

## REMARKS ON OBSOLETENESS AND FAMILIARITY WITH TRADITIONAL CROATIAN PROVERBS

### III: Mijat Stojanović's "Sbirka narodnih posloviceh, riečih i izrazah" (1866)

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The present study is part of a comprehensive research project on familiarity with Croatian proverbs. In this study, all 2,510 items of Mijat Stojanović's *Sbirka narodnih posloviceh, riečih i izrazah* (Zagreb, 1866) were presented to 16 Croatian native speakers who were asked to indicate with regard to each individual item, if they were familiar with it or not. The results of this study are represented, analyzed and compared to parallel studies based on other traditional Croatian proverb collections. Irrespective of the specific linguistic phrasing of the items (due to time and place of their origin), and despite the heterogeneity of the included items, the obtained percentage of familiarity with the items turns out to be relatively high compared to the results from parallel studies with other proverb collections. About 3% of the material was familiar to all informants, and more than two thirds of the presented items were known to more than 50% of the informants. This relatively high degree of familiarity might be explained by the fact that the material of Stojanović's collection was not simply copied from previous collections, but collected by the compiler himself.

The general conclusion which may be drawn from our study is that the construction of a corpus of Croatian proverbs, actually known today, is an absolute desideratum to be realized in the near future. The present study cannot be but one step in this direction.

## 0.

The present study, which is part of a more comprehensive research project, is concerned with the question of proverb familiarity in contemporary Croatian culture. This question has not been systematically studied before,<sup>1</sup> although the importance of this topic seems to be obvious and definitely goes beyond the narrow framework of paremiology (i.e., the study of proverbs). The particular relevance for folkloristics, linguistics, sociology, cultural semiotics, etc., need not be explained here in detail (cf. Grzybek 1991a, 1991b); still, it might be helpful briefly to outline the theoretical framework and background of our empirical studies.

In paremiology, it has become a commonplace that traditional proverb collections often turn out to be "proverb graves", in which "text corpses" are buried, i.e., proverb texts which are simply copied from previous collections by compilers who do not even raise the question if these texts (still) are part of the contemporarily familiar proverb stock. Therefore, we often find more or less obsolete material in standard proverb collections, and nobody knows which of the proverbs are still known today - the historically related question if they were ever current among the people in earlier times probably will remain unanswered forever. Nevertheless, it is just this obsolete material which serves as a basis for subsequent linguistic, comparative and other studies which never ask the relevant question as to the material's authenticity.

Basing paremiological, linguistic, and other studies on authentic material, presupposes the establishment of a completely new and qualitatively different material basis which contains all actually known proverbs of a given culture. It goes without saying that this difficult question can be solved only by way of empirical research. As to the methodological aspect of this question, the pioneering works by Grigorij L. Permjakov on Russian proverbs have turned out to be extremely inspiring. His approach combines folkloristic ideas, on the one hand, and linguistic-phraseological concepts on the other. Accordingly, a proverb is understood as a complete stereotypical text (i.e., as a "cliché" in his terminology), which is mentally stored in analogy to lexical entries. From

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<sup>1</sup> In fact, there is only the pilot study by Grzybek et al. (1993), based on the 5,935 proverbs of Daničić's *Poslovice* (1871).

this methodological position, an efficient design for the study of proverb familiarity can be derived, the so-called "partial text presentation". This method is based on the assumption that, if the beginning of a familiar proverb is presented to a member of the given culture, s/he is able to complete the proverb's beginning; if one does not know the proverb, even guessing will not help, as a rule. Of course, this approach is not free of methodological drawbacks; since we are not concerned here with a general methodological discussion, such questions need not be discussed in detail. In any case, the efficiency of this method has repeatedly been proven, and one can definitely assume that the degree of proverb familiarity can reliably be studied by way of this empirical approach.<sup>2</sup>

Before one can start the relevant research, it is necessary, however, to have an adequate experimental corpus of proverbs, which can be used for the empirical studies. As to this crucial question, there remains one major methodological problem: if the aim is to find out which proverbs are generally known in a given culture (as, in our case, in contemporary Croatian), an experimental corpus is needed which contains *all possibly familiar proverbs* (i.e., all "candidates" for generally known proverbs) the actual familiarity of which has to be subsequently studied. If one only wants to find out the familiarity of a particular proverb, or of a more or less randomly chosen proverb sample, this problem is not relevant.

For our purposes - concentrating on the question of the commonly known Croatian proverbs - it is crucial therefore, that the designing of the experimental corpus itself must be realized by way of empirical research. To this end, it is necessary, on the one hand, to analyze all relevant traditional paremiographic sources, and, on the other, to make additional analyses of contemporary proverb use (such as in print media, TV, etc.).<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> This specific design has a lot of advantages as compared to other methods of studying proverb familiarity: Among other, it successfully avoids wrong identifications (when persons have to decide if they know, or do not know, complete proverb texts presented to them, and in this case often identify allegedly known texts as 'familiar'). Furthermore, this method offers insights not only into the existence, but also the frequency of variants, since each completed version can be systematically categorized according to a specific classificational schema, (cf Grzybek/Chlosta/Reos 1994); all these variants can then be statistically analyzed. It is by this way of (retrospective) statistic analysis that proverbial "standard forms" can be obtained, and our results clearly show that they should not be determined in advance, as is often done in paremiology and paremiography.

<sup>3</sup> For general methodological remarks concerning the empirical study of proverb familiarity, in general, and the construction of an experimental corpus, in particular, see Chlosta/Grzybek (1996).

