alone make

the term unsuitable as the term for one of the two great parts of poetry; but it is my wish, in the following pages, to go further and show how the heroic quality of a poetry also hangs upon its being oral, and I shall follow a method which makes use of more than one poetry that I may show how, by starting from the form, we can surely use one poetry for the understanding of another.

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When one hears the Southern Slavs sing their tales he has the overwhelming feeling that, in some way, he is hearing Homer. This is no mere sentimental feeling that comes from his seeing a way of life and a cast of thought which are strange to him, nor from the fact that the man who is singing to the four notes of a horsehair string calls himself a *singer*—*pjesnik*, as the blind poet of the *Hymn to Apollo* called himself an *ἄοιδός*, and that he calls his songs *heroic songs*—*junačke pjesme*. When the hearer looks closely to see why he should seem to be hearing Homer he finds precise reasons: he is ever hearing the same ideas that Homer expresses, and is hearing them expressed in phrases which are rhythmically the same, and which are grouped in the same order. The verse forms, of course, are different. The rhythm is falling in both cases, but the Greek has a verse of six feet which are either dactyls or spondees, while the Southslavic has a verse of five feet which is sung either as a spondaic or trochaic whole. Moreover, the rhythmic break in the Greek verse can fall in several places—after the strong syllable of the third or the fourth foot, or after the second syllable of a third dactylic foot, or after the fourth foot; whereas the Southslavic verse has a single break after the second foot. Yet this difference in the verse form is only a surface difference in the rhythmic likeness of the thought: in both the poetries we find the same idea being stated in just the length of a verse, or in the part of the verse which stretches just from one of the rhythmic breaks to one of the verse ends. I shall deal here chiefly with those cases in which Homer and

the Southslavic singers say what is after all the same thing in just the length of the verse. I might have chosen my Southslavic examples from any part of the large number of printed texts, or even from those which I have collected myself. It seemed better, however, to limit myself to the most famous collection, that which Vuk Stefanov Karajitch made at the beginning of the last century.<sup>5</sup>

#### VERSES BEGINNING AND ENDING DISCOURSE

Like Homer, the Southslavic singer, save in rare and fixed cases, always states the idea *so and so answered* in just the length of a verse, and in both poetries the verses are made in the same way. The first part is fixed and holds the verb, the second part holds the name of the speaker, which is fitted in with the aid of an epithet. The likeness extends even to the way in which, in the first part of the verse, the pronouns for the two numbers and genders change places. Thus in Homer we have the long series:

<table border="0"> <tr><td>τὸν</td><td rowspan="7" style="font-size: 3em; vertical-align: middle;">}</td><td rowspan="7" style="vertical-align: middle;">δ' αὐτε προσέειπε again spoke</td><td rowspan="7" style="font-size: 3em; vertical-align: middle;">}</td></tr> <tr><td>to him</td></tr> <tr><td>τῇν</td></tr> <tr><td>to her</td></tr> <tr><td>τοὺς</td></tr> <tr><td>to them (m.)</td></tr> <tr><td>τὰς</td></tr> <tr><td>to them (f.)</td></tr> </table>	τὸν	}	δ' αὐτε προσέειπε again spoke	}	to him	τῇν	to her	τοὺς	to them (m.)	τὰς	to them (f.)	<table border="0"> <tr><td>πολύτλας δῖος Ὀδυσσεύς (8 times)</td></tr> <tr><td><i>much enduring divine Odysseus</i></td></tr> <tr><td>θεὰ γλαυκῶπις Ἀθήνη (14 times)</td></tr> <tr><td><i>the goddess grey-eyed Athene</i></td></tr> <tr><td>μέγας κορυθαίολος Ἑκτωρ (3 times)</td></tr> <tr><td><i>great flashing-helmed Hector</i></td></tr> <tr><td>ἄναξ ἀνδρῶν Ἀγαμέμνων (5 times)</td></tr> <tr><td><i>the king of men Agamemnon</i></td></tr> <tr><td>Γερήνιος ἱππῶτα Νέστωρ (K 168)</td></tr> <tr><td><i>the Gerenian horseman Nestor</i></td></tr> </table>	πολύτλας δῖος Ὀδυσσεύς (8 times)	<i>much enduring divine Odysseus</i>	θεὰ γλαυκῶπις Ἀθήνη (14 times)	<i>the goddess grey-eyed Athene</i>	μέγας κορυθαίολος Ἑκτωρ (3 times)	<i>great flashing-helmed Hector</i>	ἄναξ ἀνδρῶν Ἀγαμέμνων (5 times)	<i>the king of men Agamemnon</i>	Γερήνιος ἱππῶτα Νέστωρ (K 168)	<i>the Gerenian horseman Nestor</i>
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and so on. Altogether there are in the *Iliad* and *Odyssey* verses of this sort for 28 different characters.<sup>6</sup> Indeed, the only characters who have not such a verse are those who do not appear often enough for there to be the occasion or need for such a verse, or those whose names cannot, even with the

