

Concluding Formulas of Audience Address in Serbo-Croatian Oral Epic

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Olinko Delorko, who had an excellent knowledge of Serbo-Croatian oral literature and was a successful collector of oral poems, on one occasion recorded a poem that ends with the following lines (Delorko 1950:No. 240):

Draga braćo, ostala družino,
evo varna pjesme na poštenje.
Ko me čuje, živ i sretan bio,

Ko ne čuo, i taj vesô bio!
Domaćine ad ovoga doma,
pripni de se gore na tavanu,
pa odreži jedan klip slanine
da narnažem grlo i gudalo,
samo pazi, ne poreži ruku,
odmaknije tri-četiri pedlja!
Svakom momku po lepu devojkju,
a ja, brate, osta bez ikakve.
Svakom pravo i veselo bilo,
ali nije baki u zapečku,

baka kune gusle i guslara.

Dear brothers, and the rest of the
company,
here is a song in your honor.
May he who hears me be hale and
happy,
May he who does not be merry also!
Host of this home,
go up to the loft,
and cut off a rasher of fatback
to grease my throat and bow,
only take care not to cut your hand,
move it away three or four spans!
For each young man a beautiful girl,
while I, brother, am left without any.
May it be right and merry for everyone,
but it is not for the grandmother left
behind the stove,
the grandmother curses the gusle
and the guslar.

These lines serve as a good illustration of the singer's habit of ending his song with a direct address to his audience and are clearly an indication of the circumstances of the performance. The address to the audience (most often in the second person plural) is an integral part of the oral performance. It is made possible and is motivated by the oral presentation and it is a real address, not a fictive one as in written literature.

Formulas—groups of formulas and formulaic expressions¹—for addressing the audience are found in initial, medial, and final positions in Serbo-Croatian oral poems, and their position in the poem has an essential effect on determining their function and meaning. In initial position the function of these formulas is most often to draw attention to the beginning of the performance, while in medial position their role is most often to condense the action and to avoid repetition. The semantic types of concluding formulas of audience address and the way they are structured into series are the subject of this article.

The study of these formulas in Serbo-Croatian oral epic has been made difficult because of the attitude collectors took toward them: they were, it would seem, most often either not recorded or not printed. Valtazar Bogišić, who was the first to draw attention to this phenomenon in the study of Serbo-Croatian oral poems and who termed it *usklik* [exclamation] and *završetak* [ending] (1878:58-59), stated the following (60):

Even Vuk himself, who did not otherwise pay much attention to these endings, recorded for lexical purposes two lines of this kind in his *Rječnik* [Dictionary] under the entry *zagluh*.

In the unpublished manuscripts of Vuk Karadžić, five such *pripjevi* [refrains] have been preserved in his own hand. On the basis of their form and content, they appear to be the endings of epic poems (Karadžić 1974: 299-300). It is not known under what circumstances these lines were recorded—whether Vuk extracted them from certain poems or recorded them separately. In his editions of folk poems these lines are missing, and, on the whole, there are few poems that end with formulas of audience address. This is also the case with other early collections.

The same approach is also revealed in Sima Milutinović Sarajlija's *Pjevanija cernogorska i hercegovačka* [A Montenegrin and Herzegovinian Songbook] (1837). In this collection, however, there is a greater number of concluding formulas of audience address, but one must exert caution here; some lines were added by the poet himself (Nedic 1958:239-40). This attitude on the part of early collectors can be explained by considering two characteristics of such formulas. First, their content has no connection with the narrative structure of the poem, so that they do not give the impression of being organic parts of the poems. In principle, every group of such formulas serves as an adequate closing for any poem. Further research might be able to show that each singer had one manner of ending

¹ The terms *formula* and *formulaic expression* are used in this article in the Parry-Lord sense (Lord 1960:30-67).

his poems. Second, when the oral poem appears in print, the address to the listeners loses its function or, at least, its function is significantly altered.