## 1.

It is in this global context that the present study has to be seen. In order to design an experimental corpus for the study of generally known Croatian proverbs, the major traditional proverb collections were distributed all over Croatia. This first step - which was accompanied by additional analyses of the usage of proverbs in media, which cannot be dealt with here - aimed at the exclusion of those proverb texts which are contained in traditional proverb collections, but which display a clear tendency of not being generally known today. In this way, all the proverb material ever codified in the history of Croatian paremiography can be quantitatively reduced and relieved of those items which, due to their highly probable unfamiliarity, can be excluded from the subsequent analytical steps. Therefore, in this first, preparatory phase we did not chose the partial text presentation method, since the informants' task consisted only in marking those items which were definitely unfamiliar to them, or which they were sure they had never heard before.

On the whole, the following traditional Croatian proverb collections were distributed in the project's first phase:

- Bonifačić Rožin, Nikola. 1963. "Narodne drame, poslovice i zagonetke". In *Pet stoljeća hrvatske književnosti*. Vol. 27. Zagreb, 211–259. \* 613 entries
- Daničić, Gjuro. 1871. *Poslovice*. Zagreb. \* 5,935 entries
- Divjak, Milan. 1987. *Ličke poslovice. Narodna mudrost Like*. Novi Sad. \* 811 entries
- Ilić, Luka [Oriovčanin]. 1846. "Poslovice". In *Narodni slavonski običaji*. Zagreb, 244–252. \* 271 entries<sup>4</sup>
- Kekez, Josip. 1986. *Svaki je kamen da se kuća gradi. Hrvatske poslovice sakupljene u naše dane po književnim i jezikoslovnim djelima nastalima od 12. do 19. stoljeća*. Zagreb. \* 1,803 entries
- Lang, Milan. 1914. "Samobor: Iznajnici i poslovice". *Zbornik za narodni život i običaje južnih Slavena* XIX:283–306. \* 298 entries
- Peteh, Mira & Marija Duš. <sup>3</sup>1987. *Poslovice i zagonetke za najmlađe. Priručnik za odgajatelje u dječjim vrtićima*. Zagreb, 37–42. \* 262 entries

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<sup>4</sup> Obviously referring to the data given by Kulišić (1930), Kekez (1986: 145) reports a number of 274 proverbs for this collection.

Skarpa, Vicko Juraj. 1909. *Hrvatske narodne poslovice*. Šibenik. \* 15,024 entries<sup>5</sup>

Stojanović, Mijat. 1866. *Sbirka narodnih posloviceah, riečih i izrazah*. Zagreb. \* 2,510 entries<sup>6</sup>

Without a doubt, the three collections by Stojanović, Daničić and Skarpa are of central importance in the history of Croatian paremiography. Therefore, we have separately analyzed the results of these three collections in detail. Whereas the discussion of the results of all other studies may be found elsewhere (Grzybek 1997a,b; Grzybek/Chlosta 1997), the results of the Stojanović collection represent the objective of the present article.

## 2.

At the time when Mijat Stojanović<sup>7</sup> published his collection of proverbs, *Sbirka narodnih posloviceah, riečih i izrazah* (Zagreb, 1866), this was a unique event in and for Croatian paremiography. There had been no comparable publication of proverbs before: it contained proverbs and sayings, the majority of which the compiler claimed to have collected himself, mainly in Slavonia; Đuro Daničić's famous *Poslovice* were published only five years later, in 1871, and Vicko Skarpa's comprehensive *Hrvatske narodne poslovice* only in 1909.

The quality of Stojanović's collection was soon called into question. Major critical points were raised by Ivan Kasumović (1911:123ff.), among others, who compared Croatian and Serbian proverbs to their Roman and Greek equivalents; up to a point, his arguments still hold today:

1. In Stojanović's ordering of the material (which is classified on the basis of particular key-words which, in turn, are ordered alphabetically), auto-semantic key-words are not distinguished from syn-semantic functor items (such as 'ako', 'i', 'ili', and others); since the use of such syn-semantic functors as key-words is not really helpful, the result is neither a strict alphabetical nor a convincing semantic classification;

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<sup>5</sup> Obviously reporting the data given by Kulišić (1930), Kekez (1986: 148) speaks of 2,663 proverbs this collection is supposed to contain.

<sup>6</sup> Like Kulišić (1930), Kekez (1986:148) reports a number of 2,617 proverbs. According to our data, it contains only 2,510, some of which are even duplicates or quasi-duplicates, (see below).

<sup>7</sup> Mijat Stojanović was born August 26<sup>th</sup>, 1818, in Babina Greda (Slavonia), as the son of a peasant family. He worked mainly as a teacher, most of the time in Babina Greda and Zemun. After his retirement in 1877, he lived in Zagreb, where he died on August 18<sup>th</sup>, 1881. In addition to his folkloristic activities, he was interested in pedagogy and pedagogical literature.

additionally, the alphabetical order of the key-words is not consequently adhered to (e.g., 'budak', 'burgija' and others appear before 'briga', 'badnjak', and the like);

2. In the appendix [*Dodatak*], proverbs by the Dubrovnik poet Ignjat Đorđić, which were published in *Danica Ilirska* in 1864 and 1865, are added; since these proverbs were not distinguished from the authentic folk proverbs Stojanović had collected himself, Kasumović generally called into question the authenticity of Stojanović's proverb material; he suspected that the material might either contain no authentic folk proverbs at all, or that it might not be represented in the original verbal form, but in modified paraphrases by the compiler.
3. Quite a lot of expressions such as 'objediti koga' (p. 32), 'to je velik gursuz' (p. 70), 'nevalja ti posao' (p. 221), and others, are not proverbial, partly not even phraseological expressions; therefore the question of the inclusion of items seems not to have been handled systematically.<sup>8</sup>
4. Stojanović gives explanations both for single words and for complete expressions; Kasumović states that these explanations are too long and naïve in their contents. In addition to this critique, another point seems to be even more important, namely, that the compiler made up his personal interpretations of those expressions for which he did not receive any explanation among the people.
5. Another methodological drawback of Stojanović's collection not mentioned by Kasumović is that, due to the disadvantages of ordering (see above), 35 entries are duplicates which are attributed to two different key-words, such as, e.g., *Bolje je umjeti nego imati* (p. 21: 'Bolje' // p. 206: 'Umjeti'), *I bunar se pregrabi* (p. 39: 'Bunar' // p. 147: 'Pregrabiti'), or *U svoje voće kad tko hoće* (p. 126: 'Moje' // p. 176: 'Svoje'). An additional 25 entries are almost identical and differ only in minor aspects, such as *Um za gorom, [a] smrt za vratom* (p. 178: 'Smrt' // p. 210: 'Um'), *Glad [je] gotova bolest* (p. 24: 'Bolan' // p. 70: 'Gladan'), or *Stara koka [,] mastna čorba* (p. 190: 'Star-a-o' // p. 105: 'kokoš').

