

## On the Composition of Women's Songs

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The patriarch of South Slavic oral tradition studies, Vuk Stefanović Karadžić, thus categorized traditional songs in Serbo-Croatian in his preface to the 1843 (1964) Leipzig edition of *Srpske narodne pesme* (xvi-xvii, translations mine):

All our folksongs are divided into heroic songs on the one hand, which men sing to the *gusle*, and women's songs on the other, which are sung not only by women and girls, but also by men, especially young men, mostly two singing in unison. Women's songs are sung by one or two people simply for their own enjoyment, while heroic songs are sung chiefly for others to listen to; thus in the singing of women's songs more attention is paid to the singing than to the song, while in the singing of heroic songs more attention is paid to the song. Today the heroic song tradition is most alive in Bosnia and Hercegovina, in Montenegro and in the mountainous southern regions of Serbia. In these places even today nearly every house has a *gusle* . . . and it's hard to find a man who doesn't know how to play one, and even many women and girls know how. . . . Also to the west of Srem, the farther you go through Slovenia towards Croatia and Dalmatia, the more commonly you find heroic songs. Women's songs, on the other hand, I believe are most common in the places where the heroic songs are more rare [Srem, Bačka, Banat, northern Serbia] and in the market towns of Bosnia; for just as the men are softer in these places, so also the women in the heroic songs areas (except the townsmen) are harsher and think more of heroics than of love; the distribution may also have something to do with the fact that women in Srem, Bačka, and Banat, as in the Bosnian towns, have more social life outside the home. Indeed, in Srem, Bačka, and Banat people in the towns no longer sing the women's folksongs, but prefer new kinds that learned folk, students, and apprentices make up.

Further on he adds (xxvii):

Women's songs are rarely composed nowadays, except that girls and boys sometimes make up impromptu singing exchanges.

The distinction Vuk is making, based on his intuitive feel for his

native culture, is not between songs strictly for men and songs strictly for women, but rather between a special marked category—heroic—and an unmarked category of everything else—women's. It reflects a pervasive division between the men's sphere and the women's sphere in a traditional society, or between the public and the private domain, in which prestige, authority, and power accrue to the former. Heroic songs are generally restricted both in the circumstances of their performance and in their content to the world of the adult male in a patriarchal and often embattled society.

Women's songs include everything not heroic: ballads and bawdy songs, laments, lullabies, courting and love songs, songs to hive bees by, songs to spite the next village, ritual songs for rainmaking, seasonal festivals, weddings and circumcisions, and so forth. These are any songs sung outside the special circumstances of performing heroic songs, but often restricted to their own peculiar performance conditions (as, for example, ritual songs). Vuk's first publications in fact were mostly of women's songs. Until he came upon good informants (including one blind woman) who could sing the kind of songs he knew he wanted about the history and heroes of his country, he was relying on his own memory of songs he had heard in childhood. In sorting songs for the expanded 1823 edition of the Songbook he found some "borderline" cases that because of their length and narrative style he was inclined to group with the heroic, yet, he says, "it would be hard to find them sung by men to the *gusle* (unless to women)" (Karadžić 1843 [1964]:xviii). These are ballads, to use the general European term, whose tales of women's deeds and domestic tragedy clearly did not fit the heroic mold. The prestige enjoyed by one of these, the "Hasanaginica," in Romantic Europe, however, prompted him to place it in a volume of heroic songs.<sup>1</sup>

For purposes of text analysis, as opposed to ethnography, the useful distinction is between narrative (including both heroic songs and non-heroic ballads and romances) and non-narrative (again, everything else).<sup>2</sup> In narrative texts a narrator tells an audience a story, however brief, with a beginning, a middle, and an end. The intent is to convey information, familiar though it may be, to an audience. Non-narrative songs, which we

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<sup>1</sup> Ballads and heroic songs alike are concerned with marriage and violent death, though from different perspectives. Braun 1963 argues that ballad plots typically deal with either "woman's victory" or marriage and family conflict. See also Čubelić 1958, Coote 1977, and Krnjević 1973.

<sup>2</sup> On the distinction between narrative and non-narrative, see Schmaus 1957, Sertić 1965, and Simić 1963.

may term lyrics, may use narrative style (third-person, past tense) as well as dramatic style (direct speech unmediated by a narrator, dialogue), but they lack story-pattern or narrative structure. Lyrics intend to express an emotion, not necessarily for an audience. They focus on a situation or type-scene, an event that has happened or will happen, and on personal reactions to that event, but do not show it happening.

