

The Forerunners of Milman Parry: I. Matthias Murko on South-Slavic Popular Epic¹

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Part I: Prolegomena

1. Introductory

Comparative study of oral poetry in general and the present state of Homeric scholarship in particular recommend a quick glance back at a forerunner of Milman Parry in research into South-Slavic oral poetry: Matthias Murko. More particularly, it is of critical concern to make known in English an important article in which he summarises the results of his researches.² Parry acknowledged more than once the importance of Murko's researches for his own work. For instance, he states: "The researches of M. Murko ... will long remain a model for students of oral poetry."³ Again, in his posthumously published notes on an unfinished work on Cor Huso, Parry says: "It was the writings of Professor Murko more than those of any other which in the following years led me to the study of oral poetry itself and to the heroic poems of the South Slavs" (Parry "Cor Huso," 449). Similarly, A. B. Lord, Parry's pupil

and associate, has further commented: "The wisest accounts of singing and of fieldwork are to be found in the writings of M. Murko, a true pioneer." (Lord 1960: 28 n.1) Again, Adam Parry, in his introduction to the collected works of his father, writes: "It may have been Murko and his work that first suggested to Parry the possibility of finding in a living poetry an observable analogue to the poetry of Homer" (Parry 1971: xxiv).⁴ The importance, then, of Murko's researches to the student of the Homeric poems is beyond question: as critics generally acknowledge, the study of Yugoslav epic poetry is "most valuable ... for the whole method and procedure of the oral singer" (Kirk 1962: 87). What is regrettable is that the work of an important pioneer in this field of study is virtually unknown in the English-speaking world, except to a few specialists who take the trouble to venture outside the Greek tradition of epic poetry. One deterrent may be the rather old-fashioned German style which he used for reports on his researches. My hope is that the present paper will give greater currency to one of the most important works of Murko.

2. A Brief Sketch of Murko's Life⁵

Matthias (Slovenian: Matija) Murko was a Slovenian Slavist, literary historian, and ethnographer who came from a wine-growing family in the lower-Styrian region of Slovenia known as Slovenske gorice (German: Windische Bühel), a border zone with a population of mixed nationalities — Styrian-German, Slovenian, Croatian and Hungarian — and consequently exposed to several cultural influences. He was born on 10th February 1861 in Drstela (German: Tristeldorf) near Ptuij (German: Pettau).

From 1872 to 1880 Murko received his early education at the German gymnasium at Ptuij (Pettau) and at Maribor (German: Marburg), towns where German was normally spoken. His interest in the Pan-Slavic ideal was stimulated by his Slovenian teacher Jan Majciger.

4 In fact M. Parry himself states this emphatically in his notes on "Cor Huso" A 5440: "Of the various poetries for which I could obtain enough information the Southslavic seemed to be the most suitable for a study which I had in mind, to give that knowledge of a still living oral poetry which I saw to be needed if I were to go on with any sureness in my study of Homer." Similarly, *ibid.*: "In other words the study of the Southslavic poetry was meant to provide me an exact knowledge of the characteristics of oral style, in the hope that when such characteristics were known exactly, their presence or absence could definitely be ascertained in other poetries, and those many large and small ways in which the one oral poetry differed from written poetry for its understanding could be carried over to the Homeric poems." This view has been recently restated by S. Koljevic: "But it was above all on account of its comparative interest and Homeric relevance that Serbo-Croat oral epic singing became an important topic in international scholarship" (1980:7).

5 See Matl 1959: 173-83; 1961: 225-44; 1965: 301-05, 365; and Rehder 1970. 3: 260-61.

1 My best thanks are due to Professors R. Merkelbach (Institut für Altertumskunde, University of Cologne) and M.L. West (All Souls College, Oxford) for taking the trouble to read through and criticise this work at various stages of its composition and subsequently, to my considerable profit. I also wish to thank my former colleague, Professor D. Fishwick (University of Alberta, Edmonton, Alberta) and my colleagues Professors L. Koenen and C. Witke (Department of Classical Studies, University of Michigan, Ann Arbor) for reading through the penultimate draft of the translation and offering suggestions for improvement. I am also thankful to Mrs. Edda Krumins (formerly resident at Edmonton, Alberta) and Professor B.A. Stolz (Department of Slavic Languages and Literatures, University of Michigan, Ann Arbor) for suggestions on how to render Serbo-Croatian forms, names and expressions. Finally, I wish to express my gratitude to Professor M. Dimić (the founding editor of this journal), who commissioned this work some time ago, for his editorial forbearance and for his kindness, and for helpful hints and suggestions which he made to improve this paper.

2 For this article of 1919 and related publications by Murko, see Works Cited. For a complete list of Murko's works on oral poetry see Foley 1985, 451-56 and 1988, 150-51.

3 *Harvard Studies in Classical Philology* 43, 1932, p. 15 note 3 = Parry, 1971, 336 n. 1.

In the winter semester of 1880/1881 Murko enrolled at the University of Vienna where he studied Classical Philology and Philosophy and Germanic and Slavic Languages and Literatures. Through these studies he gained a sound grounding in philological and literary-historical training from his teachers Richard Heinze and Erich Schmidt (in Germanic) and Franz Miklosich (in Slavic studies). He wrote a thesis in Germanic studies and was awarded the doctorate in 1886 "*sub auspiciis imperatoris*." He received the golden ring of the Austrian Kaiser.

In the following year Murko was a senior auditor with the Croatian Slavist Vatroslav Jagić, who had been newly appointed to succeed F. Miklosich at Vienna. Jagić's lectures on Yugoslav, Russian and Polish literatures widened Murko's scholarly horizon. It was at this time that Murko decided on an academic career in the field of Slavic studies.

In 1887 he won a travel scholarship to study for a longer period in Russia. This trip enabled him to steep himself more deeply in Slavic studies. He spent the years 1887/1888 at St. Petersburg and Moscow. At St. Petersburg he studied with the important literary historian, Aleksej Nikolaevič Veselovskij (1838-1906), who encouraged him to do a comparative study of the old Russian manuscripts of the *Historia septem sapientium* (Murko 1890). Thanks to his extended travels in Czarist Russia Murko got to know Russia and Russian conditions very well.

In 1889 Murko returned from Russia to Vienna and entered the service of the Vienna Foreign Ministry, where he was for eleven years employed in the Press Division, in the "Literary Office," as the consultant on Slavic languages, especially in the evaluation of Slavic (i.e. Russian, Polish as well as South-Slavic) newspapers.

From 1892 to 1896 he taught Russian at the Public Institute for Oriental Languages and Slovenian at the Theresien Gymnasium. In 1896 he was appointed Professor of Russian Language at the Consular Academy, where he took part in the revision of the syllabus.

Despite all these activities Murko did not neglect his scholarly interests. At the request of Vatroslav Jagić he wrote his *Habilitationsschrift*,⁶ and was appointed University lecturer at the University of Vienna in 1887 in the general field of Slavic Philology. The topic of his thesis was Bohemian Romanticism (Murko 1897), a work well received by such Czech scholars as Thomas Masaryk, Jaroslav Vilek and Jan Jankubec. With this publication Murko helped propagate the comparative method in the study of Slavic literature.