An attempt to present a repertory of these formulas should perhaps begin with a study of their connection with the narrative structure of the poem. Since an epic poem is a tale of past events while the address to the audience during the moment of performance takes place in the present, the formulas under discussion really represent a step taken from outside of the epic time of the poem into the present time of the performance. The temporal gap is bridged by means of a group of formulas that express the following ideas:

- A₁ -- honoring/blessing the hero of the poem
- A₂ -- temporal antithesis (then/now)
- A₃ -- dedicating/addressing the poem to the listeners

In order to express honoring/blessing the hero, there are definite series of formulas and formulaic expressions in the oral tradition, and these give way to:

- B₁ -- blessing the listeners
- B₂ -- comment on the poem
- B₃ -- demanding wine

In the poems studied, the following relationships were established:

$$A_1 + B_1; A_1 + B_2; A_1 + B_1 + B_3.^2$$

The temporal formulas (A₂) emphasize, most often within the limits of a single line, the antithesis between past and present, succeeded by series of formulas signifying:

- B₁ -- blessing the listeners
- B₃ -- demanding wine
- B₄ -- a prayer
- A₃ -- dedicating/addressing the poem to the listeners

so that the formulas and formulaic expressions are organized according to the following schemes:

$$A_2 + B_1; A_2 + B_4; A_2 + B_1 + B_3; A_2 + A_3 + B_1.$$

When the address to the audience begins with formulas that express dedicating/addressing the poem to the listeners (A₃), the next step involves formulas signifying: _____

² A repertory of concluding formulas of audience address is provided in the appendix to this article.

- B₁ -- blessing the listeners
 B₂ -- comment on the poem
 B₃ -- demanding wine

Thus a series of formulas is established according to the following scheme: A₃ + B₁; A₃ + B₂; A₃ + B₁ + B₂; A₃ + B₃. In these cases an antithesis is established by the opposition poem/listener, and the connection between the narrative structure and the formula for addressing the audience is a looser one than in the previous cases. Still, in all the schemes of series of formulas mentioned so far, there is an evident effort to establish, at least formally, a continuity of narration. There are, however, poems that end without a "transition," simply by blessing the listeners (B₁).³

The material for this article has been collected systematically from several of the most important published collections of Serbo-Croatian oral epic poetry made in the nineteenth century, and somewhat less systematically from several manuscript collections. The selection might give rise to some objections: for more thorough conclusions a more systematic study of manuscript collections would be necessary, together with analysis of material of more recent recordings of Serbo-Croatian oral epics. In spite of these limitations, however, the material has revealed certain characteristics of concluding formulas of audience address, presented here in the form of a hypothesis rather than as the result of an exhaustive study.

As a special feature of Serbo-Croatian oral poems, audience address is formulaic to a great extent, so that one can posit a stock of traditional formulas and formulaic expressions. From the standpoint of theme, this stock is independent of the narrative structure of the poem, and, because it gives expression to general and generally accepted ideas (blessing, praise, prayer), it is easily adapted to the circumstances of the individual performance. The stability of these formulas and formulaic expressions is also manifested by the existence of the same or of similar forms in poems originating and recorded in various places and times. The groups of formulas and formulaic lines used in addressing the audience have a relatively narrow thematic scope. Dominant are expressions of good wishes in the form of a blessing, praise, or prayer; there is a high frequency of such words as hale/health, merry/mirth, brother/brothers/ sworn brother, group/company, glory/honor, integrity, poem, glass, and God—all of which signify positive life principles. Stating that the poem is being recited in someone's honor, or as a blessing of the living and the dead, or as praise has particular implications for the poem and its

³ A special subtype of this group of formulas is a blessing connected with mention of the dead (B₅) (schemes B₁ + B₅ and B₅ + B₁), in which antithesis is created by the opposition dead/living.

performance: the poem is recited with honorable intentions. The highly formulaic nature of this poetic device indicates that it too, like others, is traditional, even in the absence of a traditional plot.