<sup>5</sup> *Srpske Narodne Pjesme*. Volumes II–IV, which contain the heroic poems which Karajitch himself edited, were first published in 1823 and 1824 at Leipzig and in 1833 at Vienna. There have been a number of later editions. The latest is that printed by the Jugoslavian state at Belgrade, 1932. The references in the text are to the volume, the poem, and the verse.

<sup>6</sup> Cf. Parry, *L'épithète traditionnelle dans Homère* (Paris, 1928), 14 f.

epithet, be fitted into the last half of the verse. I now give the like series in Southslavic poetry:

Veli Said	{ njemu to him njojzi to her njima to them	{	nahod Simeune (II, 13, 54)
			<i>the foundling Simeon</i>
			Todore vezire (II, 28, 19)
			<i>Theodore the high counselor</i>
			Miloš čobanine (II, 28, 158)
			<i>Milosh the shepherd</i>
			srpski car Stjepane (II, 28, 382)
			<i>the Serbian emperor Stephen</i>
			Kraljeviću Marko (II, 55, 277)
			<i>the king's son Mark</i>

In giving the Greek series I stated the number of times the verse is found in Homer, and mentioned the number of such verses for different characters. There is no point in doing so for the Southslavic system, for here we are not limited as in Greek heroic poetry to a small vestige. It is possible to find in the Serbian texts, and if not in them, in the poetry as it is still sung, as many examples as one wishes of any given verse, and as many different verses of the type as one wishes.<sup>7</sup>

Both poetries have more than one verse for the idea in question. Homer, for example, has another series:

{ τὸν him τῆν her	δ' ἡμείβετ' ἔπειτα	answered then	{ πολύτλας δῖος Ὀδυσσεύς (3 times)
			<i>much suffering divine Odysseus</i>
			{ ποδάρκης δῖος Ἀχιλλεύς (2 times)
			<i>swift-footed divine Achilles</i>

and so on for 27 other characters. The Southslavic poets have:

Al' govori But spoke	{	Boško Jugoviću (II, 44, 58)
		<i>Boshko Yugovitch</i>
		sluga Milutine (II, 44, 154)
		<i>the squire Milutin</i>

<sup>7</sup> This does not mean to say that the same verses could be found in an identical form in any desired number. While this is true of a great number of the whole formulaic verses in the texts of Karajitch, other such verses have more or less different forms in different regions, and to a less extent, at different times: a study of these differences will furnish us with conclusions which will bear directly on early Greek heroic poetry. In the present pages, however, we are concerned only with the existence of given types of verses, and these are common to the Southslavic poetry as a whole.

These different verses are needed to provide variety in the style as the talk passes back and forth, and both Homer and the Southslavic poets have still others of the same form.