From 1887 to 1902 Murko lectured at the University of Vienna. In 1902 he was offered the chair of Slavic Philology at the University of Graz. He stayed there till

1917. With this appointment began the most productive period of Murko's scholarly creativity. His major work during this Graz period is a history of the older South-Slavic literatures (1908), which is still valuable. The work deals with the development of the whole South-Slavic Literature from its beginnings through Slavic missionaries to the extinction of the sovereignty of the South-Slavic peoples by the Turkish conquest. At Graz too Murko trained a whole generation of researchers and middle-school teachers from South-Slavic countries. It was from Graz (with the support of the Austrian Academy of Sciences) that he undertook in 1909 and in 1911/1912 his field studies in Croatia, Bosnia and Dalmatia in order to investigate the current status of the popular epic poetry.

In 1917 Murko succeeded August Leskien as Professor of Slavic Philology at Leipzig, and from 1920 to 1931 he occupied the newly created chair for South-Slavic Languages and Literature at Prague. Here he was effective not only as an academic teacher but also in building Prague up to become a new middle-European centre of Slavic studies. During his time at Prague Murko was a member of the Slavic Institute (*Slavanský Ústav*), and upon his retirement on 21st February 1931 he became its first President, a position which he held from 1932 to 1941. Together with Oldřich Hufer he founded the specialised Slavic journal *Slavia*. He undertook studies on the Reformation and Counter-Reformation among the South Slavs (*Slavia* 4, 1925-26 and 5, 1926-27, respectively); but at the centre of his studies stood his further extended trips to investigate the general problem of South Slavic popular epic, its origin, development and spread. In 1929 he published a summary of his epic studies in French (Murko 1929).

In 1951 appeared in Zagreb the crowning achievement of Murko's research work of many years, the two-volume work entitled *Tragom srpsko-bruitske narodne epike*. He died in Prague on 11th February 1952 at the ripe old age of ninety-one. As a researcher into popular epic song Murko was the successor of Vuk St. Karadžić and the forerunner of A. B. Lord (see Auty and n.7).

3. The Importance of Murko's Researches for the Study of Oral Poetry

Murko's scholarly activity was many-sided. He worked especially in the investigation of popular songs and in "Words and Things" (*Wörter und Sachen*).⁷ In his method he combined the philological criticism which he had imbibed from the leading Austrian Slavists and the doctrines of the strict Germanic philological method with

7 A phrase adopted as a slogan by the school of philologists who investigated the history of language and of culture and the relations between the two as providing mutual support and illumination — a method pioneered by R. Meringer and H. Schuchardt. See Palmer, pp. 341 ff.

6 A thesis required of candidates to qualify for lecturing at a German university.

investigation of the individual and structural facts of cultural, social, and intellectual history — the biology, so to speak, of national culture.

Two periods in his work may be distinguished:

(a) the first period (from 1890 to 1908) is marked by his literary historical works on the *Historia septem sapientium* (1890), the *Beginnings of Bohemian Romanticism* (1896) and the *History of the Older South Slavic Literatures* (1908). During this period his interests were directed at the comparative history of literature;

(b) the second period (from 1909 onwards) was concentrated principally on popular poetry. Here his work shows a considerable advance over the Romantic conceptions of his predecessors and the mythomania generated by the infectious enthusiasm of the Brothers Grimm. In his work Murko consistently went from the text to the ethnographic structure and biology of popular culture.

Murko's achievement in the field of Folklore is of the greatest importance to students of oral poetry. For ten years he was engaged in the study of material culture. His ethnographic investigations helped to revise the popular traditional Romantic opinions prevalent at the time. The same goes for his research in the field of South-Slavic popular epic. Murko started with the thesis that one must follow the life of a song in its own milieu: one must proceed from the textual exegesis to the living word and melody, to the song tradition, to the study of the function of the singer and the epic milieu.

In his study trips undertaken from 1909 to 1932 Murko conducted his investigations into the life of popular epic with a phonograph and a camera. He thus proved the rhapsodic improvisatory character of the song among real singers, the fact that the singer did not declaim a finished song but improvised with the help of a formulaic technique, so that he constantly changed his songs. He inquired into the literary themes, the ethnological structures and the productivity of the individual regions. These insights into the form of the tradition, the social milieu, the audience, were very important and meaningful for general research into popular song.⁸

8 See Fränkel, 15 f; and Foley 1988: 15-18. A propos of Murko's influence on Parry, Foley's remarks are apposite: "The numerous aspects of Murko's influence may be summarized in a single point: more than any other reporter, ... he furnished an observed reality — encountered firsthand among the South Slavs — that corresponded to the hypothesis Parry had worked out for the Homeric poems. In place of an inevitably theoretical textual analysis, there now stood a measured, perceived proof that oral epic lived in a tradition of bards and verse-making. What is more, as much as Murko's accounts had to tell him, Parry also saw the opportunity to venture into the world Murko had reported and to conduct his own analyses. For the ethnographer had provided just enough information for Parry to identify the South Slavic epic tradition as an analogue for what he believed the Homeric tradition had to be, and yet had left enough questions unanswered or even unasked that the classical scholar must have felt the need for his own expedition, this time emphasizing collection and analysis over ethnographic description" (15-16); idem, 1990/1993: 39f.

Part II: Text and Notes⁹

1. Résumé of Murko's prefatory pages

In the introduction (273-277) to the article excerpted below, Murko summarises the earlier research on South-Slavic epic poetry by his predecessors Vuk Karadžić, Kosta Hörmann, Luka Marjanović, and others. It emerges from Murko's account that the older investigators were principally interested in the songs of South-Slavic Christians who were predominantly Serbian or Croatian. This clearly distinguishes their work from that of Murko, who investigated the songs of the Mohammedans as well and did field work in the "border areas" of the South-Slavic regions of the Balkans, that is in areas of mixed population — comprising Croats, Serbs and other groups — where Catholic, Greek Orthodox, Islamic and other religious faiths or faith communities exist side by side.

2. M. Murko's Text

In 1909 I undertook a folklorist study trip into the border areas of Croatia, Bosnia and Dalmatia. There I recorded from the eighty-year old singer Bećir Islamović (from Spahići near Bihac) two long songs which lay before me in print in the collection of L. Marjanović. He sang them just as he had done twenty years earlier at Agram.¹ The comparison was naturally most instructive. With the support of the Viennese Academy of Sciences I then undertook two trips which were devoted solely to the study of the popular epic in Bosnia and Herzegovina. In 1912 I visited northwest Bosnia and the adjoining regions of Croatia and Dalmatia because the literature on the subject had led me to the conviction that the Mohammedan popular epic lives on with especial vigour in north-west Bosnia. Starting from here I travelled to the rest of Bosnia and to Herzegovina. The content or subject matter of these songs is provided by the constant skirmishes between the Turkish, Austrian and Venetian border patrols in the 16th and 17th centuries. The scene of these skirmishes was the Turkish regions of Hungary (a group of songs is consequently called *ungurske*, that is, "Hungarian"), but mostly Lika² in Croatia and northern Dalmatia, so that the home of most Mohammedan songs is also to be sought in Lika, but that of Christian counter-songs in the adjoining areas of

9 Within the text of the translation figures enclosed in round brackets () refer to the original pagination of Murko's text, while editorial omissions are indicated by a series of dots, thus: In the notes editorial expansions, explanations or notes are enclosed in square brackets []. Murko's references are kept in the format of the original; the editor's /translator's references follow the usual Works Cited format.