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Appendix

A₁ + B₁

- | | |
|--|--|
| <p>-- Bog mu dao duši spasenije,
nama, braćo, zdravlje i veselje
(Karadžić 1862:No. 2)</p> <p>-- Bog im dao duševno spasenje,
narna, bratjo, zdravlje i veselje
(Jukić and Martić 1858:No. 16)</p> <p>-- Bog mu dao sa životom zdravlje,
narna, braćo, na sretno veselje.
Tek velimo: da se veselimo,
ne bi li nas i bog veselio
(Karadžić 1845:No. 31)</p> <p>-- Bog mu dao sa životom zdravlje,
nama, braćo, na srećno veselje
(Karadžić 1846:No. 38)</p> <p>-- Bog im dao u raju naselje,
a ostalim zdravlje i veselje
(Karadžić 1862:Nos. 1, 10)</p> <p>-- Bog mu dao u raju naselje,
nama, braćo, zdravlje i veselje
(Karadžić 1846:No. 15; 1862:Nos.
31,47)</p> <p>-- Zdravo o'šli, vesela im majka,
njima majka, a mene družina
(Karadžić 1846:No. 49)</p> <p>-- Zdravo došli, vesela im majka,
njima majka, a nama družina
(Milutinović-Sarajlija 1837:No. 131)</p> <p>-- On uteče, vesela mu majka,
njemu majka, a mene družina
(Karadžić 1862:No. 4)</p> <p>-- Eto njima pjesma na poštenje,
narna bog dô zdravlje i veselje
(Glavić 1865-85:No. 269)</p> <p>-- Eto njima pjesma na poštenje,
tamo raslo klenje i jasenje,
nami bog dô zdravlje i veselje
(Glavić 1865-85:No. 271)</p> | <p>-- God give his soul salvation,
to us, brothers, health and mirth</p> <p>-- God give their souls salvation,
to us, brothers, health and mirth</p> <p>-- God give him health in life,
to us, brothers, happy mirth
We say only: let us be merry,
so that God too may give us mirth</p> <p>-- God give him health in life,
to us, brothers, happy mirth</p> <p>-- God give them a place in paradise,
and to the rest health and mirth</p> <p>-- God give him a place in paradise,
to us, brothers, health and mirth</p> <p>-- In health, farewell, may their mother be
merry,
their mother, and my company</p> <p>-- In health, welcome, may their mother be
merry,
their mother, and our company</p> <p>-- He fled, may his mother be merry,
his mother, and my company</p> <p>-- Here's a song in their honor,
God give us health and mirth</p> <p>--Here's a song in their honor,
there may the maple and ash grow,
God give us health and mirth</p> |
|--|--|

- Tebi Mara, pjesma na poštenje,
Svem narodu od boga proštenje
(Marjanović 1864-86:No. 63)
- To you Maro, a song in your honor,
To all the people pardon from God
- O Stojane, tebi na poštenje,
svem narodu od boga proštenje
(Marjanović 1864-86:No. 64)
- Oh Stojan, in your honor,
To all the people pardon from God

 $A_1 + B_2$

- Tko ostade, vesela mu majka,
tko pogibe, nek' mu kuća znade.
Ja ne pjevam da je varna ljepo,
niti, bratjo, što je meni drago,
već ja pjevam da se veselimo
(Jukić and Martić 1858:No. 23)
- May the mother of him who survived be
merry,
may the family of him who perished
know it.
I do not sing for your pleasure,
nor, brothers, because it pleases me,
but I sing that we may be merry

 $A_1 + B_1 + B_3$

- Eto njima pjesme na poštenje,
narna bog dô zdravlje i veselje.
Ova gusla ne ostala pusta,
moja rni se osušila usta.
Domaćine, donesi narn vina,
tako bio s domaćicom miran,
da bi čaša ad barela bila,
moja bi je družina popila
(Glavie 1865-85:No. 108)
- There's a song in their honor,
God give us health and mirth.
Let this gusle never be without a player,
my mouth has gone dry.
Host, bring us some wine,
may you thus find peace with the hostess,
were the glass the size of a barrel,
my company would drink all of it

 $A_2 + B_1$

- Bog sarn znade je li tako bilo,
a rni, braćo, da se veselimo
(Karadžić 1846:Nos. 71, 72)
- God alone knows if it was so,
and let us, brothers, be merry
- Davno bilo, sad se spominjalo,
a mi da smo zdravo i veselo
(Jukić and Martić 1858:Nos. 12,32;
Marjanović 1864-86:No. 33)
- That was long ago, now it is told,
and let us be healthy and merry
- Onda bilo, sad se spominjalo,
a mi da smo zdravo i veselo,
da pjevamo, da se veselimo,
sve u strahu Boga velikoga.
Nek' se ženi tko je za ženidbu,
a udaje tko je za udaju,
stare bake da paze kućarke,
a čobanke nek' stoje kod majke
(Jukić and Martić 1858:No. 22)
- That was then, now it is told,
and let us be healthy and merry,
let us sing, let us be merry,
all in fear of Almighty God.
Let him who should wed be wed,
and let her who should marry be married,
the old grandmothers should watch
the marriageable maids,
and the little shepherd girls should live
with their mothers