But the poets must also have a way of beginning a conversation. This must be done in a much greater variety of ways, since the way in which the statement is made must depend largely upon the way in which the action leads up to the speaking. If both the speaker and the person spoken to are clear in the hearer's mind Homer uses the verse:

καὶ μὲν φωνήσας ἔπεα πτερόεντα προσηύδα (49 times)  
*And addressing him he spoke winged words*

This in Southslavic is:

Pak mu poče tiho govoriti (II, 44, 50)  
*And quietly she began to speak to him.*

The word *quietly* in the one poetry has become as conventional as *winged* in the other. If the speaker is known, but not the person spoken to, we find such a series as:

αἰψὰ δ'  $\left. \begin{array}{l} \text{ἄρ' Εὐμαιῶν} \\ \text{to Eumaeus} \\ \text{'Αθηναίην} \\ \text{to Athena} \end{array} \right\} \begin{array}{l} \text{ἔπεα πτερόεντα προσηύδα (twice)} \\ \text{he spoke winged words (3 times)} \end{array}$   
*And straightway*

and so on. This is like the Southslavic:

Pa govori  $\left\{ \begin{array}{l} \text{svoj gospodi srpskoj (II, 49, iii, 14)} \\ \text{to his Serbian nobility} \\ \text{srpskom car Stjepanu (II, 28, 677)} \\ \text{to the Serbian emperor Stephen} \end{array} \right.$   
*And he spoke*

Or the poet may wish to tell both who speaks and to whom he speaks:

καὶ τότε  $\left\{ \begin{array}{l} \text{ἄρ' Ἰδαίου} \\ \text{to Idaeus} \\ \text{'Απόλλωνα} \\ \text{to Apollo} \end{array} \right\} \begin{array}{l} \text{προσέφη} \\ \text{spoke} \end{array} \left\{ \begin{array}{l} \text{κρείων Ἀγαμέμνων (H 405)} \\ \text{royal Agamemnon} \\ \text{νεφέληγερέτα Ζεὺς (twice)} \\ \text{cloud-gathering Zeus} \end{array} \right.$   
*And then*

Reče Said	}	Simo gospođi kraljici (II, 13, 143)
		<i>Simeon to the royal queen</i>
}	}	ostariloj majci (II, 55, 79)
		<i>to his aged mother</i>
}	}	Ljutici Bogdanu (II, 38, 108)
		<i>to Lyutitsa Bogdan</i>

Homer has a type of verse in which he tells the mood of the speaker:

τὸν δ' ἄρ' ὑπόδρα ἰδὼν προσέφη To him, scowling, spoke	}	πόδας ὠκὺς Ἀχιλλεύς (4 times)
		<i>swift-footed Achilles</i>
}	}	κρατερὸς Διομήδης (3 times)
		<i>mighty Diomede</i>

Here there is a certain difference. The shortness of the South-slavic verse does not allow it to say so much. The thought of the Homeric verse will be stated simply as

Ražljuti se Miloš Voinovič (II, 28, 419)  
*This angered Milosh Voïnovitch*

or more fully in two verses:

Ražljuti se Kraljeviću Marko,  
Pa govori Novaku kovaču (II, 66, 152-153)  
*This angered the king's son Mark,*  
*And he spoke to Novak the smith*

But the rhythmic effect of the verses is the same in both languages. The thought still begins and ends with the verse, and the rhythmic pattern of the Homeric verse with its two clauses separated by the verse-break is little different from that of the two clauses separated into two verses.

The verses which begin speech are by far the most common type of verse in the two poetries, but the likeness in the style of discourse goes even further. Homer very often begins the speech itself with a set verse of address:

Ἄτρείδη κύνιστε, ἄναξ ἀνδρῶν Ἀγάμεμνον (8 times)  
*Son of Atreus, most glorious king of men Agamemnon!*

Τυδείδη Διόμηδες, ἐμῶι κεχαρισμένε θυμῶι (3 times)  
*Son of Tydeus, Diomede most pleasing to my heart!*



ὦ πάτερ ἡμέτερε Κρονίδη, ὕπατε κρειόντων (4 times)  
*O our sire, Cronus' son, loftiest of monarchs!*

The Southslavic singers follow the same practice:

Car Lazare, srpska kruno zlatna! (II, 44, 4)  
*Emperor Lazarus, Serbia's crown of gold!*

Pobratime, Kraljeviću Marko! (II, 73, 21)  
*My comrade, Mark the king's son!*

O naš babo, stari Jug Bogdane! (II, 31, 122)  
*O our father, old Jug Bogdan!*

Of a like sort is the following type of verse:

κέκλυτέ μευ { Τρῶες καὶ Δάρδανοι ἠδ' ἐπίκουροι (4 times)  
*you Trojans and Dardanians and allies!*  
 Hear me { πάντες τε θεοὶ πᾶσαι τε θεαῖναι (twice)  
*all you gods and all you goddesses!*

Čujete li { sva srpska gospodo! (II, 34, 53)  
*all you Serbian lords!*  
 Hear me { gospodo latinska (II, 36, 102)  
*you lords of the Latins!*

Finally, the poets in both languages have verses which they use when speech is ended, either to tell the effect of the speech, or what was done right afterwards:

αὐτὰρ ἐπεὶ τό γ' ἄκουσε { πολὺτλας δῖος Ὀδυσσεύς (θ 446)  
*much enduring divine Odysseus*  
 But when this was heard by { Ποσειδάων ἐνοσίχθων (twice)  
*Poseidon the earth-shaker*

Kad to začu { Pecirep Lazare (IV, 7, 300)  
*Lazarus Petsirep*  
 When this was heard by { bego Zotovića (IV, 22, 29)  
*beg Zotovitcha*

ὦς ἔφατ' εὐχόμενος, τοῦ δ' ἔκλυε Φοῖβος Ἀπόλλων (3 times)  
*So he spoke in prayer, and he was heard by Phoebus Apollo*

Boga mole, i umoliće ga (IV, 8, 163)  
*They prayed to god, and won their prayer*

ἦ ῥα, καὶ ἀμπεπαλῶν προίει δολιχόσκιον ἔγχος (9 times)  
*He spoke, and brandished and hurled his long-shadowing spear*

To mu reče, bojno koplje pušti (II, 43, 617)  
*So he spoke to him, and hurled his battle spear*

ὡς ἄρα μιν εἰπόντα τέλος θανάτου κάλυψεν (twice)  
*So he spoke, and the end of death came over him*

To izusti, laku dušu pusti (II, 32, 64)  
*So he spoke, and gave up the lightsome soul*

As a last example of the verses used in discourse I would call attention to a certain formal manner of putting and answering questions:

ἀλλ' ἄγε μοι τόδε εἰπὲ καὶ ἀτρεκέως κατάλεξον (α 169 + 16 times)  
*But come, tell me this, and relate it to me truly*

τοὐγάρ ἐγὼ τοι ταῦτα μάλ' ἀτρεκέως ἀγορεύσω (α 179 + 3 times)  
*Indeed I shall relate this to you truly*

Što te pitam, pravo da mi kažeš (II, 31, 8)  
*What I ask you, truly do you tell me*

Kad me pitaš, pravo da ti kažem (II, 31, 23)  
*When you ask me, truly must I tell you*

#### VERSES TELLING OF THE MOVEMENT OF TIME

After the verses beginning and ending speech the like verses in the two poetries which are most noticeable are those which mark the progression of time. Most frequent of all is the following:

ἤμος δ' ἠριγένεια φάνη ροδοδάκτυλος Ἥως (21 times)  
*When appeared the early-born rosy-fingered dawn*

Kad u jutru jutro osvanulo (II, 5, 54)  
*When on the morn the morning dawned*

Each verse in Homer which tells the time of day could be paralleled from the Southslavic. I quote only the following:

δύσετό τ' ἥελιος, σκιάωντό τε πᾶσαι ἀγυιαί (7 times)  
*And the sun set, and all the ways grew dark*

Danak prođe, tavana noćca dođe (II, 42, 138)  
*The day passed, the somber night came on*