To summarize, one can say that Stojanović's collection is characterized by a number of organizational disadvantages, which do not correspond to paremiological standards, even not to those of his time. However, most of the above-mentioned critical objections concern the classification and the presentation of the material, rather than the quality of the material itself.

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<sup>8</sup>To do historical justice to Stojanović, one should not forget, however, that his collection's title clearly indicates that he did not intend to include proverbial or phraseological material only, but also particular words which he considered to be culturally or locally specific.

In this context, two remarks have to be made as to the concrete verbal form of the included items: firstly, one cannot say with certainty if the proverbs have in fact been paraphrased or modified, as Kasumović suspects. Secondly, even a cursory glance at the collection makes it obvious that the concrete verbal form of the material has changed since the time of the collection's publication. For these reasons, our informants were asked to write down variants of the presented items familiar to them. On the whole, there remain two relevant points of criticism with regard to the material itself:

- phraseological and lexical material is included in addition to strictly proverbial material;
- in the appendix, literary proverbs by an individual author are added.

But even these two objections must be seen in an appropriate light: Firstly, the fact that there is lexical and phraseological material in addition to proverbial items, does not say anything about the quality of the proverbial material. And secondly, attention must be paid to the generally known fact that there is a fluent transition between auctorial and folk items, in particular from a diachronic perspective, since former individual (auctorial) expressions have often turned into common (folk) expression over time (cf. Grzybek 1994).

From this perspective, the quality of Stojanović's proverbial material may not generally be called into question, at least not in advance, and an evaluation of its authenticity remains a desideratum. Of course, it is difficult to say something about the proverbial material's authenticity at the time of its publication; what we can do, however, is to test the extent to which the included proverb texts are still familiar today, and to compare the results to those from other studies.

### 3.

All 2,510 items<sup>9</sup> of the Stojanović collection were distributed among 16 Croatian native speakers who lived in different Croatian regions and who had also spent their youth in various regions of Croatia (among them Drniš, Dubrovnik, Hvar, Pelješac, Rijeka, Vukovar, Zadar, Zagreb, and others). Since our aim was not the study of regionally or locally specific

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<sup>9</sup> As can be seen from this number, the 60 duplicates or quasi-duplicates (see above) were not excluded for technical reasons and were thus presented twice, either in identical or very similar form. Due to a regrettable technical mistake, two items were not presented as separate items, but were included in two other entries: *Jel zabavljaš? - Traži, gdi su plot opleli* and *Kad tko što izgubi, i po njedri traži*. On the other hand, two other items (each occurring only once in Stojanović's collection) were presented twice immediately one after another, so that the ultimate number of 2,510 items is not changed.

factors, a more detailed presentation of the individual data does not seem to be necessary here; let it suffice to say that the distribution all over Croatia was guaranteed, and that there were usually two persons (a male and a female subject) from each major region.

In finding the informants, attention was paid to the fact that 'age' seems to be a crucial factor in proverb knowledge (cf. Grzybek 1991; Grzybek et al. 1993). Therefore, an average age of >50 years was desirable in the composition of the sample. In fact, the group's average age was  $54.69 \pm 11.80$  years of age; the average age of the nine female subjects was  $56.66 \pm 11.19$  years, the average age of the seven male subjects  $52.14 \pm 11.39$  years. The detailed data for the individual subjects may be taken from Table 1 (see below).

Right from the beginning, it must be pointed out very clearly that no reliable conclusions may be drawn as to the general familiarity of the tested items, since our results are based on a relatively small sample ( $n = 16$ ). Still, the sample's size and the results obtained from it allow for some preliminary evaluation of the material; also, it will be possible to put forward some tentative hypotheses which may serve as a starting-point for future investigations.

It is obvious how labor-intensive our calculations are, if one takes into consideration the fact that it was necessary to compute more than 40,000 individual results ( $2510 \times 16$ ) solely for the analysis of this study, and more than 300,000 results for comparisons with our other studies. In the analyses, there were more problematic issues, however, than the mere question of dealing with this enormous amount of individual answers. One complication was caused by the fact that we were well aware of the probable obsolescence of the material, at least as far as the concrete phrasing of the items was concerned; a comparable problem was related to the fact that most probably our informants would be familiar with dialectical forms other than those given in the test material. In other words, we were faced with a high probability that our informants might know a particular proverb, but not in the concrete verbal form given. In order to handle these problems, all subjects were asked to mark such items as "known" and to additionally write down those variants of the presented texts which seemed familiar to them. In the analyses, we could not, however, simply rely on the subjects' own answers; instead, every time an additional variant was given, it had to be classified either as a true variant (and in this case, the proverb had to be classified as 'known'), or as an additional proverb text in its own right (in which case the proverb had to be classified as 'unknown'). Everyone who has ever dealt with the problem of 'proverb types', knows that this is a rather difficult problem, which causes painstaking effort and can hardly ever be satisfyingly solved. We



therefore tried to find a pragmatic solution, counting those items as known which not only semantically correspond to the presented items, but which can also be considered to be verbal variations. To give but a few examples, the following three variants were counted as 'known':

Teško onomu tko je lud.  
→Teško onom tko pameti nema.  
Čuje se i dobro po daleku, a zlo i po daljem.  
→Dobro se daleko čuje, zlo još dalje.  
Bolje u grob, no bit rob.  
→Bolje grob nego rob.