According to Vuk's observation, heroic songs and women's songs flourished in mutually exclusive areas, except for the villages of Bosnia and Hercegovina. Bosnian towns already were subject to influences that were undermining the heroic way of life. But elsewhere a rich tradition of both kinds persisted long after Vuk's time. Vuk's publications of women's songs drew heavily on material from Bosnia and Hercegovina. Over one hundred years later the Parry Collection of the 1930s, despite an emphasis on heroic songs in its original intent, in its publication, and in the seminal studies based upon it, also fortuitously mined the wealth of Bosnian tradition in both kinds of material. The archive contains approximately eleven thousand dictated and 250 recorded women's songs.<sup>3</sup> Seventy-five of these have been transcribed, edited, and published in Bartók and Lord's *Serbocroatian Folk Songs* (1951), a chiefly musicological study. Altogether, these published and unpublished texts offer a rare opportunity to observe the features of a living oral tradition as exemplified in women's songs.

In Gacko in the spring of 1935, Parry and his assistants were able to hold extensive recording sessions with women singers of the area, among whom three stand out in the quantity (over 600 lines from each) and quality of their repertoires. The oldest of the three, Halima Hrvo, was a peasant in her sixties, visiting the town (*varoš*) from her village near Foča. She sings with an "altogether rural character," as Bartók characterizes her style (1951: 88), and seems diffident about her village songs in the presence of a townswoman, the hostess. She says all her village songs are sung in one style, "u ravan" ("straight"), and that village and town songs differ both in words and melody. She regards the town songs as prettier but has never had time to come to town often enough to learn them. Though she had learned from her father, who was a *guslar*, to sing long heroic narratives (there are two in the collection, 112 and 133 lines long, one sung in the *guslar* style and the other in her usual ballad style), she tends to cut short and summarize her texts.

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<sup>3</sup> I am indebted to the Curator of the Milman Parry Collection at Harvard University for permission to use the materials on which this study is based.

Halima has a standard melody for songs with a basic ten-syllable text line. In performance the ten-syllable line becomes fifteen syllables followed by a quasi-refrain of eight syllables<sup>4</sup> as she repeats each line, introducing the repetition with the syllable “Ej” and pausing markedly after the fourth syllable of the repeated line:

Smilje milje, beru l' te djevojke,  
Ej! Smilje milje,  
Beru l' te djevojke

Sweet immortelles, do maidens pluck you,  
Ej! Sweet immortelles,  
Do maidens pluck you.

From the beginning of a line through the repeat and the pause afterward to the beginning of the next new line takes about twenty-five seconds—a much slower pace that is customary for the *guslar* performing heroic songs.

The most prolific and forthcoming singer in the group was Almasa Zvizdić, forty-five years old, hostess for the recording sessions and wife of a prominent citizen of Gacko, the muezzin of the local mosque. She represents a transition in the tradition between village and town. Thanks to her village background, she and Halima know a great many of the same songs; at least seven of the texts recorded from each singer are shared. In conversation she was eager to illustrate any kind of song mentioned from her wide knowledge of occasional and ritual songs and general lyrics, and she was capable of improvising a new song on the spot. She did not, however, record any songs of great length (the longest is forty lines); her songs are shorter and include fewer narratives (three to Halima's five) than those performed by the others. Her style is described by Bartók as mostly rural except for some sentimental urban texts in 8/5 rhythm. Her singing is more ornate than Halima's, higher pitched and more strained.

A third generation was represented by eighteen-year-old Hajrija Šaković, a member of a family that contributed assistance and many dictated texts to the collecting project. Her style, like Halima's, is still purely rural, though she seems to use a greater variety of melodies and delivers lines with fewer pauses. Her repertoire was more limited than the others', and she shares only three songs with Almasa and none with the older Halima. She seems to have learned mostly classic ballad tales; eight of the nineteen recorded are narratives with familiar plots.

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<sup>4</sup>The similarity to the *bugarštica*, or long line, is striking.