ἦμος δ' ἥλιος κατέδυ καὶ ἐπὶ κνέφας ἦλθε (7 times)  
*But when the sun had set, and darkness had come on*

A kada je tavná nóca došla (II, 28, 51)  
*But when the somber night had come*

Whole fixed verses likewise mark the passage of the years:

ἀλλ' ὅτε τέτρατον ἦλθεν ἔτος καὶ ἐπήλυθον ὥραι (3 times)  
*But when the fourth year had come, and the seasons had come on*

Kad nastala godina četvrta (II, 25, 13)  
*When the fourth year had set in*

#### VERSES TELLING OF THE MOVEMENT OF THE CHARACTERS

A third notable group of like verses in the two poetries is that in which the poet moves his characters about the scene of his story:

αὐτὰρ ἐπεὶ ῥ' ἴκοντο δόμους εὖ ναιετάοντας (3 times)  
*But when they had come to the pleasant palace*

Kad su bili pred bijele dvore (II, 33, 86)  
*When they had come before the white palace*

αἶψα δ' ἔπειθ' ἴκοντο Πύλου αἰπὺ πτολίεθρον (ο 193)  
*Quickly then they came to the sheer city of Pylos*

Kada dođe bijelu Prizrenu (II, 28, 66)  
*When he had come to white Prizren*

ἀγχίμολον δέ οἱ ἦλθε Βοηθοίδης Ἐτεωνεύς (ο 95)  
*And there drew near to him Boethus' son Eteoneus*

Dolazi mu otac igumane (II, 13, 49)  
*There drew near to him the reverend abbot*

ὄρνυτ' ἄρ' ἐξ εὐνήφῃ Γερήμιος ἱππότης Νέστωρ (ν 405)  
*Rose from his bed the Gerenian horseman Nestor*

Uranio starac kaluđere (II, 13, 1)  
*Rose up an aged monk*

#### VARIOUS OTHER LIKE VERSES AND GROUPS OF VERSES

It would be possible to draw up a very long list indeed of the various other like verses in Homer and Southslavic heroic poetry. They are of all kinds:

δῆσε δ' ὀπίσσω χεῖρας ἐυτμήτοισιν ἱμάσι (Φ 30)  
*He bound his hands in back with well-cut thongs*

Svezaše mu ruke naopako (III, 21, 113)  
*They bound his hands behind him*

αὐτοκασιγνήτη δλοόφρονος Αἰήταο (κ 137)  
*The very sister of the baleful-hearted Aetes*

Mila seka Frpce Ibrahima (III, 26, 38)  
*The dear sister of Ibrahim Ferptsas*

σπασσάμενος τανύηκες ἄορ παχέος παρὰ μηροῦ (3 times)  
*Drawing his sharp-edged sword from beside his stout thigh*

On poteže sablju od bedrice (II, 24, 164)  
*He drew his sword from beside his thigh*

ὠμῶξεν δ' ἄρ' ἔπειτα καὶ ὦ πεπλήγετο μηρῶ (3 times)  
*He groaned then, and smote his thighs*

Udari se rukom po koljenu (III, 24, 40)  
*He smote his hand upon his knee*

When, as happens in many cases, the action of the poetry is alike even in its details, we may find whole groups of like verses:

Kad se pobre nakitile vina  
 Onda reče Tanković Osmane (III, 24, 5 f.)  
*When the comrades had sated themselves with wine  
 Then spoke Osman Tankovitch*

αὐτὰρ ἐπεὶ πόσιος καὶ ἐδητύος ἐξ ἔρον ἔντο,  
 τοῖς ἄρα μύθων ἤρχε Γερήνιος ἱππῶτα Νέστωρ (γ 67 f.)  
*But when they had sent from them desire for drink and food  
 Then began to speak the Gerenian horseman Nestor*

Pa pripasa sablju okovanu,  
 I prigruu ćurak od kurjaka,  
 A na glavu kapu od kurjaka,  
 . . . .  
 Pa uzimlje koplje ubojito (II, 41, 75-77, 79)  
*And he belted on his sharp sword,  
 And put on a coat of wolfskin,  
 And on his head a cap of wolfskin,  
 . . . .  
 And he grasped a spear of battle*