Croatia and in northern Dalmatia. Epic folk song, however, has mostly died out in these once much disputed areas of Croatia, indeed other memories of the Turks have completely faded. But on the other hand the yield in Bosnia and also in Dalmatia was uncommonly rich. I devoted my attention chiefly to the singers, their present position, the conditions of their existence and the reasons for the decline of the popular epic. In line with the starting point of my studies I was interested above all in the Mohammedan singers, but for the purposes of comparison I did observe also the singers of the Orthodox and Catholic Christians. From north-western Bosnia I travelled via Jajce and Travnik to Sarajevo.

In 1913 I travelled through the bank area of the Sava up to Brod, and wanted also to cover the rest of northern and middle Bosnia. But at that time there was an outbreak of cholera in Tuzla and I had to confine myself to the Bosna valley where also (278) the popular epic thrives vigorously in the Catholic enclaves. In a Mohammedan coffee-house at Fojnica I learnt now that in that very place, during the nights of Ramadan, the Muslim month of fasting, a Catholic singer entertains the followers of Mohammed. When I expressed my astonishment at that I was given the following reply:

To us all is one, we live in harmony. *Onda bilo, sad se spominjalo*³ (literally: "once happened, now just mentioned").

Further experiences taught me that deep respect was shown to every hero, whatever the faith to which he belonged; on the other hand, however, songs may be selected and changed according to the audience. Consequently I no longer needed to be surprised that Moslem landlords and even Pashas⁴ very frequently allowed Christian singers to come to them or even retained them constantly. I therefore began to pay equal attention to the popular epic of the Mohammedans, the Orthodox Christians and the Catholics, the more so as I have always visited places where two or all three principal religious faiths or faith communities exist side by side. I stopped for a longer time at Sarajevo, where I could study the epic song in the popular coffee-houses during the month of Ramadan and then came to Herzegovina (that is, the Mostar district), into the classical home of the popular epic song, where it still flourishes vigorously, while in Bosnia it is already retreating in all districts and is regarded as low-class. On the other hand, in Herzegovina, especially on the Montenegrin border, popular epic song still enjoyed current interest in the most recent times, and it was here that the final battles between Christians and Turks produced new songs.

In 1914 I wanted to travel around the south-east part of Bosnia and the Sandžak-Novipazar, which had formerly belonged administratively to Bosnia, so that I hoped still to find here the popular epic just as it had been till 1878 in Bosnia and

Herzegovina, but the outbreak of the World War prevented completion of my studies. So long as I have not undertaken this trip, I cannot tackle a larger work which I have planned on the popular epic in Bosnia and Herzegovina, although the more important results of my researches up till now have been set down in my travel reports to the Vienna Academy.⁵

(279) Naturally I cannot give here a complete extract from my reports, and I limit myself to the most essential information which may interest philologists in particular. I refer incidentally to parallels in the epic of other peoples which suggest themselves, without meaning to exhaust the subject in any way.

Popular epic songs are called, according to their content, "heroic songs" (*junačke pjesme*: this expression has been in vogue since the time of Vuk Karadžić⁶ or "songs of heroism" (*pi. o junačtvu*) or "songs of heroes" (*pi. o junaka*), or sometimes also "ancient," "olden" (*starijske*) songs. Like the natures of Bosnia and Herzegovina, the psyche of their inhabitants is also different, so that we find a difference in their popular epic. In particular the difference is strongly pronounced among the Mohammedans, but among the Orthodox Christians also in the region of the Sava I was told of the rustic manner of performance there, in contrast with the "Herzegovinian" manner. For the Mohammedan popular epic the Krajina (that is, the border region) in the north-west Bosnia is important: its songs spread widely in the rest of Bosnia and in Herzegovina, but here they underwent changes, particularly in the performance. The Krajina type is already visually characterised by the fact that the accompanying instrument is not the usual *gusle*, a fiddle with only one string made of horse-hair, but a small, handy *tambura* or *tamburica*⁷ with two metal strings, which in part is used by the Christian singers also. This instrument is known also in Dalmatia and in part also in Liika, but there the *gusle* with two horse-hair strings is the predominant instrument — this, however, constitutes an advance and was previously unknown. In Herzegovina the songs of all religious faiths or faith communities are rather similar to one another and their singers distinguish themselves by their greater speed, clarity and warmth of performance, also by a more lively imagination — a fact which is expressed in the vernacular by the opinion that the Herzegovinians tend to be liars.

The singer is also called *pičvač*, dialectically *pičvač* and hypocoristically *pivo*. I never heard the expression *guslar*⁸ which is also missing in Vuk's dictionary, and rather means "gusle-player," for which the word *guslac* is also used....

In north-western Bosnia there exists more of a class of singers. One can speak of professional singers also among the Mohammedans of Herzegovina, but among the Christians they are rarer, especially in Herzegovina, where in many places "everyone sings," so to speak. But, that is also true only to a limited extent: everywhere it is only specially competent individuals who possess the gift of song. On the other hand, singers come from all classes of people. The majority are agricultural workers,

frequently traders in the towns. Epic song is especially popular with the herdsmen in the Alpine pastures. Very strongly represented among the Mohammedan professional singers are the gypsies, the usual minstrels in the Balkans. Carters or coachmen deserve notice because they contribute to the spread of songs of different regions. Quite modern professions are also represented among the singers: thus one singer in Sarajevo was a furnace man or stoker at the central electricity station; another was discovered by a great admirer of popular song to his great amazement in the winter of 1912 to be a coal-porter. Only very few singers were without employment, among them the only two blind men, a Mohammedan and an Orthodox Christian whom I met in north-western Bosnia. Blind people and cripples are on the whole rare; they mostly come as beggars from Dalmatia⁹ and Slavonia. Already in the time of Vuk Karadžić the singers in Syrmia¹⁰ (in eastern Slavonia) at least were to a large extent singers of this kind, and they were probably also for that reason slightly regarded. But thanks to the famous collector of Serbian popular songs the report of the "songs of the blind" has found its way into the learned literature, and contributed, beside the mythical Homer, to the notion that professional singers are above all the blind....

The participation of the higher classes in popular epic song deserves special emphasis. Leaders or heads of all religious faiths or faith communities also used to have and still have a good command of the art of singing. Even in Mostar every pupil of the Catholic theological education establishment still had the *gusle* hanging over his bed, and the Serbian *mitropolit* (bishop) there is renowned as a *gusle*-player. We find practising connoisseurs of heroic song among the Beys,¹¹ the highest aristocrats of the country. High-ranking and rich Beys retained — especially in earlier times when feudalism was still in full bloom — permanent or resident singers. As late as the year 1913 a Bey from north-eastern Bosnia took a singer with him to Bad Rohitsch-Sauerbrunn¹² in southern Styria. Such singers, among whom were also Christians, were mostly better valets, grooms and soldiers, especially leaders of small companies and standard-bearers.