As opposed to this, the following three "variants" were classified as 'unknown':

Kaša gusta ne ostaje pusta.  
→Što je gusto nije pusto.  
Ako laže, ne smeta mu brada.  
→U laži su kratke noge.  
Grm u nuždi bedem.  
→Utopljenik se i za slamku hvata.

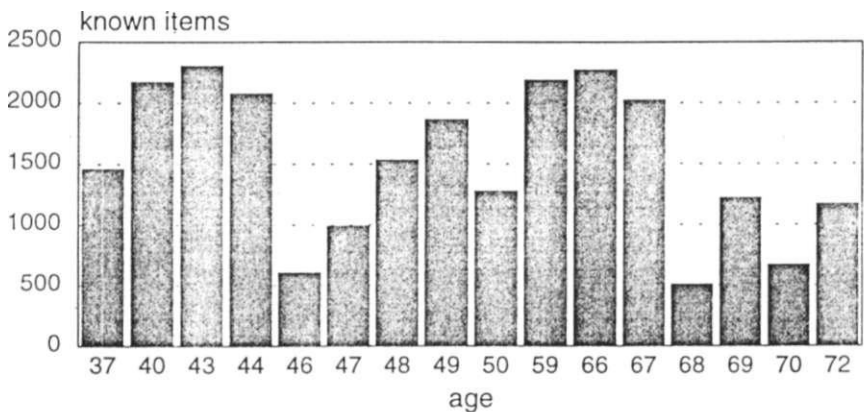
With these complications in mind, let us now turn to the concrete results. The following table 1 is based on the categories described above; it displays how many proverbs were known to the individual subjects (or which were, respectively, classified as 'not unknown' by them).

**Table 1:** Individual proverb familiarity

subject	sex	age	items	%
1	f	50	1274	50,76
2	m	59	2184	87,01
3	m	47	986	39,28
4	f	46	602	23,98
5	m	40	2169	86,41
6	m	37	1456	58,01
7	f	69	1221	48,65
8	m	72	1168	46,53
9	f	44	2070	82,47
10	m	67	2017	80,36
11	f	68	504	20,08
12	f	70	665	26,49
13	f	49	1861	74,14
14	m	43	2297	91,51
15	f	48	1527	60,84
16	f	66	2267	90,32

As can be seen in Table 1, the lowest sum of individually known proverbs is 504 of the 2,510 presented items (subj. #11), the highest is 2,297 (subj. #14); this corresponds to 20.08% vs. 91.51% of the complete collection. One might perhaps tend to regard these two results as extreme, non-representative exceptions; this interpretation would not be correct, however, since the results achieved by subject #4 (23.04%) and subject #16 (90.32%), respectively, come very close to these scores, too. In fact, the persons with high proverb knowledge know (more than) four times as many proverbs as those with lower proverb knowledge. At first sight, such individual differences may surprise; yet, this observation coincides with results obtained in comparable studies, both on the basis of German proverbs (cf. Chlosta/Grzybek/Roos 1994:42ff.) and Croatian proverbs (cf. Grzybek 1997a, 1997b). In fact, the difference in our study is even smaller as compared to the studies just mentioned, where persons with higher proverb knowledge knew 12 or 13 times as many items as those with lower proverb knowledge. Probably, this difference is due to the relatively high general proverb knowledge in our study: on the average,  $\bar{x} = 1516.75$  items ( $s = 605.11$ ) were known to our 16 subjects, which corresponds to 60.43% of the complete material; the median is  $Md = 1491.50$ . As can be seen, mean value and median are relatively closely to each other; interestingly enough, exactly half of the subjects ( $n = 8$ ) reached the mean value, and the same number of subjects is beyond the median. Figure 1 illustrates the general results, ordered by age; this order nicely illustrates two facts: first, that there is no general increase by age, and second, that proverb knowledge is quite heterogeneous for each individual:

**Fig. 1:**



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The question of how many items were known by the individual subjects, can of course be nothing but a first step in our analyses. For our purposes, it is much more important to know which concrete proverbs and how many proverbs were known by how many subjects. These questions do thus not concern individual, but collective proverb knowledge. The relevant results giving an answer to these questions may again best be represented in a table (cf. Table 2).

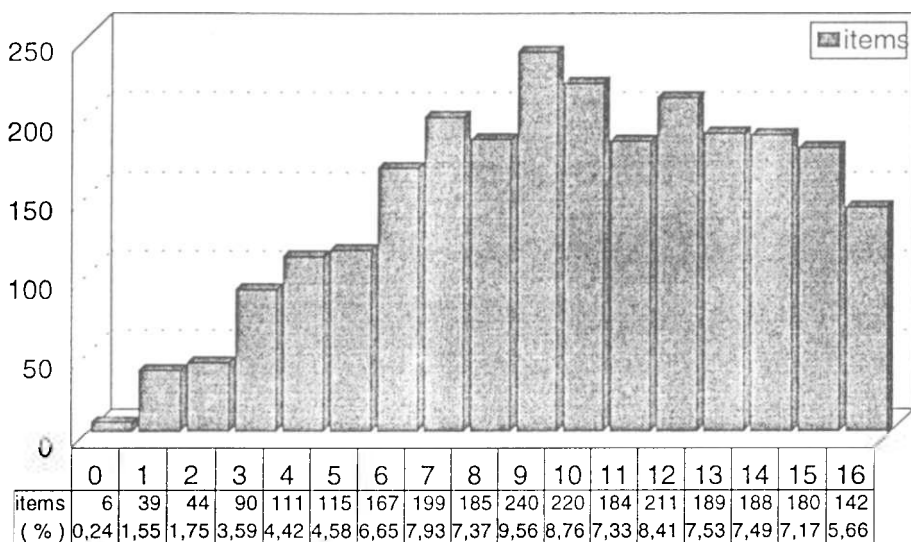
**Table 2:** Collective proverb knowledge