Typically for women's songs, whether ballads or lyrics, these texts deal generally with the problems of getting the right pair of lovers matched up, rather than with the concern for continuation of a family line and triumph over national enemies characteristic of heroic songs. They illuminate the points of stress in the relationships of men and women in the patriarchal family. The characters in them are limited to a woman and a man protagonist and a third party, a threatening authority figure such as a mother (seldom a father), husband, or rival. These characters are caught in unresolved conflict between obedience and desire, social demands and personal satisfaction. The imagery and story-patterns of the songs tend to merge two crucial life passages, marriage and death, into one, so that marriage often becomes the equivalent of death, rather than the triumph over death that it is in heroic songs. Whether or not they present a realistic portrait of family life in Gacko in the 1930s,<sup>5</sup> women's songs articulate the shared feelings of the powerless, that is women generally, and men in situations they cannot control.

By 1823 Vuk had already noted that new women's songs were no longer being composed, whereas he observed heroic songs in the making. The ritual songs in his collection would indeed be old and relatively fixed by regular repetition in the tradition. Other kinds of women's songs would be hard to assign to a particular date because no public events or people are mentioned in them. But they could be just as new as heroic songs, depending on whether one is dating the material and allusions in them or the composition and performance of individual texts. A few texts in the Parry Collection deal with clearly contemporary situations: e.g., Halima's "Ameriko, duga mora" ("America, broad sea") and Almasa's "Ameriko, grka čemerika" ("America, bitter hellebore") on the loss of menfolk emigrating to the United States, and at least two local jokes: one on the burning of some cakes for the professor's refreshment, another on a flashy car new to the village.<sup>6</sup> Though others are less obviously of recent provenance, a survey of this repertoire and comparative songs indicates that composition of women's songs out of traditional material was very much alive fifty years ago.

With this wealth of oral tradition to work on, we can ask a number of questions about composition and transmission that illuminate from a different perspective what has been learned from the model of the heroic

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<sup>5</sup> See Erlich 1966 and Lomax 1968.

<sup>6</sup> Parry texts 6526, 6525, 6464, and 6483.

song. What is a “song” and what is a variant of the “same” song in songs without narrative skeletons on which to hang verbal components? Must we assume implied narrative to understand a text? Are songs fixed and learned, or recomposed by each singer? Are they recomposed each time the singer performs the song?

The brevity of the songs (the average number of lines is 17 for Almasa, 22 for Halima, and 32 for Hajrija) and the frequency and ease with which they may be repeated suggest that the singers would not find it necessary to recompose them in performance as does the singer of heroic songs, who deals in hundreds or even thousands of lines. Each rendition of the song by the same singer would closely resemble all others. The fourteen texts from these singers that were recorded more than once for the Parry Collection bear out this suggestion. Repeated renditions of a single song vary only slightly from one another, much less than orally composed versions of purportedly “the same” heroic song are known to do. As in examples A1 and A2 given below in the Appendix (two recordings of Halima’s “Karanfil se na put sprema” (“Karanfil prepares for a journey”), text 6505a and text 6398), the variation usually consists in leaving out or inserting lines rather than in the rewording of lines. Apparently songs exist as fixed texts for the individual singer insofar as in her mind a given subject is linked to a given set of lines, whether or not all those lines are articulated in any one performance.

Are those lines peculiar to a single discrete song or can they be used to express similar ideas in different contexts? In other words, are they formulas in the sense of the Parry-Lord theory of oral composition? From an analysis of verbal repetition in Halima’s songs,<sup>7</sup> it appears that she may have learned the art of composition by formula in the Parry-Lord sense for singing longer narrative songs of 40 to 100 lines and more. In a test for formulaic density, samples taken from a heroic text and a ballad yielded 43 percent formulas (exact repetitions of metrical units from the singer’s entire repertoire); the heroic sample was 93 percent formulaic (repeated exactly or with variation) and the ballad 78 percent. The percentages might well be

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<sup>7</sup> The classic source on formula analysis is Lord 1960. Cf. Duggan 1973:29, and espec. 220: “When a singer is reproducing a work of a hundred verses or so, it stands to reason that he will, whether he wishes to or not, depend more upon the performance from which he has heard the work than if he is singing a song of over a thousand lines whose telling might even be spread over a period of several evenings.” This observation should be all the more true of songs of ten lines or so, frequently repeated and perhaps sung in chorus. See also Nedić 1969:11-13 on variation and formulas in South Slavic lyrics and Peukert 1961a.

higher if we had more narrative texts from this singer. Nevertheless, the attestation of formulas in these two cases differs from that in heroic song in that most of the formulas are repeated only within the same song. For example, a dream narrated in the heroic sample is reported directly afterwards in the song in the same words. This kind of repetition of passages is typical also of ballads (similar to incremental repetition of the English-Scottish tradition). It affords little evidence of repetition in differing contexts, comparable to the way the singer of heroic songs reuses formulas from story to story. What the test for formulaic repetition does show, however, is that such redundancy is a significant feature of storytelling, whether heroic or ballad, that non-narrative songs lack.