It was a surprise to me that Moslem women can also often recite (without instrumental accompaniment) heroic songs, in order to inculcate the military spirit in their sons (281) or to keep them at home, to prevent them from going after other forms of amusement. I heard also of female Catholic and Orthodox singers in Herzegovina; these, of course, were felt to be great exceptions, and one woman lived indeed completely like a man.

As regards the age of the singers, the youngest person singing in public of whom I heard was 15 years old, the oldest 104. I myself saw an uncommonly lively singer of 85 years, who had previously been in the service of prominent Beys. The singers begin uncommonly early "to pick up" their songs; while still on the knees of their father or

a relative they try their hand at playing the *gusle* and singing, activities which in earlier times practically formed a kind of school for them. In Konjic (Herzegovina) there sat near a Moslem singer his two sons, a 9- and a 12-year old, the elder of whom was said to know already all the songs of his father. The usual age for beginning teaching is 10-12 years, even 15, in general the golden time of youth "when one has thought of nothing." The years 24-25, at most 30, were mentioned to me as the upper limit for the ability to pick up songs to last. But many very soon also lose their singing ability, if as a result of marriage or taking over of business they have saddled themselves with cares. A single hearing suffices in their youth for most singers to pick up any song, but later it becomes more difficult, although a 68-year old singer in Gacko assured me that he would be able to repeat any song which he had heard in the evening on the next day. All singers speak of an irresistible drive to acquire songs. In the case of popular or folk song, oral tradition is naturally the rule. I found only one Mohammedan singer in north-western Bosnia, who had attended school for half a year, and so could read printed collections of songs at a pinch. Later, however, I found also among Moslems several singers who knew how to read and write, while others have songs read out to them. In particular the Christian singers, especially in Herzegovina, borrow from printed collections, but all agree on one thing, that a song can be more easily learned by listening to it than by having it read aloud or through reading. Blind singers also may have songs read to them, so that the oral tradition was not even among them always protected.

Every Moslem singer can list his teachers, mostly relatives, sometimes as far back as his grandfather. Others learnt from singers who frequented the hospitable table of their father, others, again, in the *čaršija* (in the market) and in the coffee-houses. On the other hand, the Christians cannot for the most part list their teachers; they learn "everywhere" where songs are sung.

The singers practise their skill in public, in the coffee-houses and inns, in Herzegovina also in the barber shops in the *čaršija*, in the markets and at the church festivals, and in houses, especially among the rich landowners, the Beys and Agas;¹³ but people also are entertained with heroic song at gatherings (*sjelo, silo*) in the farm-house rooms and in the spinning rooms. The best time for singing is the long winter nights and among the Mohammedans the nights of the Ramadan month of fasting. At such times the singers wander (282) far and wide, for up to three months in the winter. In summer, people permit themselves to indulge in singing in their leisure hours and at various places of communal work, but at all times of the year singers are summoned during high feasts and on special festal occasions, among the Christians especially at the festival of their house patron. Epic song enjoys special cultivation at weddings, where it simply serves the purpose of music for the guests; both wedding parties make

the effort to procure the services of the best singers, and leading singers relate with pride how many brides they have conducted home.

Among the Mohammedans one can easily observe an aristocratic and a democratic trend in popular singing. In earlier times a Bey would never have gone into a coffee-house, nor would a singer who had any self-respect. The popular coffee-houses are on the whole not old, especially in Herzegovina. The oldest singer whom I got to know had never been in a coffee-house, but was only a singer to prominent Beys whom he used to accompany on horseback on their travels or on military expeditions. In general in earlier times every Bey, Aga or *dizdar*¹⁴ who led a *četa* or company (detachment) had his own singer, just as he had his own standard-bearer (*barjaktar*). Many a feudal aristocrat was until very recent times a special patron of singers; thus only decades ago in Bosnian Petrovac the well known Bey Husein Kulenović Staroselac, who kept singers with him for several months, learned songs from them and also so influenced them to his point of view that under his direction a special edition of popular epic songs arose. The popular epic singer consequently belonged to the feudal remains of the Middle Ages, in which Bosnia so abounded. But among the Christians also the popular epic, if we examine it closely and look back into the past, comes from the higher social levels and always served to glorify the warriors of the higher classes, even though in the last centuries they may have been only *uskočki*¹⁵ ("insurgents," guerrillas from Turkey) and *hajduks*.¹⁶ P. Hektorović from the island of Lesina (Slavic: Hvar) in his work entitled *Ribanje*¹⁷ (published in 1568) puts in the mouth of two fishermen entertaining a patrician the first two well-known epic songs and lets them also sing a lyric song, in which a member of the upper class (*gospodin*) rides on the battlefield, while before him a servant sings a song to honour him. Still for the 17th century we have the express testimony of Jurij Križanić:

Among the Croats and Serbians, while we were still boys, there flourished some kind of imitation of that well-known Roman custom. For I saw noblemen and military men sitting at dinner and standing behind them soldiers who sang the aforementioned songs in praise of their ancestors.¹⁸

It is no accident that among the papers of the Croatian (283) baron or magnate and Ban,¹⁹ Peter Zrinski, (who was executed in 1671 in the town of Wiener Neustadt), was found one of the oldest recordings of Serbo-Croatian popular epic song, dating from the year 1663. However, in the older Serbian songs at any rate the deeds of kings, czars, princes, and despots as well as of their aristocratic society were glorified, just as in general medieval Serbia, with regard to the national constitution and social relations, stood much closer to Hungary, Poland and Bohemia than to Byzantium. Especially noteworthy is the fact that even Hungarian kings (Matthias Corvinus) and generals

were celebrated as heroes in the popular song of all South Slavs. Besides, even the German minstrel (*Spielmann*) was so well known in Serbia at the beginning of the 13th century that Saint Sava, the organiser of the Serbian Church, in his *nomocan* *on*²⁰ translated the Greek word *μῦθος* with *špilman* and the kings of Bosnia, the Bašići in Montenegro, Sandalj in Herzegovina and other princes had their jesters (*oculatores*). The Trojan saga and Alexander Romance in their western romantic adaptations were known to the South Slavs; of the French chivalric or knightly romances Tristan and Lancelot, Buovo d'Antona and also the saga of Charlemagne..... Instructive parallels are offered by the popular epic of the Germanic peoples, especially in the Nordic countries.