subject	items ( $f_{abs}$ )	$f_{\%}$	$f_{cum\%}$
0	6	0,24	100,00
1	39	1,55	99,76
2	44	1,75	98,21
3	90	3,59	96,45
4	111	4,42	92,87
5	115	4,58	88,45
6	167	6,65	83,86
7	199	7,93	77,21
8	185	7,37	69,28
9	240	9,56	61,91
10	220	8,76	52,35
11	184	7,33	43,59
12	211	8,41	36,25
13	189	7,53	27,85
14	188	7,49	20,32
15	180	7,17	12,83
16	142	5,66	5,66

Table 2 illuminates collective proverb knowledge: at the one end of the table, it turns out that only six items (0.24%) were not known by any one subject; at the other end, it becomes clear that 142 items (5.66%) were classified as 'known' by all subjects.<sup>10</sup> Table 2 contains the remaining results which are also illustrated in fig. 2.

<sup>10</sup> A close analysis of these 142 entries (cf. the list in the appendix) shows that eight items were presented twice in form of duplicates or quasi-duplicates; if one concentrates on the relevant 134 items, the percentage is 5.34%. Since comparable analyses are not available for all percentages, the number of 142 will be retained in the course of this article.

Fig. 2:



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#### 4.

A first analysis of the 142 items classified as 'familiar' by all subjects confirms the above-mentioned fact that the material included by Stojanović is extremely heterogeneous; thus, the phraseological and paremiological material includes, in addition to proverbs, many other genres, such as, for example,

- **stereotypical comparisons**, such as *Beži kao od kuge, Plašljiv/Brz kao zec, Leti kao muha bez glave*, etc.;
- **idiomatic routine formulae**, such as *Bože pomози, Evo ti moja ruka, Na tebi je red*, etc.;
- various **phraseological expressions**, such as *San ga je svladao, On(a) je moja desna ruka, Ima zlatne ruke*, etc.

An exact classification, or typology, of the complete material depends, of course, on the theoretical parameters applied, and it is definitely beyond the scope of this paper to fulfill this task. But even without a detailed analysis, one conclusion seems to be justified, namely that if one excludes these additional items, more than 70 texts still remain, which are undoubtedly proverbs or proverbial sayings, and which were classified as 'known' by all 16 subjects. This absolute score still sums up to ca. 3% of the presented material; at first sight, this seems to be a relatively low score; this percentage was, however, neither reached in our Skarpa study nor in our Daničić study: in the Skarpa study, only 0.45% of the material were

classified as 'known' by all eleven subjects, and in the Daničić study, only 0.17% of the material were known by all fifteen subjects. An explanation for these differences might be the fact that the absolute number of items presented in those two studies was significantly larger than in the Stojanović study: the Daničić collection contains 5,935 texts, the Skarpa collection as many as 15,024 texts; it seems reasonable that the relative percentage of generally known items is smaller with an increase of presented items. Therefore, a comparison of the absolute scores is quite interesting: in fact, our Skarpa study yielded a similar result, since the absolute sum of items known by all subjects was 67. The results did not converge so obviously in the Daničić study: here, only 10 proverbs were known by all 15 informants, 44 proverbs by at least 14 of the total 15, and only at a level of 86.66% of familiarity (13 of 15 subjects) the result was an absolute score of 86 generally known items.<sup>11</sup>

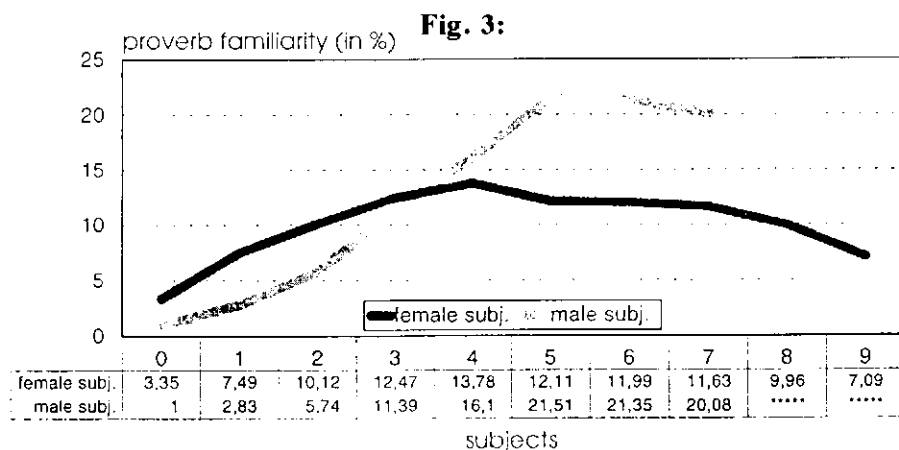
With these general results in mind, let us now look at some more specific analyses of our study. Interesting observations can be made with regard to the different results achieved by the male vs. female subjects, although again no reliable interpretations are possible, of course, due to the small overall number of subjects.