- Onda bilo, sad se spominjalo,
a mi da smo zdravo i veselo,
da pjevarno, da se veselimo,
a za time da s' Bogu molimo
da nas čuva kuge i morije,
da nam rode berda i doline
(Jukić and Martić 1858:No. 24)
- That was then, now it is told,
and let us be healthy and merry,
let us sing, let us be merry,
and then let us pray to God
to protect us from plague and pestilence,
to let our hills and valleys yield well
- Davno bilo, sad se spominjalo
kano Đurđev danak u godini,
baš kô dobar junak u družini;
Tamo raslo klenje i jasenje,
među nama zdravlje i veselje
(Karadžić 1846:No. 24)
- That was long ago, now it is told
like St. George's Feast in the year,
just like a brave hero in his company;
there may the maple and ash grow,
among us health and mirth
- Onda bilo kadno se činilo,
Urodilo šarenilo cveće,
Među narna zdravo i veselo
(Šunjić 1925:No. 113)
- It was then that it happened,
Let bright flowers bloom,
Among us health and mirth
- Onda bilo kadno se činilo;
s onu stranu Save i Dunave
urodilo senje i jasenje,
među nama zdrčlje i veselje
(Šunjić 1925:No. 1)
- It was then that it happened;
on the other bank of the Sava and Danube
let the timber and ash grow,
among us health and mirth
- Onda bilo, sad se spominjalo,
a mi da smo zdravo i veselo
(Jukić and Martić 1858:Nos. 1, 33)
- That was then, now it is told,
and let us be healthy and merry
- Onda bilo, sad se spominjalo
kano Jurjev u godini dana,
a mi, braćo, da se veselimo,
sve u stravu boga velikoga,
a u zdravlje kralja kraščanskoga
(Alačević 1888:No. 121)
- That was then, now it is told
like St. George's Feast in the year,
and let us, brothers, be merry,
all in fear of Almighty God,
and to the health of the Christian king
- Tako bilo, pak se spominjalo,
a mi da smo zdravo i veselo
(Jukić and Martić 1858:No. 34)
- So it was, now it is told,
and let us be healthy and merry
- To je bilo kad se učinilo,
a srce se naše veselilo.
(Milutinović-Sarajlija 1837:No. 166)
- It was then that it happened,
and let our hearts be merry.
- To je bilo kad se i činilo,
nama, družbo, zdravlje i veselje
(Karadžić 1846:No. 81)
- It was then that it happened,
to us, company, health and mirth
- To je bilo kad se i činilo,
tek velimo: da se veselimo
(Karadžić 1862:No. 6)
- It was then that it happened,
we say only: let us be merry

-- To je bilo kad se i činilo,
pokojnijem duševno spasenje,
a živijem zdravlje i poštenje
(Milutinović-Sarajlija 1837:No. 9)

$A_2 + B_4$

-- To je bilo kad se i činilo,
već za slavu boga da molimo
i za zdravlje vladike svetoga
Amin, bože, vazda te molimo.
(Karadžić 1845:No. 95)

-- I to bilo kad se zahoćelo.
Arnin, bože, sve se s tobom može.
(Milutinović-Sarajlija 1837:No. 7)

$A_2 + B_1 + B_3$

-- Davno bilo, sad se sporninjalo,
a rni, bratjo, zdravo i veselo:
rodila narn bielica pšenica,
uz pšenicu rujna lozovina,
vince pili pa se veselili.
Varna pjesma, meni čaša vina,
ne bi l' ona od barila bila
(Jukić and Martić 1858:No. 21)

-- Onda bilo, sad se sporninjalo,
a rni da smo zdravo i veselo.
Ko me sluša, na čast neka mu je,
varna pisma, meni čaša vina,
da bi ona od barila bila
(Šunjić 1925:No. 173)

-- Onda bilo, sad se spominjalo;
trista glavah, a trista je falah.
Komu pievarn na zdravje mu bilo,
što popijem, to u moje tielo
(Jukić and Martić 1858:No. 15)

-- Onda bilo kad se je činilo;
s onu stranu Save i Dunave
urodilo senje i jasenje,
među nami zdravlje i veselje.
Pokraj Lašve, baš iz one strane,
urodilo svakojako cviće,
ponajviše modro i zeleno,
sve u zdravlje kućnog domaćina
koji nas je ovdje sakupio.