The Mohammedan singers usually sing for pay, which may take very different forms. (284) The Beys used to give gifts of grain, horses, oxen, indeed, whole pairs of oxen, as in the *Rigveda*, cows, sheep, clothes and ducats; in Herzegovina they used to grant also plots of land but today money is the usual means of payment. In the coffee-houses the singers were "honoured" with coffee, tea, lemonade, cigarettes and tobacco; the money contributions collected in cups are usually meagre today, while among the ordinary people even that form of payment is no longer available; in particular among the Christians only "tips" are usual. Of the alcoholic beverages with which every singer lets himself be honoured, spirits are decidedly preferred on the ground that beer and wine are bad for the voice, but they are not refused by the Christian singers. Drinks cannot harm the singer because he "shouts them out."

The songs, having ample or extensive narratives and a predilection for epic recitations, are immensely long. Among the Mohammedans songs lasting as long as two or three hours are considered normal, but they usually last longer than that, even 7-8 hours or yet more. Among the songs collected in *Matica hrvatska*²¹ from north-western Bosnia, the average length is 873 verses, eleven consist of 2001-3000 verses, four of 3001-4000 and more verses. But the association published in its two volumes only 22,700 + 23,956 = 46,656 verses in fifty songs, the longest of which consisted of 1862 verses. In consequence the singer generally sings only one song in one night or even divides it over two to three nights.²² Even the local Christians are amazed at the length of the Mohammedan songs, but their own songs, which are usually designed for an hour, also can last quite long: in Herzegovina I even heard of a song lasting six hours. This is explained by the fact that among Mohammedans in particular epic songs take the place of concerts, theatre, and other forms of amusement. Of course, the singers take breaks in the course of longer songs; they can sing uninterruptedly for only an hour, at the most an hour and a half.

As regards the number of their songs, the singers are never able to give exact information. They speak generally of 30-40 songs, or approximately 100; they have songs for every night of Ramadan, for three months, for every day of the year. For the

most part they do not exaggerate; at any rate I was able to convince myself that they had more songs than they reported. To give an idea of the repertoire of a single singer, I mention Saliko Vojniković, who from the 2nd to the 17th of February 1887 sang or dictated at Agram²³ ninety songs with more than 80,000 decasyllabic verses, so roughly double the length of the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*,²⁴ if we take into account the fact that the decasyllable is shorter than the hexameter, otherwise almost three times the length. When I was arranging these transcripts in the archive of *Matica hrvatska* (285), they filled seven folio volumes; in print they would come to more than two thousand pages.....

The accompanying instruments, the *tambura* and the *gusle*, may be replaced by a stick, a *čibuk*,²⁵ a cigarette mouth-piece, or any object, indeed even a small child may be engaged, in order to keep time. The prelude or overture with the accompanying instrument is usually followed by a short introductory song in which the singer emphasises that he wants to sing a "true" song or "a song from olden times" or "of the ancient heroes." Frequently he gives expression in the process to his own feelings and compliments the people present.

The performance consists of a monotonous, muffled recitation which produces an unmusical effect on musical experts, and is not easy even for the local or indigenous people to understand, especially if they have lost touch with the ordinary people. It is noteworthy that the Krajina singer is less intelligible right at the beginning, if he continues to play the *tambura* loudly. It becomes better if he gets into a faster or even the fastest pace, because here and there he only recites. The singing of the Herzegovinians, which is accompanied by the *gusle*, is more musical and, despite its greater speed, is easier to understand. There are incidentally different kinds of performance or delivery, depending on the subject-matter or content (of the song). Besides, in Herzegovina there are two kinds of delivery, a more literary and faster one, and a slower, rustic kind. The mental and physical exertion of the singers is immense, for I counted 13-28, for the most part 16-20 decasyllabic verses²⁶ in a minute, so that the best stenographer could not keep up with them for long. It is also no cause for surprise if they completely break out in sweat, especially in restricted spaces.

I was, however, impressed not so much by the circumstance that they retained the longest songs in memory but by their rather unerring choice of words, even during the fastest recitation, so that I never noticed any straining after words. That ought to mean a good deal, for even a local Bey told me that he could not put three words together in this way. The singers have, nevertheless, no fixed text; they create their songs afresh again and again although they claim to be delivering these same songs always exactly or just as they have "picked <them > up" or "heard" them. That may refer only to the characters, the themes, and the development of the action, but otherwise they (the singers) can shorten or lengthen the songs in accordance with their whole basic

nature²⁷ or as they see fit — depending on their mood, on the audience which they have in front of them, and also the pay to be expected. One can even speak directly of schools in connection with the treatment of songs. Thus Bey (286) Husein Kulenović Staroselac, whom we have already mentioned (282), used to demand: "Embellish the hero, the horse, you will not be able to buy it for him for your money!"

His embellishment of the maiden lasted as long as a song lasts today. Of similar kind were other expansions, but on the other hand this very man was very much concerned with truthfulness in the songs. The singer who related that to me did not want to hear anything again about detailed descriptions and says of a maiden or a woman simply: "she makes herself attractive."²⁸ Already Marjanović²⁹ reported of a specialist who could (so to speak) dress a maiden and saddle a horse most beautifully.³⁰ For comparison two parallels from Medieval German poetry readily suggest themselves: Lachmann's so-called *tailor-stanzas*³¹ which he wanted to see eliminated from the *Nibelungenlied*, and the notorious description of Enite's horse in Hartmann von Aue's *Erec*, which runs to about 500 verses. The taste of the medieval Germans was probably not much different from that of the Bosnian nobles, who until very recent times were still living very much in the Middle Ages!

Great and unexpected services were rendered by the phonograph for the study of the texts of the songs. The Phonograph Committee of the Vienna Academy stipulates that every text should be written down before recording. In consequence of this I discovered that even the same singer dictates quite a small fragment of an epic song (about twenty verses) differently and after a few minutes sings differently during the rehearsal into the horn of the phonograph, and again differently during the actual recording. Since I had stenographers at my disposal on the second trip, I can present three, in one case even four, parallel texts. The divergences or deviations are not confined to the interchange of individual words and to alterations in the word order. Whole verses appear in a completely altered form or are left out. Fifteen dictated verses, for example, came to only eight in the phonograph recording. A good singer from northwest Bosnia, however, managed to render even the first verse quite differently on each occasion. He dictated,

Beg Osmanbeg rano podranio (an etymological figure!)³²
"Bey Osman-bey got up early";

sang at the rehearsal into the phonograph horn,

Beg Osmanbeg na bedem izigje
"Bey Osman-bey went up the ramparts";

and at the phonograph recordings,

Beg Osmanbeg niz Posavljije gleda

"Bey Osman-bey looks down the Sava plain."

A critic who originally came from Herzegovina, who should have been familiar with popular epic singing, thought that this singer had landed in confusion because of diffidence. There could be no question of diffidence and confusion in the case of a professional singer, but, on my next trip, I paid very special attention to this and discovered that in the monastery of Duži near Trebinje a singer who was very well known in that locality and was (287) most kindly treated, sang so differently from his dictation that a monk and the teacher had to stop taking down the divergences as early as the second verse. On the other hand, a school headmaster or principal, who had collected very many songs, was quite astonished when I told him about the great changes made by the singers. No wonder that in this regard completely erroneous views prevail even in the scholarly literature. There is talk of "freezing" of epic songs on the lips of rhapsodes, and even John Meier,³³ who himself says: "The singer knows no song but only the subject matter," allows himself a few pages later³⁴ to be misled by investigators in the Slavic field, to wit, Wollner and Krauss,³⁵ into stating that the performer keeps strictly to the text and does not change an iota in it.

