

## Juriša the Hajduk in Historical Reality and in Serbocroatian Oral Songs

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In written historical documents dating from the end of the 16th to the beginning of the 17th century there appears a man named Juriša the Hajduk as one of the leaders of the Senj uskoks. In Serbocroatian oral songs recorded in the 18th, 19th and 20th century there appears a hero named Juriša the Hajduk, marked by a surname of the toponimic form - Senjanin. The paper reconstructs the life story of Juriša the Hajduk and analyses the songs about him. The aim is to consider how an epic character is shaped in oral tradition and how oral songs shape a vision of real life.

The paper is an attempt to establish whether the poetic character of Juriša Senjanin in Serbocroatian oral songs is based on the life story of a man who really existed, in order to examine the way in which oral songs create a vision of reality. A study which sets out from the songs and leads toward reality has to begin with the naming of the character in the songs (Juriša) and the attributes predominantly linked with him in the songs (Senjanin, active in Senj or with a company of men from Senj).

On the basis of available historical sources, it is possible to reconstruct the biography of a Senj uskok who is named variously as Juriša Hajduk, Juriša called the Hajduk, Juriša Lučić, Juriša Vojković from Klokoča and whose position is defined as "cap. della cavalleria", "famoso capitano", "hauptman", all of which indicate a harambaša, brigand captain, the leader of a company. Since his rank was a minor one in the Military Border hierarchy, he is mentioned relatively rarely in documents of Venetian and Austrian provenience. In short, only the following has remained on record of his existence.

In 1597 the Venetian authorities announced a price for the head of Juriša the Hajduk, Ivan Vlatković and several other men from Senj whose raids disrupted good neighbourly relations with the Ottoman Empire (*Stanojević 1973, 173*).

From 1600 to 1608 he took part in the defense of the Ledenica fortification from the martoloz (*Lopašić I, 273-275*), Christian border guards in Turkish service; left with a large group of Senj soldiers for an attack on Kaniža (*Horvat II, 6-7*), but came back from Karlovac; in the company of Ivan Vlatković attacked Skradin, set fire to it and took some prisoners (*Tomić, Vol. 238/6, 34*); along with his brother Periša robbed along Vrana Lake near Šibenik (*Tomić, Vol. 241, 43-44*), and along with Ivan's brother Miho Vlatković organised a large raid to plunder Pula (*Stanojević 1973, 232*).

In the investigation that was undertaken when the Uskoks killed the imperial emissary in 1601 Juriša is mentioned as one of Rabat's killers.

He was twice imprisoned in Senj; the first time he was rescued from the dungeon by Uskoks, and the second time he escaped with Ivan Vlatković, dressed as servants (*Horvat II*, 74; *Stanojević* 1973, 229-230).

In one contemporary source it is recorded that he was famous for his physical strength and that he married an abducted girl (*Poparić*, 154).

Twice word came to the Senj border-land (1601, 1608) that he had fallen into a Turkish ambush, the first time he managed to save himself somehow, the second time all trace of him is lost (*Bojničić*, 100-101; *Horvat II*, 83).

As far as I know, there are only 23 songs in which mention is made of a hero named Juriša or Juriša Senjanin, very often as a vojvoda or harambaša, sometimes alternatively as Juriša/Jure. If one took into consideration also the songs in which a poetic character named Jure or Jurica Senjanin is mentioned, this number would increase to some thirty songs. The oldest songs about this hero are the four written down in the *Erlangen Manuscript*, dating from the first decades of the 18th century, that is to say, more than two centuries after the death of Juriša the Hajduk. A number of songs about this hero have been written down in the 19th century by well known and less well known collectors: Vuk Karadžić, Matija Mažuranić, Georgije Sefanović Kojanov, Tadija Smičiklas, Mihovil Pavlinović, Miroslav Alačević, Luka Marjanović and others, and only several of the songs have lasted to our day: the manuscript collections of Olinko Delorko dating from the 1960's.

The territorial diffusion of the songs shows an interesting characteristic - the places in which the poetic character of Juriša Senjanin was known belong to the Military Border region: this refers primarily to the *Erlangen Manuscript* and to the songs written down in the 19th and 20th centuries in the vicinity of Senj, in Žumberak, the vicinity of Karlovac, on Kordun and in Srem, while outside this territory are the islands of Hvar and Šipan, the localities of Drvenik, Primošten, Bukovica and in Herzegovina - areas to which the activity of the Senj Uskoks extended - and as the extreme north-eastern points the vicinities of Sombor and Mol - as being close along the Border.