What about stability of texts within the tradition? In example A3 below, we have Almasa's variant of Halima's song. Almasa characteristically has a slightly fuller version that more closely parallels others in the tradition, but the two are indisputably the "same" song. Evidently for these two singers at least the text is relatively fixed. Their agreement on words is confirmed by texts they sang for the records together, though usually even in duets one singer would lead and often the group songs were sung by several individual singers successively.

But if lyric songs (distinct from narrative) are acquired and retained as fixed verbal entities due to ease of memorization, one would expect close variants to be widespread. In fact, comparison of two relatives from Vuk's collection, separated from the Parry Collection in time and probably place (A4 and A5), shows considerable divergence among songs as wholes and illustrates what kinds of elements are shared among them. No. 295, like Parry's two, portrays the situation in an opening narrated scene followed by dialogue that continues on for 27 lines. It shares lines 4-5 and 8-9 with Parry's songs, but does not describe the woman's distaste for the house without the master. No. 336 puts two shared couplets, lines 6-7 and 12-13, the bitter supper and bedchamber/prison ideas, in an entirely different context; the speaker has been smitten by the eyebrows of two handsome figures on a riverbank and no longer sees the world as it was. The first of the Vuk variants is arguably the "same song" in the sense of displaying the same type-scene, the parting of husband and wife, although the wording diverges from the Parry Collection songs after the first lines. In the second a shared formula cluster turns up in an entirely different scene, thus a different song.

Probably all the songs in our sample have parallels in the tradition in one of these senses, through either a shared type-scene or a shared formula

cluster or both.<sup>8</sup> Yet a search through a number of published collections as well as the Parry Collection texts for parallels to Halima's text 6505b, example B, turned up no single song close enough to this text to warrant claiming that it was fixed in the same tradition and learned by rote, unless this is a local song that has eluded other collectors. Could she or someone in her locale have composed the text we have?

Many of the lines in Halima's song recur in other texts in a variety of settings. When this text is compared line by line to a sample of songs<sup>9</sup> with at least partially similar content, it appears that all but the last three lines have identical twins or close relatives in other songs. Five lines are duplicated exactly; eleven are formulaic variations. Moreover, the lines parallel to Halima's rarely occur in isolation. Most of the songs in the comparative sample provide at least two parallel lines, usually consecutive, and the closest variant shares eight of its twenty lines with Halima's song. Lines float from song to song in clusters, like the commonplaces in the English-Scottish ballad tradition,<sup>10</sup> and more like the compositional formulas<sup>11</sup> in Serbo-Croatian heroic songs. The stability of the lyric text as it is transmitted among singers lies in its parts rather than in the whole.

The technique of composition of a lyric seems to consist in the combination of familiar clusters of lines rather than in the recomposition of an entire song line by line in traditional formulaic language.<sup>12</sup> While the essence of a narrative song is a story outline that the singer fleshes out with a choice of type-scenes and formulas, the lyric has no such backbone of narrative structure. Realizing a single type-scene, it plays upon an unstated theme that attracts to itself conglomerations of images embodied in clusters of formulas from the common store of traditional poetry. Each cluster of

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<sup>8</sup> See the notes to the texts in Bartók and Lord 1951:*passim*. See also Davidović 1884.

<sup>9</sup> The songs in the sample are taken from collections dating from the eighteenth century to the present. They are Karadžić 1843 (1964):Nos. 206, 510, 511; Marjanović 1864:No. viii; Andrić 1909-42:Vol. 5, Nos. 47, 48; Vol. 6, No. 78; Vol. 7, Nos. 124, 178, 346; Milošević 1954-64:Vol. 1, No. 102; Vol. 2, Nos. 54, 54a; Vasiljević 1953:Nos. 89, 230a; Gesemann 1925:No. 150; Rubić 1918:232-46, No. 40.