Precisely from my experiences with the phonograph recording I therefore drew the unconditional conclusion that all Serbo-Croatian epic songs, as they lie in print before us, were in reality sung or dictated in this way on only one occasion.³⁶ One should consider the consequences of this conclusion for textual criticism: we can *never* reconstruct the original text of a song orally produced and spread abroad. Thus I was able also to establish with total conviction that Vuk Karadžić, who like all collectors is not free from errors, did not record his song "*The Jakšić brothers look for their wives*" from the lips of the people, but borrowed it from the Croatian poet Mat. Ant. Reljković, who had already in 1779 printed this song³⁷ in the second edition of his didactic poem *Satir*³⁸ in order to show how men should not allow themselves to be influenced by women.

(288) As regards the performance or delivery, it is further noteworthy that many a singer makes his work easier by punctuating his song with prose narratives. Thus in Mostar I listened to a Mohammedan singer, already spoiled by education, who did a lot of narration and mainly sang descriptions of the girl and the horse, apparently because they were easier on account of their commonplace. Also concerning Christian singers, it was reported to me that not only do they sing heroic deeds but also they are able to narrate in prose and to pass comments, but at the same time there were expressly mentioned to me also such singers as are not able to narrate. From the

Montenegrin Vojvoda,³⁹ Marko Miljanov, a self-taught man, we have a complete history of the Kući clan in which narrative created out of the tradition is punctuated with songs.⁴⁰ It was claimed of a famous singer whose songs were printed in the collection of *Matica brvatska* that he was a better narrator than a singer. It is evident then that poetry and prose can coexist perfectly well even in the heroic saga. A more detailed study of these and similar facts may throw new light on the controversial questions of the "Sagvers" (spoken verse)⁴¹ in Old Norse, Old French and Celtic literature.

The singer is completely absorbed in his song, betrays his excitement through his emotions, and can also, like his listeners, be moved to tears. The singer's attitude before persons of a different faith or religion deserves attention. What really comes into consideration is only the great contrast between "Turks" and "Vlachs," the term by which the Orthodox and Catholic Christians are likewise designated. That the Christians frequently have the same songs is therefore easy to understand. Between Christians and Moslems, however, every possible regard for either side is shown, and the singers try not to hurt the feelings of the listeners, a thing that is easily possible, since there are many songs which are harmless and do justice to "heroes" of both sides. Moreover, Christian singers also adopt the songs of the Moslems and *vice versa*. In general, though, a Moslem will make the least concessions and prefer not to sing. A Bosnian Catholic explained to me that he sang all songs in the manner in which he "received" them. On the other hand, it was said of one of his famous neighbours, whose songs are in print, that when he sang before Moslems he knocked down all persons of a different faith, and *vice versa*. In general there are various anecdotes on the subject, of how the singers understand how to "reverse the blows"⁴² even in songs about Kraljević Marko.⁴³

The singers are familiar with the usual artist's pride and envy. When on one occasion in Sarajevo I gave equal pay to three singers, one of them refused to accept anything and went away insulted, because, as it was later explained to me by the people around him and on the next day by the singer himself, he rated himself absolutely higher than the other two. In a remote place in Herzegovina, a 19-year-old singer explained to me: "All of us, like us here, all of us are enemies of one another. It is agony for me if another person is more capable than I."⁴⁴ To illustrate his point he then drew the following comparison: "You, Professor, also travel around, in order that you may know more than other professors. It would be better for you to stay at home." And indeed he was right: at the place in question, there was, to be sure, a house for the district authority but no hotel for strangers, so that I had to avail myself of the officially prescribed hospitality of the rural police.

The members of the audience listen to the singer with the greatest attention, participation and emotion. In the intervals they reflect, direct questions at the singer,

and also express criticism, to which the singer is never at a loss for answers. The most extreme result of adverse criticism consists in the singer having his *gusle* daubed with tallow when he leaves, so that he cannot play and sing any further.

The ten-syllable unrhymed verse with a caesura after the fourth syllable, but no strophe or stanza, sounds much more regular during dictation than when it is being sung. In singing there are frequent unstressed syllables⁴⁵ at the beginning of the verse, before the first accented syllable, and also inserted syllables in the interior of the verse. The last syllable is frequently suppressed or "thrown" into the next verse,⁴⁶ while the penultimate syllable is shortened and blurred or drawn out long and stressed in opposition to its natural accent. All these variations may be local or individual usage, and can also occur side by side. For metrical reasons words can be shortened in a striking manner or also split (or resolved⁴⁷).

The language, which is rich in tropes and figures of speech and is exceedingly graphic, sounds magnificent on the lips of a good singer. Dialect mixtures occur — a phenomenon to be explained by the wanderings of singers and of songs, by the influence of the written language, and by the circumstance that the Orthodox Christians who live next door to each other on the one hand, and the Catholics and the Moslems on the other, have many shared dialectal features.

The heroic songs must always have a martial subject matter. Those of the Mohammedans contain mostly border skirmishes of the 16th and 17th centuries or other events from Bosnian history. Apart from a few examples these songs seldom deal with more important events like the conquest of a town or even a state. The poet of the *Iliad* himself does not know how to describe mass fights and breaks battles up into single combats. Thus here, too, there are especially numerous duels, frequently caused by a woman or one's honour. Kidnapping of girls or women, weddings, raiding of wedding processions, purchasing or ransoming of captured heroes, frequently at the expense of a woman, presenting the hero with gifts, principally with gifts of brides, retaliation for violence committed, but also plundering expeditions provoked by mischief, thirst for glory, greed, and over-extended states of peace — these are the usual materials for songs. At the centre of all this stands one Mustaj-bey from Lika, a character who is little known in history but who (to judge by the songs) could have lived at that place during the whole 150 years of Turkish domination. Around him are grouped older and younger heroes, in particular the brothers Mujo and Halil Hrnjica, who are especially prominent in Herzegovina and beyond Montenegro have become known even to the Albanians. There are also not lacking the usual traitors and a fool, or jester, Tale Ličani. Thus we have here the example of a (290) relatively late formation of a cycle, next to which, on the Christian side, stands⁴⁸ the cycle of the songs about *uskoks*.⁴⁹ The Mohammedans thus live very much in the past but in

Herzegovina, at any rate, they possess also songs about the latest fights with the Montenegrins. These, however, are less known.