Taking into consideration the fact that, on the one hand, 142 items were known by all subjects, and, on the other, 178 items by all the women and 504 by all the men, it becomes clear that there are 36 items known by all the women which were not known by all the men, and 362 known by all the men, but not known by all the women. Although the men's group is slightly smaller than the women's group, two conclusions seem to be allowed: first, that there are differences by gender, and second, that the proverb knowledge exclusive to the men's group is larger than the one exclusive to the women's group. A closer analysis seems to confirm these hypotheses: On the average, the male subjects ( $n = 7$ ) knew more items ( $\bar{x} = 1753.86$ ,  $s = 499.02$ ) than the female subjects ( $n = 9$ ,  $\bar{x} = 1323.33$ ,  $s = 616.06$ ); however, this difference does not turn out to be statistically significant ( $t = 1.50$ ,  $p > 0.1$ ), a result which may not be independent of the relatively small number of informants. Interestingly enough, it turns out that the men's proverb knowledge seems to be more homogeneous than the women's, since the standard deviation of the males' score is smaller despite the greater mean value. A look at Fig. 3, which illustrates

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<sup>11</sup> In comparing these results, one should not forget about the extreme heterogeneity of the Stojanović material, which prevents the comparison of this study with our previous Skarpa and Daničić analyses. Additionally, and even more importantly, attention should be paid to another warning repeatedly brought forth in previous studies: this warning concerns the fact that all these studies have only a preliminary and limited reliability, due to the small samples.

the collective percentages achieved by the men and women separately, allows for the hypothesis that the greater homogeneity of the men's proverb stock is particularly manifested in those proverbs known to a relatively high degree. This conclusion may be drawn from the observation that the women's curve is quite symmetrically structured with a peak in the central area, whereas the men's the curve is rather asymmetrical (cf. Fig. 3).



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In addition to the obviously more homogeneous proverb repertoire common to the male subjects, further analyses show that the men also display a great amount of more or less exclusive proverb knowledge, not shared by the women. This conclusion may be drawn from an analysis of which proverbs are well known by men and not - barely - known by women, and vice versa. Taken to extremes, this would be the case when a given proverb is known by all the nine women, but not by a single man (m-9//f-0), or when a proverb is known by all the seven men, but not any one woman (m-0//f-7). In our study, there is no such example, however.

Still, a corresponding analysis of this question yields an interesting tendency: thus, there seem to be hardly any proverbs which are known only by the women (but not known by the men). In fact, there is not a single proverb which is known to four (or more) of the women and not one of the men; furthermore, there is not even one proverb known by six (or more) of the nine women and only a single man. There is only one proverb, which is known by five of the women (which is still the majority of the female subjects) and only a single man: *Zabawio je, ne znam iko komu?* Generally speaking, it thus appears that those proverbs generally known by the women are also known by the men.

The corresponding analysis of the men's proverb knowledge displays a slightly different picture. Here, we have one item known by five of the seven men which was not known by any of the women: *Gleda u njega kao štrk u jaje*. As can be seen, this item is not a proverb, but a comparison; however, there are an additional eleven proverbs known by four of the men (i.e., still the majority of our male sample), and another eight proverbs known by six of the men, but by only one woman:<sup>12</sup>

Dok se mudri namudrovaše, ljudi se naludovaše, a svi slabo nauživaše.  
 Bila bi glava zdrava, al je puna vaših (uših).  
 Grm u nuždi bedem.  
 Hvala na časti; prosenica me i od kuće tjera.  
 Obradovala se hrdja gvoždju.  
 Ako laže, ne smeta mu brada.  
 Pusto mlieko i psi loču.  
 Lakome oči pri masnoj pogači.

Again, due to the small number of our sample, it is not reasonable to analyze these concrete texts with regard to specific (exclusive) male or female proverbs. Yet, it seems to be justified to draw the conclusion that in our study there is a tendency that men have a more homogeneous proverb stock of items which is well known among them, and which is not shared by the female part of population. This conclusion may be illustrated by tables 3a-d (showing the figures only for the relevant majority of subjects).

**Table 3a:**

Items predominantly known by the women (but not by the men)

f / m	90	80	70	60
no.	***	***	***	***

**Table 3b:**

Items predominantly known by the women (but only one of the men)

f / m	91	81	71	61	51
no. of items	***	***	***	***	1

<sup>12</sup> There are ten additional proverbs known by five of the men, and by only one of the women.

**Table 3c:**

Number of items predominantly known by the men  
(but by none of the women)

f / m	07	06	05	04
no. of items	***	***	1	11

**Table 3d:**

Number of items predominantly known by the men  
(but only one of the women)

f / m	17	16	15	14
no. of items	***	8	10	28

One should be cautious, however, with any relevant generalizations; in all previous studies based on partial text representations, no gender differences could be observed, neither in German (Grzybek 1991), nor in Croatian (Grzybek et al. 1993). However, in all those studies the factor of 'gender' was controlled only with regard to the whole corpus of items, not to each single proverb.

## 5. Conclusion(s)

To conclude, it must be repeated once more that all our observations must not be taken as statistically representative results; rather, they allow specific hypotheses to be put forward which it would be worthwhile to analyze in the future, on the more solid and comprehensive data basis. The restrictions concern the small number of informants, on the one hand, and the method of the presentation, on the other. Specifically, the method of partial text presentation should yield more reliable insights. With this perspective in mind, let us briefly summarize the most important results of our study.

The major objective of the present study was an evaluation of the proverb material contained in Mijat Stojanović's *Sbirka narodnih posloviceah, riečih i izrazah* (Zagreb, 1866). This task was guided by the idea to construct adequate test material for finding out the generally known proverbs of contemporary Croatian. Thus, the results of the present study should not be seen in isolation, but in the context of parallel studies with other traditional proverb collections.



Without a doubt, the 142 items in our study which were classified as 'known' by all 16 subjects, should form part of the experimental corpus.<sup>13</sup> Moreover, it seems to be clear that not only these 142 items, but also texts with a lesser degree of familiarity should be included. Since it would not be reasonable, however, to exclude only those six items which were not known by any one subject, it remains to be decided up to which degree of familiarity items should be included in the experimental corpus.