<sup>10</sup> See Jones 1961. Buchan 1972 applies a kind of Parry-Lord formula analysis to Scottish ballads.

<sup>11</sup> See Coote 1980.

<sup>12</sup> Lazutin 1960 analyzes the Russian folk lyric in similar terms.

formulas in the text contributes to the song both the denotation of the lines themselves and a wealth of connotative meaning accrued from their contact with other contexts in the poetry and by association with the society's customs and beliefs.<sup>13</sup>

Halima's text is a peculiar concatenation of such clusters, fixed in her repertoire but presumably her own creation out of traditional materials. Elliptical and illogical as a narrative, it coheres through this kind of associative linking. It deals with a widespread theme in the women's songs, a girl's ambiguous feelings about marriage or sexual initiation. The underlying situation is this: a nubile girl encounters a man and both provokes and repels his advances. The theme could be shaped into a narrative about the outcome, either tragic or humorous, of the encounter.<sup>14</sup> Here, however, Halima ignores the narrative possibilities and chooses rather to illuminate the situation by juxtaposing three motifs:

1. In the greenwood, unpicked flowers and a lonely man
2. In the greenwood, a girl asleep among flowers is discovered by the man
3. Dialogue between the girl and the man

In example B in the Appendix, the three sections are printed separately, with comparative passages in the parallel column.

Most recognizable variants of this song consist only of the third element, the dialogue, or the third introduced by some version of the second.<sup>15</sup> Halima's song elaborates one aspect of the underlying situation, the lonely man, as a prelude to the kernel of the song. In this prelude the question addressed to the immortal flowers in the first line raises the same issue of whether or not marriages are taking place that is the subject of the banter in the third part. The picture of the girls picking immortelles, customary adornments for a wedding party, is a traditional metaphor for marriage. The reply to the opening question indicates that failure to have marriages would result in disorder in nature—the flowers, like the girls, would not be fulfilling their proper function—and in unhappiness for the young man. The formula cluster used here more commonly leads into a lament by the man over the frustration of his hopes to marry. Aware of

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<sup>13</sup> See Lord 1960:97.

<sup>14</sup> See, e.g., Andrić 1909-42:Vol. 5, No. 47.

<sup>15</sup> On the structure of South Slavic lyrics, see Pollok 1964 and Peukert 1961b.

these traditional connections, singer and audience know without being explicitly told what the sorrowful Mujo sitting on his infertile stone is doing in the song.

The second scene, frequent as a song opening on its own but linked here by allusions to *smilje*, immortelles, and again to the name Mujo, presents the second character in the coming dialogue and switches the focus from the man's point of view to the girl's. A girl picking flowers or engaged in some other activity symbolic of her female and nubile status, such as embroidering or washing clothes, falls asleep and from this transitional and vulnerable state is roused, as though to a dream world, by a man. Halima confuses the picture somewhat by using formulas associated with a scene in which the girl, quite wide awake, goes astray on an excursion to the greenwood and stumbles upon a man—he is recumbent, often wounded, not she.<sup>16</sup> The connotations of the traditional lines have led her, as happens more frequently than editors of collections allow us to see, to a severe violation of narrative sense, yet the lyric sense is maintained.

The third motif, the kernel of the song, is developed less fully in Halima's song than in parallel versions. It has a stable form involving a challenge, a journey, questions and answers, then curses and responses, within which the formula content of the speeches varies. A girl appeals to a man, in the name of a ritual brother-sister relationship she attempts to establish with him, to take her on a perilous journey over a mountain. For a marriageable maiden, a journey implies the critical journey she takes on leaving her father's home for a new home as a wife. She wants to make the trip from childhood to adulthood without giving up the secure non-sexual relationship of a sister to a brother in exchange for the threatening relationship with a husband in a strange household. Mount Romanija, the mountain most commonly named in the formula cluster, is reputed to be a hazardous border region infested with outlaws, that is, with predatory males. Once the journey is undertaken, the dialogue discovers the true situation: the questions and answers progressively reveal the inevitability of the impending marriage, and the curses and responses half humorously express her resistance and his insistence on what is to come. (The curse-and-response exchange also occurs in other more lighthearted contexts, as when a girl defies her mother's railing at her chosen lover.) Halima follows the regular form for this scene but cuts both parts short, first by having the man baldly state his intentions in reply to the first question, instead of spinning out the revelation through three or four exchanges, and then by having only

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<sup>16</sup> See Delorko 1971.

one curse and response where other versions have as many as four. Here she makes up her own lines that summarize the intent of the scene rather than continue with the images of the formula cluster; it is precisely these lines that have no parallels in other versions of the scene.