Like the Mohammedans, the Catholics also have their gaze directed intently into the past. Their songs are reflected in the collections of Bosnian and Herzegovinian popular songs by [Ivan Franjo] Jukić⁵⁰ and [Fra Marijan] Sunjić⁵¹ respectively: the collection of the former was published for the first time in 1858, while that of the latter lay in manuscript at the time, and only recently came to light. At the centre of these songs are heroes defending Christianity in the border regions of Dalmatia and Croatia, mostly Bosnian-Herzegovinian *uskoks* ("renegades")⁵² and Bosnian *hajduks*.⁵³ Various literary sources of popular singing are also highly relevant, in particular the *Razgovor ugodni* ("Pleasant conversation") of the Dalmatian Franciscan friar Andrija Kačić,⁵⁴ a South-Slavic heroic chronicle in prose and songs composed completely in the style of popular epic — since the mid-18th century the most frequently printed Croatian book. Probably any of the better Catholic singers in Herzegovina can sing the song which originally came from Kačić about the liberation of Vienna from the Turks in 1683. Nothing portrays the psyche of the Catholic South-Slavs better than the extremely wide circulation of this song: likewise the fact that in Dalmatia the Christian heroes of Kotari⁵⁵ are still remembered in churches on Sundays.

In the case of the Orthodox Christians, I noticed that the well-known old Serbian popular songs are much less widely circulated among them than might be supposed. When at Sarajevo, during a phonograph recording session, Serbians who were present asked a singer from the neighbourhood in my presence whether he knew the songs about Prince Lazar, Miloš Obilić and Vuk Branković, he answered in the negative, for he was not, as he put it, "well versed in written documents" (*pismen* = "literate"), that is to say, such songs can be learnt only from books. That became fully clear to me only in Herzegovina. The singers there always used to offer me songs about more recent or the most recent Herzegovinian-Montenegrin border skirmishes, and these songs frequently originate from the poems of the Montenegrin nobleman Petar Petrović Njegoš, but above all from the books entitled *Kosovska osveta* ("Revenge for Kosovo") and *Slavenska* (291) *sloga* ("Slavic Peace or Harmony"), which are supposed to have been composed by the Brothers Sobajić⁵⁶ in Nikšić. Apart from song-books on local fights and on the Russo-Turkish War, there are also such songs about the Russo-Japanese War, and of course already about the Balkan Wars. Thus the singers like to be completely contemporary and up-to-date, but they have at any rate retained sufficient taste to admit that the older songs are better, though they are no longer well-received among the listeners, the particularly energetic Serbian element.

We are thus confronted with the surprising fact that the popular epic song is today mostly of literary origin at the very place where it is in the greatest bloom. As sources of songs the collection by Vuk Karadžić and Vuk Vrčević⁵⁷ was also expressly

mentioned to me. Earlier the songs were heavily copied from Vuk's collection, but today they are reissued in numerous little songbooks which enjoy a wide circulation. A speculative Serbian bookseller in Sarajevo even publishes reprints of Moslem popular songs in the Latin alphabet. Frequently the songs from Vuk's collection were read aloud by Orthodox priests who put in an appearance inside the house on festival occasions. The same practice was followed by the Franciscan friars and the Catholic secular priests, who are distinguished by their martial moustaches (secular priests live only in Herzegovina) and even now live completely with the ordinary people. If they visit their widely scattered parishioners, even today in the evenings at the fireside they reach for the *gusle*. As, however, the knowledge of reading and writing spreads more and more, the singers themselves are today learning from songbooks. Thus a 21-year-old poet complained to me as his greatest pain the fact that he possessed only half Kačić and so could not learn the whole. That others have the whole in their heads was expressly attested to me. Songs found in the oral tradition from Kačić were represented as something special, (292) but, as can be seen, the whole of Kačić could be found! I doubt, though, that all the songs are suitable for performance, especially the Turkish ones.

As may be easily understood, I paid the greatest attention to the question of whether and how epic songs come into being even today. That this is the case is shown by not less than thirteen expressions assembled by myself for the creation of a song, which have the meaning: "to sing a song," "to invent or devise a song," "to embellish a song," "to put together or compile a song," "to arrange a song," "to tailor a song," "to create a song," "to make a song from one's head" [i.e. from memory]. However the expression *isenaditi*, *knaditi* ["to make up"], which is particularly widespread in the whole of Herzegovina, was formerly almost totally unknown and is "unclear" to the great dictionary of the South Slavic Academy. Frequently I heard of borrowings of a song, of amalgamations or combinations of songs ("to thresh songs together"), of new creations or adaptations, of improvements and additions. A singer gave the explanation that a song could not be good "if the *gusle*-player cannot add something to it from his own head." In connection with what I have already mentioned about the performance or delivery of songs, it must accordingly be said that at least all the better singers are even today improvisers. However, the philologists, in my opinion, worry too much about the question of how among the pre-Homeric singers the *oidoi* were followed by rhapsodes or merely reciters, since there are *oidoi*, that is, singers who also compose new songs, even today among the rhapsodes.⁵⁸ I have personally become acquainted with authors of known and unknown epic songs, and possess reliable information on others. Seldom does a hero sing of his own deeds, but still there are also such men to be found among the leaders of a *četa* (company, detachment). Sometimes several members of the same company take part in the editing

of a song. Usually the heroes find their singers in their immediate vicinity, but distant spectators too may sing of an event, or even such people as have only heard of it. Among composers of this sort are to be found herdsmen or shepherds of both sexes, sometimes quite young, who thus compete not only in singing but also in the creation of songs. Sometimes they also create songs together, criticise one another and accept or also reject the songs (simply by making fun of them).

As a pre-condition of every song, however, an event is always explained. It is no accident then that singers in their introductory song emphasise that they want to sing a true song, and Kačić stands especially high among the Catholics for the reason that in his work everything "holds true." In the same way, I heard in Moslem and Orthodox [Christian] circles that a song is no good if it does not bring the truth. Listeners call out "Stop!" to singers if descriptions of a fight in which they have taken part do not agree with their recollections. A youth told me that he could "compose only an untrue song because he was nowhere there." (293) Nevertheless, I heard in Moslem and Christian circles that a singer could also invent martial encounters because he knows the places and people (or characters involved).

A deep insight into the nature of popular epic was afforded me sometimes by the disconcerting answers of many singers that the songs on such events as the last fights between the Herzegovinians, the Montenegrins and Turks (especially during the years 1875-1878) can be composed only by "educated people" or "people like yourself." It is no accident that most popular songs sing of only the smaller fights, for battles which many Montenegrin battalions have fought cannot of course be overseen by an ordinary man and described by him in their entire development. I got a classic answer from a singer from the district of Nevesinje who had fought not only against the Turks, but also against "the Kaiser from Vienna," that is to say, he had taken part in an insurrection or civil disturbance in 1882. When I asked him why he had not sung anything about the event himself he said: "That is not necessary. It has now been taken over by the newspaper men, the educated people." Many Montenegrin epic songs even in the collection of Vuk Karadžić had always given me the impression of newspaper articles, but now I obtained verification of it from a singer. Such is the face of the "singing folk" of the Romantic movement, "the folk song which composes itself" in Herzegovina, the songs of which, thanks to Vuk Karadžić, have so profoundly influenced also the views of Jakob Grimm. In this case it must be especially emphasised that their collector already in 1833 had not withheld from the world the following statement regarding the blind Filip Višnjić, the singer of the first Serbian War of Independence, who had come from Bosnia to Serbia in 1809 and until 1813 lived in that Serbian camp singing songs like a second Tyrtæus:⁵⁹ "I firmly believe that all these new songs about the times of Karagjorgje were composed by Filip himself."