It goes without saying, there can be no a priori decision. Yet, there are two arguments in favor of a limit at 50% of familiarity: namely that exactly half of the subjects ( $n = 8$ ) are beyond the mean value of  $\bar{x} = 1516.75$ , and the same number of subjects is beyond the median of  $md = 1491.50$ . This limit of 50% is identical with that of our other studies from which, too, only those proverbs were transferred to the further steps which were beyond 50% of familiarity in the first step. In other words, all proverbs below the 50% limit in this aspect will be excluded from further investigations (unless they achieve a high percentage of familiarity in our other studies, of course).

As can be seen from Table 2, exactly 1,739 items from our study are beyond the 50% limit; this sum corresponds to 69.28% of the complete Stojanović material. In other words: more than two thirds of the Stojanović material were classified as 'known' by at least half of our informants, and all these texts will have to be considered in the next analytical steps. Therefore, it does not seem to be justified to disqualify the Stojanović material as obsolete.

Of course, it is interesting to compare the results of the present study to those from our Daničić and Skarpa analyses:

- In the Skarpa study, which was based on no less than 15,024 items, eleven subjects took part; here, it was more difficult to find a clear limit, since a limit at  $n \geq 5$  would correspond to 54.54%, and a limit at  $n \geq 6$  to 45.45%. In the first case, 3,727 items (24.81% of the collection) would have to be considered, in the second case, 2,387 items (15.89%).
- In the Daničić study, which was based on 5,935 texts, fifteen subjects took part; here, the number of items beyond the 50% limit ( $n \geq 8$ ) was 625, which corresponds to 10.53% of the complete Daničić collection; if one lowers the limit to  $n \geq 7$ , a sum of 867 items (14.61%) remains.

Although any conclusion as to the Stojanović material must be drawn with caution, due to the heterogeneity of the included material, the relatively high percentage of known items is definitely surprising. This high degree

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<sup>13</sup> One might, of course, immediately eliminate those items which are not proverbs; this typologically-oriented step can be made at a later stage, however.

of familiarity may be related to the fact that Stojanović did indeed collect the material himself, and did not simply copy his texts from other, previously published collections.

Another preliminary conclusion may be drawn from our results, which is in line with our other studies. Taking into consideration the fact that 2,504 items were classified as 'known' by at least one person (cf. Table 2), and that the subject with the greatest individual proverb knowledge (# 14) knew 2,297 items (i.e., no less than 91.51%), there remain 307 additional items which were known by at least one more person. If one further considers the fact that the sum of items known by all subjects ( $n = 142$ ) is clearly below the smallest individually known sum ( $n = 504$ ), it becomes obvious that the number of 1,739 items beyond the 50% level are not composed by way of cumulation. In other words: the individual proverb stock of a given person with fewer known proverbs need not necessarily be included in the proverb stock of a person with greater proverb knowledge. This observation once more confirms the existence of individually heterogeneous proverb knowledge, both in quantitative and qualitative respects.

Of course, many questions remain unanswered after the present study. One thing seems to be clear, however: the construction of a corpus of Croatian proverbs, actually known today, is an absolute desideratum to be realized in the near future. The present study cannot be but one step in this direction. Moreover, not only the final establishment of a Croatian proverb minimum, but also all relevant preparatory steps have to be realized by way of solid empirical research.

## 6. Appendix: 134 items known by all 16 informants<sup>14</sup>

No.	Entry
28	Ako je tko lud, ne budi mu drug.
197 / 1090	B[r]lez muke neima nauke.
129	Bit će svega, a nas biti neće.
62	Bježi kao od kuge.
63	Bježi kao vrag od krsta.
217	Blaženi mir.
178	Bože pomози.

<sup>14</sup> It should be repeated here that the original number of 142 was reduced to 134 by the exclusion of duplicates and quasi-duplicates (cf. above). On the whole, there were an additional 6 items, which were also duplicates of quasi-duplicates, but which were not classified as known in both instances by all 16 informants. However, the deviation is tolerable: two of these items (#1338, #1231) were known by 14 informants in the second presentation, four items (#1949, #1497, #1681, #1958) by 15 informants.

- 168 Bože prosti.  
112 Bolje išta nego ništa.  
102 Bolje je pošteno umri, nego nepošteno živiti.  
202 Brez Boga ništa.  
205 Brez vatre neima dima.  
1144 Da su se po celom svietu tražili, ne bi se bolje našli.  
604 Djelo čovjeka hvali.  
1581 Držim ga na svojim rukama.  
725 Dugačka je jezika.  
1343 Dugački vlasi, a kratka pamet.  
381 Dva loša ubiše Miloša.  
1010 Čim otvori usta, laže.  
1271 Čovjek je od oka.  
1540 Čovjek je to od rieči.  
142 Čovjek snuje, ali Bog boguje - i odlučuje.  
302 Čuje se i dobro po daleku, a zlo i po daljem.  
309 Čuvaj dok šta imaš.  
143 / 310 Čuvaj se čovječe, i Bog će te [pak će te i Bog] čuvati.  
1272 Čuvam ga kao oči u glavi.  
456 Evo ti moja ruka.  
575 Gdje se tko češe, ondje ga i svrbi.  
576 Gdje si bio? - Nigdje! Šta si radio? Ništa!  
528 Glad neima očijuh.  
560 Gleda kao tele u nova vrata.  
374 I dušu bi svoju prodao.  
647 = 1572 Ima zlatne ruke.  
354 Imaš li dušu?  
1529 Izpeci, pak reci.  
471 Jedna mu daska fali u glavi.  
355 Jednu dušu imaš.  
720 Jezik za zube.  
1403 Kad mi ne možeš pomoći, nemoj ni odmagati.  
782 Kaži mi, da ti kažem.  
866 Kako došlo, tako prošlo.  
867 Kako je tko sijao, onako i žanje.  
869 Kako tko radi, onako i ima.  
875 Kakvi otac, takav sin; kakva mati, takva kći.  
762 = 921 Koliko ljudi, toliko ćudih.  
1509 Kolju se kao psi.  
799 Kud će suza, neg na oko.  
794 Kud on okom, oni skokom.  
796 Kud puklo da puklo.  
825 Leži kao klada.  
209 / 944 Leti kao muha b[r]ez glave.  
1032 Makar me glave stalo.  
80 Mala djeca, mala briga; velika djeca, velika briga.  
1045 Mekano je krilo materino.  
2052 Na jedno uho ušlo, na drugo izišlo.  
1560 Na tebi je red.  
2101 Na vrbi svirala.