ἀμφὶ δ' ἄρ' ὤμοισιν βάλετο ξίφος ἀργυρόηλον, (4 times)  
 ἔσσατο δ' ἔκτοσθεν ῥινὸν πολιοῖο λύκοιο, (K 334)  
 κρατὶ δ' ἐπ' ἰφθίμῳ κυνέην εὐτυκτον ἔθηκεν (4 times)  
 εἶλετο δ' ἄλκιμον ἐγχος ἀκαχμένον ὀξεί χαλκῶι (4 times)  
*About his shoulders he slung his silver-studded sword,  
 And he put on over all the hide of a grey wolf,  
 And on his mighty head he set a well-made helm,  
 And took a strong spear pointed with sharp bronze*

Njim, dolazi Blažena Marija,  
 Roni suze niz bijelo lice.  
 Nju mi pita gromovnik Ilija:  
 "Sestro naša, Blažena Marija!  
 Kakva ti je golema nevolja,  
 Te ti roniš suze od obraza?"  
 Al govori Blažena Marija:  
 "A moj brate, gromovnik Ilija!  
 Kada neću suze proljevati? (II, 1, 10-17)

Unto them drew nigh blessed Mary,  
 Weeping tears down her white face.  
 Her questioned the thunderer Elijah:  
 "Our sister, blessed Mary!  
 What is your great sorrow  
 That you weep tears adown your cheeks?"  
 Answered him blessed Mary:  
 "O my brother, thunderer Elijah!  
 How may I not pour forth my tears?"

Πάτροκλος δ' Ἀχιλῆι παρίστατο ποιμένι λαῶν  
 δάκρυα θερμὰ χέων ὡς τε κρήνη μελάνυδρος

....

τὸν δὲ ἰδὼν ὦκτιρε ποδάρκης δῖος Ἀχιλλεύς  
 καὶ μιν φωνήσας ἔπεα πτερόεντα προσηύδα·  
 τίπτε δεδάκρυσαι, Πατρόκλεες, ἤυτε κούρη

....

τὸν δὲ βαρὺ στενάχων προσέφη, Πατρόκλεες ἱππεῦ·  
 "ὦ Ἀχιλεῦ Πηλῆος υἱέ, μέγα φέρτατ' Ἀχαιῶν,  
 μή νεμέσα· τοῖον γὰρ ἄχος βεβίηκεν Ἀχαιοῦς

(II 2 f., 5-7, 20-22)

*But Patroclus stood beside Achilles the shepherd of the people,  
 Pouring forth warm tears like a spring of dark water*

.....

*And when he saw him, swift-footed Achilles pitied him,  
And spoke and addressed him winged words:  
"Why are you in tears, Patroclus, like a girl*

*. . . .  
With a groan you spoke to him, horseman Patroclus:  
"O Achilles, Peleus' son, far the mightiest of the Achaeans!  
Be not angry: such grief has come upon the Achaeans*

Finally, there are the many cases in which the thought which Homer expresses in one line will be expressed by the South-slavic singers in two full lines:

*τίς πόθεν εἰς ἀνδρῶν ; πόθι τοι πόλις ἠδὲ τοκῆς ; (α 170)*  
*Who are you, and whence? Where is your city and where your parents?*

*Otkle li si, od koje l' krajine?  
Kako l' tebe po imenu viču (III, 21, 73 f.)  
Whence come you, from what land?  
What is the name by which they call you? <sup>8</sup>*

In other cases there will be some small difference in the essential meaning of the verses:

*Posadi ga u stolove zlatne,  
Ugosti ga vinom i rakijom  
I gospodskom svakom đakonijem (II, 24, 267-269)*  
*She placed him at the golden tables,  
Gusted him with wine and brandy  
And all manner of lordly delicacies*