-- It was then that it happened,
to the dead their souls' salvation,
to the living health and honor

-- It was then that it happened,
but let us pray for the glory of God
and for the health of our holy bishop.
Amen, God, always we do pray.

-- And it was then that it was desired.
Amen, God, everything can be done
with your help.

-- That was long ago, now it is told,
and let us, brothers, be healthy and merry
may our white wheat yield well,
and with our wheat our dark red grapes,
may we drink wine and be merry.
For you a song, for me a glass of wine,
let it be the size of a barrel

-- That was then, now it is told,
and let us be healthy and merry.
Let it be to the honor of him who listens
to me,
for you a song, for me a glass of wine,
let it be the size of a barrel

-- That was then, now it is told;
three hundred men, and three hundred
praises.
Health to him for whom I sing,
let what I drink be for the health of my
body

-- It was then that it happened;
on the other bank of the Sava and Danube
let the timber and ash grow,
among us health and mirth.
Beside the Lašva, on that very bank,
may flowers of all sorts bloom,
most of all blue and green,
all to the health of our host
who has gathered us together here.

Kako narn je milo na sastanku,
nek' narn bude lipo na rastanku,
varna pisma, meni čaša vina.
(Šunjić 1925:No. 51)

Since our meeting is pleasing,
let our parting be pleasant,
for you a song, for me a glass of wine.

$$A_2 + A_3 + B_1$$

-- To je bilo, nije davno bilo,
skora bilo, sad se spominjalo;
vama pjesma, a pomoć od Boga
(Karadžić 1862:No. 53)

-- That was, it was not long ago,
it was recently, now it is told;
for you a song, and help from God

-- Onda bilo, sad se spominjalo,
svim delijam pisma na poštenje,
a nam bog da zdravlje i veselje
(Ivančić 1886:Nos. 21,24)

-- That was then, now it is told,
to all heroes a song in their honor,
and to us may God give health and mirth

-- I to bilo ka' se je činilo;
ova pjesma svijema Srbima,
od men' pjesma, a od boga zdravlje
(Karadžić 1862:No. 9)

-- And it was then that it happened;
this song to all Serbs,
from me a song, and from God health

$$A_3 + B_2$$

-- Eto pisma, bratjo moja draga;
komu mila-i milja mu bila,
komu merska--i merža mu bila;
nek' rniluje što je njemu drago,
dat' ću njemu gusle i gudalo,
neka pieva što je njemu drago
(Jukić and Martić 1858:No. 5)

-- There's the song, my dear brothers;
to the one to whom it is dear-the dearer
may it be,
to the one to whom it is loathsome-the
more loathsome may it be;
let him love what is dear to him,
I shall give him the gusle and bow,
let him sing what he pleases

-- Eto pjesma, moja braćo draga;
kažu ljudi da je tako bilo,
a ja tude asli bio nisam,
kako čuo, tako vama kazah.
Tko zarnjera, nek' mi dade mira,
ja ću njemu gusle javorove,
i gudalo, drvo šimširovo,
i nek' pjeva kako njemu drago
(Ikić 1881:No. 5)

-- There's the song, my dear brothers;
men say that is the way it was,
but I was not there, truly,
as I have heard, so have I told you.
Let him who finds fault leave me be,
I'll give him the maple gusle,
and the bow, made of boxwood,
and let him sing as he pleases

$$A_3 + B_1$$

-- Ova pjesma svjema Srbinjima,
od men' pjesma, a od boga zdravlje
(Karadžić 1862:Nos. 33, 34)