If a comparison is made of the diffusion in time and space between the songs about Juriša Senjanin and those about Ivan Senjanin, whose poetic character is based in part on the life history of the Senj vojvoda Ivan Vlatković, contemporary and comrade in arms of Juriša the Hajduk in raids, the following differences can be perceived:

- in the same corpus, consisting of almost 300 printed titles and manuscript collections, more than 600 songs have been found about Ivan Senjanin and only some thirty of them about Juriša Senjanin. Even in the *Erlangen Manuscript* it is possible to discern a more developed oral tradition in verse about Ivan Senjanin, and in later collections the disproportion is increased;
- the reception of these two poetic characters differs in certain folklore regions: songs about Ivan Senjanin are well known throughout the territories of the Serbocroatian speaking region, while those about Juriša Senjanin are known along the Military Border territories and in the regions gravitating towards it.

On the basis of the above, a hypothesis can be formed on selectivity as a feature of historical memory in verse. Selectivity and a tendency toward rationalisation are achieved in the diachronic development of Serbocroatian epic poetry by a specific kind of suppression of a character: in the song its functions are taken over by other characters. On the selected material, the proposed hypothesis can be evolved in the following manner.

The songs about Juriša Senjanin originated during the lifetime or immediately after the death of Juriša the Hajduk, while the first notations date from two centuries later. The time that passed in between was sufficient and necessary for the poetic

character to be included into existant epic tradition, and to be separated from a depiction of the actual exploits of a man in real life. Relatively little is left, in the poetic vision of oral singers, of the historical existance of Juriša the Hajduk. The memory has been preserved of a man of that name, his belonging to a company of Senj Uskoks and stay in Senj, his position in the company (harambaša, vojvoda) and his actual historical connection with Ivan Vlatković. All these facts are relatively stable elements of oral tradition - they are repeated in many songs. In addition to this, in some of the songs certain details appear which could be said to be historically authentic: the linking of Juriša Senjanin with the gentry of Otočac or tales of his robberies in Šibenik.

From the standpoint of theme, all the songs in which this character appears belong to heroic epic poetry: only in two or three of them do motifs of love and family relations predominate. The songs about Juriša Senjanin belong to the following thematic circles: heroic marriage by abduction, raiding and irregular fighting, hand to hand combat, taking and retaking of prisoners, heroic death. Quite simply, the events in the songs are the events in the actual life of Juriša the Hajduk, but in the songs the events are not described the way they took place in actual life, but in the way prescribed by the story poetics of Serbocroatian oral songs, along with many changes in specific details.

The diachronic development of songs about Juriša Senjanin took place - as far as it can be established on the basis of the songs collected - in the following stages:

1. The actual historical events and heroic exploits of a man gave rise to oral tradition. The Senj Uskoks were a company of men which according to social position filled all the requirements for the creation of heroic epics, and Juriša the Hajduk in actual life took part in events which have been the subject of epic songs (raids, battles, abduction, plunder, imprisonment). The time of origination of a legend about the hero and its first forms are, unfortunately, unknown.
2. Spreading in time and space, the oral tradition in verse survived relatively long, owing, among a series of other factors, to the stability of the story model. If the duration is followed, for instance, of the four oldest songs about Juriša Senjanin, it can be perceived that three of them, whose story models manifest a greater stability, have been better preserved in oral tradition and are more widespread. (cf. *A Catalogue of Songs about Juriša Senjanin*, ER, No. 113, 106, 131).
3. In the diachronic development of oral tradition, during the repeated performing or creation of a song, the hero's name is revealed to be a variable element in comparison with the greater stability of the story model. This mechanism would explain the greater diffusion of songs about Ivan Senjanin as compared to the relatively small number of songs about Juriša Senjanin. An analysis of the story models of the songs about Juriša Senjanin in the context of Serbocroatian verse epic tradition reveals that the character functions linked to Juriša Senjanin (cf. *A Catalogue of Songs about Juriša Senjanin*) can in some other variants of the same story models be attributed to other heroes or (if the function is that of a minor character) quite simply omitted. So, for instance, the story "The lover buys out his mistress, while her relations object" has a variant in which Ivan Senjanin appears as the girl's abductor; the story "A hero's marriage by abduction of the bride from a dance" has variants in which the hero is Ivan Senjanin or Marko Kraljević in the stories "A tower besieged because of a girl" and "A girl threatens the abductor with her brother" the function of the accomplice can be omitted; in the story "A vila reports on the death of the hero/company" the character of Juriša Senjanin is substituted by the characters of Ivan Senjanin, Gavran

the Standard-bearer, the Young Jovan, Vidak the Standard-bearer (Kleut, 201, 213, 215-217, 221-224, 226, 227, 230-232, 234).