The lyric song, then, represents associations on a theme, or type-scene, usually portraying a relationship in tension. This theme is presented in a selection of narrated scenes, often metaphorical,<sup>17</sup> and monologue or dialogue, for which the words are supplied by clusters of traditional formulas. The formula clusters pervade the tradition, linked into lyrics and entering both heroic songs and ballads as the narrative evokes them. Individual singers may create new songs by recombining traditional elements, not to tell a story but to express a feeling. Less constrained than narrative to make sense or convey information, the combinations of elements are held together by unstated connections that may or may not survive and spread in oral tradition.

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<sup>17</sup> See Pollok 1963.

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### Appendix: Comparison Texts

#### A1: HALIMA HRVO Text 6398

Karanfil se na put sprema, ej sprema,  
[E sprema, moj dilbere, moj]  
Karanfilka konja vada i plače:  
"Karanfile, ime moje, i tvoje,  
S kim ti mene ludu mladu ostavljaš?"

"Ostavljam te s tvojom majkom i mojom."  
"Kad mi nema tebe bega kraj mene  
Kad ja pođem u ložnicu da spavam  
Men' se čini ta ložnica tamnica."

#### A2: HALIMA HRVO Text 6505a

Karanfil prepares for a journey, hey prepares,  
[Hey, prepares, my darling, mine]  
Karanfilka brings his horse and weeps:  
"Karanfil, my name and yours,  
With whom are you leaving me, your  
innocent young bride?"

"I'm leaving you with your mother and mine"  
"If I don't have you, my lord, next to me  
When I go into the bedchamber to sleep  
That bedchamber seems a prison to me."

Karanfil se na put sprema, ej sprema,  
 Karanfilka konja vada i plače  
 "Karanfile, ime moje i pleme!  
 S kim ti mene ludu mladu ostavljaš?"

"Ostavljam te s mojom majkom i s tvojom."

"Što će meni tvoja majka i moja  
 Da m'ostavljaš jednu mladu žalosnu?  
 Kad mi nejma tebe bega kraj mene  
 Kad ja pođem u ložnicu da spavam  
 Men' se čini ta ložnica tavnica."

A3: ALMASA ZVIZDIĆ Text 6410

Moj se dragi na put sprema, i peva.  
 Ja mu mlada konja sedlam i plačem.  
 "S kim ostavljaš zlato tvoje, dragane?"

"Ostavljam te s mojom majkom i s tvojom."

"A jadna mi moja majko i tvoja,  
 Kad mi tebe mlada nejma kraj mene,

Kad ja pođem na večere večerat,  
 Cin' mi se ta večera čemerna;  
 Kad ja pođem u ležnicu da legnem,  
 Čini mi se ta ležnica tavnica."

A4: KARADŽIĆ 1843 (1964):336

Kolika je Jahorina planina, zlato!  
 [zlato l' moje, planina, planina!]  
 Kroz nju teče tiha voda rijeka,  
 na njoj sjede dva dilbera lijepa.  
 Kakve su im šainove obrve,  
 zanjese moju pamet do mrve!  
 Kad ja sjedem večerati večeru,  
 čini mi se ta večera čemerna.  
 Kad ponesem šimšir-kašu ka grlu,

čini mi se sindžir-gvožđe na grlu.  
 Kad ja pođem preko praga u sobu,

Karanfil prepares for a journey, hey, prepares  
 Karanfilka brings his horse and weeps:

"Karanfil, my name and family!  
 With whom are you leaving me, your  
 innocent young bride?"

"I'm leaving you with my mother and  
 with yours."

"What do I care for your mother and mine  
 If you leave me, a poor miserable bride?  
 If I don't have you, my lord, next to me  
 When I go into the bedchamber to sleep,  
 That bedchamber becomes a prison to me."

My beloved prepares for a journey and sings.  
 I his bride saddle his horse and weep.

"With whom are you leaving your treasure,  
 my dear?"

"I'm leaving you with my mother and with  
 yours."

"A poor thing to me are my mother and yours  
 If I don't have you, my young husband, next  
 to me

When I go to supper  
 That supper is bitter to me;  
 When I go into the bedchamber to lie down  
 That bedchamber seems a prison to me."