*εἶσε δέ μ' εἰσαγαγούσα ἐπὶ θρόνου ἀργυροῦλου*

*. . . .  
σῖτον δ' αἰδοίη ταμίη παρέθηκε φέρουσα,  
εἶδατα πόλλ' ἐπιθείσα χαριζομένη παρεόντων (κ 366, 371 f.)*

<sup>8</sup> One of my own texts, dictated by Perkachin Shtyepan of Stolats in Hertsegovina, contains an even fuller expression of this thought:

*Odaklen si, od koga si grada?  
Čijega si roda i plemena?  
Kako li se po imenom viđeš?  
Whence come you, from what city?  
Of what family and race are you?  
What is the name by which you call yourself?*

These verses contain not only the thought of α 170, but also of θ 550:

*εἶπ' ὄνομ' ὅττι σε κείθι κάλειον μήτηρ τε πατήρ τε*

*And she led me and sat me down upon a silver-studded seat*

. . . .

*And a grave housekeeper set food before me,  
Giving me many dishes generously from her store*

In such cases as these, though the number of verses is not the same, or the thought is somewhat different because of differences of idiom in the two languages or because of differences in customs, the hearer still has the feeling of a like rhythmic mould of the thought, and we find at work the same forces which tend to make the whole verse the dominating unit of the poetic style.

This rhythmic likeness of the thought of the two poetries also is found, though to a somewhat less striking degree, when the different lengths of verse have made it necessary for the Southslavic singers to use two verses where Homer uses one, or when Homer uses only a half-verse where the Southslavic poets have a whole verse. An example of the first kind is this:

Vidosava, moja vjerna ljubo!  
Ja sam noćas ćudan san usnio (II, 24, 137-138)  
*Vidosava, my true wife,  
In the night I dreamed a wondrous dream.*

κλῦτε, φίλοι· θεῖός μοι ἐνύπνιον ἦλθεν ὄνειρος (twice)  
*Hear me, friends! In my sleep there came a wondrous dream.*

In such a case as this, where the thought begins and ends with a verse, though not the same verse in the Southslavic poetry, the verse is still felt as the unit. In cases of the second kind, however, it is a part of the verse which corresponds with the whole verse:

Ono reče, na noge ustade (II, 2, 19)  
*So he spoke, and rose to his feet*

ὧς εἰπὼν ἀνόρουσε, [τίθει δ' ἄρα οἱ πυρὸς ἐγγύς] (ξ 518)  
*So he spoke, and leaped up [and set up for him near the fire]*

A on ode uz bijelu kulu (II, 13, 103)  
*But he went through the white palace*

βῆ δ' ἵμεναι διὰ δώμαθ' [ἔν' ἀγγελίλειε τοκεῦσι (ζ' 50)

*And she went through the palace [that she might tell her parents]*

Even in such cases as these, however, the verse break in the hexameter is strong enough to keep much of the rhythmic likeness.

As a matter of fact, instances of these two sorts are not nearly as common as one might expect from the difference in the length of the Southslavic and the Homeric verse, because the Greek singers, instead of adding to the thought of a verse, tend to fill it out instead with ornamentation. The greater number of examples quoted from above will show this tendency of the Southslavic to simpleness, of the Homeric to fullness of style. Thus we find the tendency of the two poetries to express the same idea in the like rhythmic form of the whole verse so strong as even to counteract differences of idiom and verse form. The differences of thought, of course, are much stronger: as many as are the points of likeness between these two heroic ages, the differences of customs, religion, warfare, private, social, and political life are more frequent, if not more profound, and such differences make it useless to look in the one poetry for most of the verses of the other. But wherever that thought is the same we find it tending to be expressed in the like form of the whole verse which is also a whole sentence.