In the largest number of instances it can be observed that older songs have a better preservation of the historical connection between Ivan Vlatković and Juriša the Hajduk who were contemporaries in real life, comrades in arms and fellow sufferers in imprisonment, so that this narrative segment could be taken to be the older level of oral tradition. Yet, this is only a general tendency since the poetic transposition of actual events does not follow the regular principles of chronology. In the song on the struggle of the frozen company the anonymous singer of the *Erlangen Manuscript* (ER, No. 122) attributes the main feat to Ivan Senjanin, while there is no mention of Juriša Senjanin, while significantly younger variants (SNP III, No. 59; *Senjske i munjavske*, No. 67) preserve the memory of Juriša Senjanin. The growth of the oral tradition about Ivan Senjanin takes the opposite course: taking on the experience of others and the functions of other poetic characters, he becomes, in a way, the personification of the fate of Senj Uskoks.

4. Connected with this are the fewer departures in the character of Juriša Senjanin from historical reality in comparison with the songs about Ivan Senjanin; lesser is the scope of anachronisms and fewer are the anapisms.

#### A CATALOGUE OF SONGS ABOUT JURIŠA SENJANIN WITH A REVIEW OF CHARACTER FUNCTIONS

I. Poems of a magical-mythical content

II. Religious poems

III. Love poems

- *The lover buys out his mistress, while her relations object*,  
Mažuranić, No. 47 (HNP VI, No. 30) abductor of a girl

IV. Poems about family relations

V. Poems about social strife

VI. Historical poems

VII. Poems about combat and heroic feats

- *A hero's marriage by abduction of the bride from a dance*  
ER, No. 113 harambaša, advisor  
Marjanović, HNP, No. 9 a groom for whom the bride  
is abducted by another
- *A tower besieged because of a girl*  
Alačević B, No. 11 a hero killed in the siege
- *Outlaw attacks the wedding party*  
Pavlinović A, No. 77 groom's brother, advisor
- *The struggle of the frozen company*  
SNP III, No. 59 standard-bearer, advisor  
*Senjske i munjavske*, No. 67 a hero in the company, advisor
- *The harambaša tests the courage of the company by skinning a goat*  
Junaci i junakinje, No. 28 harambaša
- *The capture and liberation of the sleeping company*  
Klarić, No. 27 liberator of the company
- *Hand to hand combat for a heroic heritage*  
ER, No. 106 the hero whose arms are the  
cause of the combat  
SNP III, No. 61 "

- *The son as the heroic substitute for his father in combat*  
*Grčić*, No. 4 the aged father  
*Delorko (133)*, No. 45 " "  
*Delorko (310)*, No. 151 " "  
*Delorko (728)*, No. 92 " "  
*Bezić*, No. 126 the combatant son
- *Company without spoils*  
*ER*, No. 164 harambaša, fighter
- *Saving of a hero from prison at the request of his mother*  
*Marjanović A I*, No. 1 the hero who leaves his  
 (HNP IX, No. 17) comrades
- *A girl threatens her abductors with her brother - bloody gifts*  
*LMS*, 1845, Vol. 71, pp. 123-127 the girl's kin, one of the abductors  
*Delorko (355)*, No. 2 the girl's brother, an abductor
- *A girl flees her abductors by a ruse*  
*Banović*, ZNŽO, XXV/1, 1921 one of the abductors
- *Stealing and re-stealing a horse*  
*Marković*, No. 21 (HNP IX, No. 11) horse thief
- *Ominous dream: the wounded hero brings news and dies*  
*Murat*, No. 10 (HNP IX, No. 26) the wounded bearer of news  
*Božović III*, No. 54 one of the avengers
- *The vila/blackbirds report the death of the hero/company*  
*Smičiklas*, No. 71 avenger of the dead  
*Glavić*, No. 144 one of the avengers  
*Milas*, No. 34 " "
- *Abduction of girls by water and the vila reports the death of the hero*  
*Marjanović A II*, No. 13 one of the avengers
- *Death due to betrayal in the company*  
*ER*, No. 131 the hero who orders the  
 betrayal and meets his death  
 " "  
*Danica*, IV, 1863, pp. 333-334 " "
- *Death of the hajduk in a dance*  
*Pavlinović*, No. 1479 the hero who dies
- *Merciful hero gives up spoils and prisoners*  
*Pavlinović*, No. 1481 merciful hero
- *Groom dies at the hand of escaped prisoner*  
*Marković*, No. 16 old wedding guest

VIII. Blows of fate and catastrophes

IX. Poems of human cruelty

- *Tragic rape*  
*Bogišić archives*, box I, No. 13/81 brother to hero who rapes the girl
- *Sister murderer of sister*  
*Kirijak*, No. 3 groom's brother
- *Death of the maligned bride*  
*Bezić*, No. 163 husband and murderer of maligned wife

X. Humorous songs

XI. Nature and the universe

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