1583	Ne ide mu to od ruke.
1177	Neima soli u glavi.
958 / 1511	Ne laje pas poradi sela [za selo], nego poradi [za] sebe.
1994	Ne smije ni usta otvoriti.
1710	Ne soli mi pameti.
2151	Ne valja ti posao.
2152	Ne vidi dalje od nosa.
1195	Ni kuvano ni pečeno.
1215	Nitko se nije s naukom rodio.
1200	Nova metla dobro mete.
1547	O tom više ni rieči.
1599	On je (ona) moja desna ruka.
787	Oteto, prokleta.
1107	Pala mu sikira u med.
2199	Plašljiv je kao zec. Brz je kao zec.
2236	Pokazao mu je zube.
1428	Poštena je duša.
1431	Poštuj starije, i tebe će mladi.
972	Pravi je lisac.
1525	Prevario se u računu.
377	Prodao je vragu dušu.
1447	Pruži mu samo prst, a on grabi cielu ruku.
498	Puče glas kao grom iz vedra neba.
2077	Raste kao iz vode.
1359	Reci makar jednu, al pametnu.
362	Reci po duši.
484	S glave počima riba smrditi.
1076	S konja na magarca.
1451	S puta (bježi), ide baba ljuta.
1589	S ruke na ruku.
818	S trbuhom za kruhom.
904	Sami je koža i kost.
1742	San ga je svladao.
1767	Silom ništa.
2040	Sjeo je na uši.
2078	Skočio bi za nas u vodu i u vatru.
1757	Sliep je kod očijuh.
1702	Smrt će doći i sama, ne treba ju zvati.
1017	Sramota je lagati.
1590	Srećne je ruke.
905 / 1828	Stara koka [,] mastna čorba.
1804	Svaki cigan svoga konja fali.
895	Svatko je kovač svoje sreće.
2097	Sve u svoje vrijeme.
1591	Svi mu idu na ruku.
1116	Svoja kuća svoja sloboda.
1682	Svoje čuvaj, tudje ne diraj.
444	Svuda je dobro, al doma najbolje.
305	Što čuo, ne čuo, što vidio ne vidio.
182 = 414	Što je pravo, i Bogu je drago.

1592	Što mu oči vide, to ruke načinu.
1745	Što se babi htilo, to se babi snilo.
1863	Što tko traži, ono i nade.
1865	Što triezan misli, to pijan govori.
447	Teško domu, u kom sloge nema.
1350	Teško onomu, tko pameti ncima.
1927	Tko drugomu jamu kopa, sam u nju pada.
1905	Tko jači, taj kvači.
1890	Tko nas kamenom, mi njega kruhom.
1907	Tko neima u glavi, ima u nogama.
2506	Tko pjeva, zlo ne misli.
164	Tko se čuva, i Bog ga čuva.
820	Tko tebe kamenom, ti onog kruhom.
1554	To je samo liepa rieč.
1747	To nisam ni u snu sanjao.
2042	Toga su mi već pune uši.
187	Trla baba lan, da joj prođe dan.
1663	U svakoj nesreći i sreće ima.
2030	Utopio bi ga u kapi vode, da može.
2032	Utopljenik se i slamke hvata.
2125	Vrana vrani neće oči izkljuvat.
2267	Zaklela se zemlja raj, da sve nje se tajne znaju.
2238	Zub ima na njega.
1842	Zubato sunce.
2302	Žale za tim kao za lanjskim sniegom.
2305	Žalibože truda i muke.
2308	Žedna bi ga preko vode prevco.

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## RAZMATRANJE DREVNOSTI I NJENE BLISKOSTI S TRADICIJSKIM HRVATSKIM POSLOVICAMA

III: Sbirka narodnih poslovića, rieči i izrazah (1866.)  
Mijata Stojanovića

### SAŽETAK

Studija je dio šireg projekta o poznavanju hrvatskih poslovića. Šesnaest govornika hrvatskoga jezika trebalo je odgovoriti na pitanje koliko im je poslovića od 2.510 sadržanih u zbirci Mijata Stojanovića *Sbirka narodnih poslovića, rieči i izrazah* (Zagreb 1866) poznato. Analiziraju se rezultati tog istraživanja i uspoređuju sa sličnim istraživanjima provedenim na temelju nekih drugih hrvatskih zbirki usmenih poslovića. Bez obzira na jezične specifičnosti predstavljenih poslovića (ovisno o vremenu i mjestu njihova nastanka) i bez obzira na heterogenost uključenih jedinica, postotak poznatih jedinica je relativno visok u usporedbi s rezultatima ostalih istraživanja. Oko 3% materijala bilo je poznato svim ispitanicima, dok je više od polovice ispitanika

poznavalo više od dvije trećine predstavljenih jedinica. Ovaj relativno visok postotak poznatosti može se objasniti činjenicom da materijal Stojanovićeve zbirke nije bio jednostavno prepisivan iz prijašnjih zbirki, nego samostalno skupljen.

Iz studije slijedi da je ustanovljavanje reprezentativna korpusa poznatih hrvatskih poslovice apsolutan dezideratum koji valja ostvariti u budućnosti. Ovu studiju treba shvatiti kao korak u tom smjeru.