-- This is a song to all Serbs,
from me a song, and from God health

- Ova pjesma svjema Srbima,
od men' pjesna, od boga varn zdravlje
(Karadžić 1862:No. 43)
- This is a song to all Serbs,
from me a song, from God health to you
- Od nas pjesna, a pomoć od boga
svakojemu bratu Rišnjani
(Milutinović-Sarajlija 1837:No. 19)
- From us a song, and help from God
to all brothers from Risan
- Ova pjesma na tvoje poštenje,
Bog ti dao zdravlje i veselje,
rodilo ti vino i pšenica,
i da bi ti rodilo predivo,
i da bi ga gulile dievojke,
udovice terle i topile,
biegunice na rosu nosile,
stare bake žicu otezale;
pošten bio tko te je rodio
i bielim mliekom zadojio,
poštena mu na rarnenu glava,
poštenija pod obrazom brada,
štimala te bratja i družina,
dušmani ti svi pod nogarn' bili
kano konj 'ma klinci pod pločama
(Jukić and Martić 1858:Nos. 17,30)
- This song in your honor,
God give you health and mirth,
may your vines and wheat yield well,
and may your flax yield well,
and may the girls strip it,
may the widows comb and soak it,
may the girls who have eloped spread it
on the dew,
may the old grandmothers spin it;
honored be the one who begot you
and who gave you white milk,
honored be the head on his shoulders,
even more honored the beard on his chin,
may you be honored by your brothers and
company,
may all your enemies be under your feet
like nails under horses' hooves

 $A_3 + B_1 + B_2$

- Od nas pesma, a od boga zdravlje,
nas lagali, mi polagujemo
(Karadžić 1845:No. 12)
- From us a song, and from God health,
if they lied to us, we are lying to you

 $A_3 + B_3$

- Vami pjesma, a meni čaša vina,
da bi čaša od barjela bila,
ova bi je družina popila
(Svilokos 1885-86:No. 1)
- For you a song, for me a glass of wine,
were the glass the size of a barrel,
this company would drink all of it

 B_1

- A mi, braćo, zdravi i veseli
(Alačević 1888:No. 22)
- And let us, brothers, be healthy and merry
- A mi da smo zdravo i veselo
(Glavić 1865-85:No. 259)
- And let us be healthy and merry
- A mi, družbo, zdravo i radosno,
vince pili, te se veselili
(Milutinović-Sarajlija 1837:No. 100)
- And let us, company, be healthy and joyful,
let us drink wine, and be merry

- I mi, družbo, zdravo i veselo
(Milutinović-Sarajlija 1837:No. 152) -- And let us, company, be healthy and merry
- Pa rni zdravo i veselo, družbo
(Milutinović-Sarajlija 1837:No. 87) -- And so let us be healthy and merry, company
- Pa da si rni zdravo, prijatelju
(Milutinović-Sarajlija 1837:No. 42) -- And so may you be healthy, my friend
- I da si rni zdravo, pobratime
(Milutinović-Sarajlija 1837:No. 12) -- And may you be healthy, my sworn brother
- A sad zdravo, moja braćo draga,
bog vam dao zdravlje i veselje,
ne bilo ga ko brata gubio
(Milutinović-Sarajlija 1837:No. 39) -- And now to your health, my dear brothers,
God give you health and mirth,
let no man live who has killed a brother
- Bog narn dao zdravlje i veselje,
dušmanima ternje i kamenje
(Jukić and Martić 1858:No. 35) --God give us health and mirth,
to our enemies thorns and stones

B₁ + B₅

- Narna bog dô zdravlje i veselje,
mrtvim dušam vijčno spasenje,
koga nije da kruha ne ije,
a mi da smo zdravo i veselo
(Glavić 1865-85:No. 252) -- God give us health and mirth,
to dead souls eternal salvation,
let him who is not here eat no bread,
and let us be healthy and merry

B₅ + B₁

- Koga nije da kruha ne ije,
a mi, braćo, zdravo i veselo
(Jukić and Martić 1858:No. 19;
Glavić 1865-85:No. 261) -- Let him who is not here eat no bread,
and let us, brothers, be healthy and merry
- Koga nije da kruha ne ije,
a mi da smo zdravo i veselo
(Glavić 1865-85:No. 251) -- Let him who is not here eat no bread,
and let us be healthy and merry

B₂

- Ja ne lažem, moja braćo draga,
onaj laže koji meni kaže
(Delić 1877 :No. 39) -- I do not lie, my dear brothers,
he lies who told me so