How high is Mount Jahorina, o treasure!  
 [my treasure, the mountain, the mountain]  
 Across it flows a quiet stream of water,  
 On it sit two handsome beaus.  
 What falcon brows they have,  
 They blow my mind to pieces!  
 When I sit down to supper,  
 That supper is bitter to me.  
 When I raise the carved wooden spoon  
 toward my throat,  
 It seems an iron chain around my throat.  
 When I cross the threshold into the sitting  
 room,

čini mi se negve su mi na nogu.  
 Kad ja pođem u ložnicu spavati,  
 čini mi se ta ložnicu tavnica.  
 Kad ja pođem u džamiju klanjati,  
 čini mi se džamija se poklanja.

A5: KARADŽIĆ 1843 (1964):295

Oj, sinoć se Duka Leka oženi,  
 a jutros mu sitna knjiga sustiže:  
 “Ajde, Duka, ajde, Leka, na vojsku!”  
 Duka Leka sprema konja da ide,  
 verna ljubica drži konja i plače:  
 “Jao Duka, jao Leka, vojvoda!  
 Ti opremaš dobra konja na vojsku,

na kom mene ludu mladu ostavljaš?”

“Ostavljam te tvojoj majci i mojoj.”  
 “Jao Duka, jao Leka, vojvoda!  
 Teško mene kod dve majke bez tebe!”

B: HALIMA HRVO Text 6505b

“Smilje milje, beru l’ te djevojke?”  
 “A da mene ne beru djevojke  
 Od mene bi gora mirisala  
 I u gori kamen stanoviti  
 I u njemu Mujo jadoviti.”

Smilje brala zela i’ Emina  
 Smilje brala, u smilju zaspala.

Nagazila na devet pandura  
 Na desetog buljubašu Muja.  
 “Bogom braco buljubaša Mujo!  
 Prevezi me preko Romanije

It seems I have fetters on my legs.  
 When I go into the bedchamber to sleep,  
 That bedchamber seems a prison to me.  
 When I go into the mosque to bow in prayer,  
 The mosque seems to be bowing.

Oh, last night Duka Leka was married,  
 And this morning a message come for him:  
 “Come, Duka, come, Leka, to the army!”  
 Duka Leka prepares his horse to go,  
 His true love holds the horse and weeps:  
 “Alas, Duka, alas commander Leka!  
 You are preparing your good horse to go to  
 the army,

To whom are you leaving me, your innocent  
 young bride?”

“I’m leaving you to your mother and mine.”  
 “Alas Duka, alas commander Leka!  
 It’s hard for me with two mothers without  
 you!”

KARADŽIĆ 1843 (1964):511

“Čubar-bilje, beru l’ te devojke?  
 “Zašto mene brat’ neće devojke  
 Kad od mene sva gora miriše  
 i po gori stanovno kamenje.  
 Na kamenu mlado momče stoji,  
 Ono stoji te godine broji. . . .”

KARADŽIĆ 1843 (1964):363

Devojčica ružu brala pak je zaspala,  
 Njoj dolazi mlado momče iz Novog Sada. . . .

MARJANOVIĆ 1864:183

Smilje brala kićena divojka  
 I berući i u goru zadje.  
 Kad u gori razbojište nadje  
 Na razboju ranjena junaka . . .

VASILJEVIĆ 1953:197 (Pljevlje, 1949)

Cmilj devojka po gorici brala,  
 Berući ga u goricu zade.  
 U gorici tuđina bratila:  
 O tuđine, moj po Bogu brate!



“Brother, whose is that mansion?”  
“Sister, it is your brother’s.  
I’m taking you to my fine house.”  
“Silence, brother, may lightning strike you!”  
“And lay me beside you, my dear!”

Without talk and without discussion  
Without kissing and without caressing  
And without those intentions men have.”  
When they were in the midst of Romanija  
The sister asked the brother:  
“Brother, whose is that mansion?”  
“Sister, it is your brother’s.”  
“Brother, what’s that dancing?”  
“Sister, your brother is getting married.”  
“Brother, where is the bride?”  
“Sister, I’m leading her by the hand.”  
“Brother, may the waters carry you away!”  
“Sister, may you rescue me!”  
“Brother, may gunshot kill you!”  
“Sister, may you heal me!”