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\* \*

There is nothing strange in this common tendency of the two poetries. Indeed, to the person who has actually seen the practice of a living oral poetry it seems the most natural of things: the easiest formula for the oral poet to handle is that which is both a whole sentence and a whole verse. This is the only formula which is complete in itself both in rhythm and thought. It is only formulas of this kind which can be joined on to one another, and be joined together in any number to make a shorter or longer passage. Formulas of other kinds



can fill only a given part of the verse, and they must be preceded and followed by formulas which are different in rhythm and which contain other parts of the sentence. Thus the art of the oral poet is largely that of grouping together whole fixed verses. These fixed verses themselves are, of course, no work of the single singer, but the gradual work of time and of countless singers ever seeking to cast their thought into the easiest mould. When any one of them hits upon the formula which is poetically good, and which expresses an idea which other singers would wish to use, and expresses it in a form which is easy to use, that formula is kept, and becomes a part of the tradition. In the measure that the idea to be expressed is a common one in the poetry, so is there need for the formula which is easily handled, and since the sentence-verse is most easily handled, the most common ideas will be cast into this form. Also the thought of the poetry will be largely shaped in this process: it is only when the thought of a verse is of the simplest sort that it can be used over and over for different stories and different situations. Thus the singers of an oral poetry ever seek and keep for the common ideas of their poetry the whole verses which give the simple statement of those ideas. Now to a very great degree the common ideas of Southslavic heroic poetry are the same as those of early Greek heroic poetry: it therefore follows that both poetries will often express the same idea in just the length of a verse.<sup>9</sup>

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\* \*

The diction of Southslavic heroic poetry we know to be oral and traditional. The diction of Greek heroic poetry, which has those features which in the Southslavic poetry are due to that traditional and oral nature, such as the feature of whole formulaic verses which we have looked at in these pages, must therefore also be oral and traditional. But we need not stop here at the form: understanding it we can go on to see

<sup>9</sup> Cf. also Parry, "The Distinctive Character of Enjambement in Homeric Verse;" *T. A. P. A.* LX (1929), 200-220.

the hold which heroic poetry, by its *oral and traditional* forms has on the life of men of an heroic age.

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\* \*

In the summer of 1933 I met in Gatsko, in Hertsegovina, Mitcho Savitch, a man then eighty-two years old. He had never learned to write. He dictated to me a number of poems which told of the uprising against the Turks in 1876, in which he took part, and he also dictated to me the story of his life. It began: "I was twenty-two years old when I took part in my first battle at Ravno above Gatsko. . . ." The account goes on in a prose which keeps falling into verse, thus: "My fourth battle was in the Valley of the Wolves. Two pashas attacked King Nicholas, the Montenegrins and us men of Hertsegovina, in the Valley of the Wolves. King Nicholas met them heroically. There were three pashas, by God:

Dvije paše bismo i ubismo,  
A Selima živa ufatismo.  
*Two pashas we fought and overcame,  
And Selim we took alive.*"<sup>10</sup>

The first of these two verses is a very common one in all the poetry. It is used very often, for example, in the poems which tell of the battle of Kosovo in 1389, about which has been built one of the greatest cycles of Southslavic poetry. Thus in the poem which tells of how Musitch Stephan went to that battle we have the verse (II, 46, 162):

Tri je paše bio i ubio  
*Three pashas he fought and overcame*

The verse appears in Vuk's volumes in the poems of different singers, and from different regions. It must have been a very

<sup>10</sup> *Bilo mi je 22 godine kad sam prvi put bio u boju na Ravnom više Oacka . . . E četvrta bitka na Vučji dol. Udariše na Kralja Nikolu dvije paše, na Crnogorce i na nas isto Erecogovce, na Vučjem dolu. Kralj Nikola junački dočeka. Tri su Bogami paše bile.*

old verse in his day. A hundred years later it is still the form in which an old man casts the thought of his own life. It is no verse that he has made, but has come down to him from the past. For the people as a whole who created the verse and kept it, it is an ideal; for this man it has become a boast. And as we can see in the case of this one verse, so the whole body of traditional poetry from the past brought with it the ideal of life as a whole for these men of Gatsko who have ever been renowned for their singing. So in the Greek heroic age did they sing the *κλέα ἀνδρῶν*—*the high deeds of men*.