Vuk even encouraged him in 1815 in Syrmia⁶⁰ where he was recording his songs, to return to Serbia, since he had the wish that he might continue to compose songs (*pevač*), but he preferred to remain there, where his singing art was amply remunerated, so that he had a horse and wagon, could send his son to school and "has become quite a gentleman" (*čisto se bio pogospodio*). Thus he was very quickly acquiring the "culture" or way of life so dangerous to popular epic. All this and similar things were known also to the Slavists, but nevertheless they remained stubbornly faithful to the belief in a mystical origin of popular epic, for instance, Miklosich right to the end of his life.

In the opinion of the people, and in reality, Maksim Sobajić (who has been already mentioned)⁶¹ had been to school. He published at least one of the songbooks named above. However, he is supposed not to have composed all the songs himself but to have received ready-made ones from the army and edited them. For in Montenegro there was a "captain of the singers" (*kapetan od guslara*) and in every battalion 1-2 singers, who in the evenings sang songs in the camp and composed new ones, which were then sent to the press by Sobajić. Express mention was also made of a communal or joint composition and editing by the singers and companions in arms.

The book entitled *Kosovska osvetla* ["Revenge for Kosovo"], which was published by Sobajić, nevertheless also caused much offence in Herzegovina because it favoured the Montenegrins too much, and it was actually burnt. Yes, folk poetry may even suffer this fate. Such conflicts arise in Montenegro even between individual clans, for every clan there has its own popular songs celebrating its deeds. Indeed money already played a part in such partisanships decades ago. Thus a singer told me the story of how two educated persons came to his uncle after the battle of Vučji do (1876) and demanded from him two Twenties (*plete*) in order that he might break into song, but he could not buy this fame for himself. Just like a paid newspaper item! W. Scherer's⁶² comparison of the travelling singers with "wandering journalists" is in fact apposite on this point.

In recent years only sanguinary events on a smaller scale, such as occur everywhere, and other topics like weddings, courtings, parliamentary elections, service in the army, etc; have continued to be the subject of song. Indeed, there are even accusations and appeals to the district or state government in verse. Not only can singers offer completely new improvisations in their introductory and concluding songs but there are not seldom also singers able to reach for the *gusle* and immediately sing of any event. I was told by an old Bey in Bosnia that he could make a song out of my visit to him at once. An Orthodox Christian peasant, from the vicinity of Gacko, even offered me the beginning of one such song. It began with a comparison usual in popular song: *Poletiš dva sokola siva* ("There came flying two grey falcons"), that is to say, two rural policemen whom the district governor had sent to invite him to meet me.

From the details given so far it emerges that popular epic songs, in so far as they did not come into being from combination or were not freshly invented, have a historical basis. Admittedly the minor border skirmishes will not easily admit of documentary proof even in the 16th and 17th centuries, yet it is not excluded that the basic facts could be found out. Interesting studies can be made without further ado on the geography of the songs. In the case of the Krajina singers the geography is mostly very precise, but as the songs wander towards the south it naturally becomes worse and worse. Thus fun is made of the Herzegovinian singers because they make, for instance, Mujo Hrnjica travel from north-western Bosnia over the Croatian mountain range Plješevica by ship. In cultural-historical terms, nevertheless, all songs are more or less true and deserve careful study from this point of view also. Indeed they can be used (of course, with the necessary discrimination) as sources for cultural history, so that in this regard a rehabilitation of popular songs is appropriate because they have been pushed too much aside by critical historical research in reaction to the exaggerations of the Romantic movement. Thus we have (295) also documentary descriptions of duels between Christians and Turks, just as they occur frequently in songs, and Vienna several times forbade the Ban⁶³ of Croatia to engage in a duel with the Pasha⁶⁴ of Bosnia. The present-day conditions in Bosnia and Herzegovina still correspond in many respects with those described in song. Among the population there still lives an especially martial spirit; horse-racing (long-distance), running, shot-putting belong to the usual amusements. One still hears a lot about epic hospitality and addiction to drink. On the wine-drinking of the Moslem heroes I could not get any satisfactory information; in any case they copied their Christian opponents in this respect. This phenomenon still occurs even today in the border areas. In the whole of Herzegovina there is still alive and prevalent the belief that many a hero living even now is invulnerable, so that even the Austrian army officers were interested in such cases. Among both the Mohammedans and Christians various lucky charms serve as a means [to achieve invulnerability]. But usually such a child of fortune has been "born in the small shirt" (*u košuljici se rodio*) which corresponds completely with the Russian *vorozhke rodils'ia*, that is, in the *amnion* ("sheep caul"), a protective covering which usually ruptures before birth. Such a "connate" or "green" little shirt is dried and sewn into the armpit which has been cut open. Also memories of the old feudal conditions of the country are still very much alive. Stories are told of how individual feudal lords carried on wars with one another until about the middle of the 19th century. Before one of the last such great lords, Dedaga Čengić, everyone up to the major or squadron leader had to stand with his hands on his breast. The aristocrat was one of the last great lovers of heroic singing which he had to have (literally) with his coffee, every evening, after the removal of the table; at those sessions other listeners could be present only by his special favour. The remains of the old castles in the country yield

interesting points of comparison. A Catholic singer from Herzegovina, who had come with a delegation to Vienna, found in the court museum there the same horse's armour as in his song.

The popular epic is everywhere in serious decline, for it is no longer appropriate to the times. The feudal aristocracy has no more interest in it, for their martial splendour was already past from the time of Omer Paša,⁶⁵ and certainly from that of the [Austrian] occupation of Bosnia and Herzegovina [1878]. The songs on the border skirmishes of the 16th and 17th centuries are simply an anachronism. The modern constitutional state [founded on law and justice] has also deprived the popular epic of the heroism⁶⁶ of the *hvjeduks*.⁶⁷ There are no military clashes any more, the *handžar*⁶⁸ has yielded to the rifle and this has been followed by the machine gun. Today (296) there are no more heroes any more but only "pantaloon wearers." No one can be challenged to a duel by any one, and heroic courage has been replaced by discipline ([Lat.] *disciplina*, orderliness. . . .). Thus, for different reasons the aristocracy allows singing to decay, while in the towns too singers are becoming increasingly rare and are now sometimes driven out of the coffee houses. The remuneration is becoming ever smaller, so that singers who have a family to feed must stay with their work. The singing of such long songs also presupposes leisure, but now, as an Aga⁶⁹ told me, the *Švaba*⁷⁰ (the German [or in effect anyone] who has crossed the Sava with the hat or cap) demands that people should work. Among the Christians the intelligentsia is influential against the all too long and expensive family feasts which were unthinkable without singing. The people find no pleasure any more in the content of the songs because they have lost their belief in their truthfulness. The most implacable foe of the singers, however, is modern education. Song collections have fundamentally spoiled the business of singers, and simply ruined the singers themselves,⁷¹ for today any Bey can read the song for himself when and where he wants, every schoolboy can entertain his relatives and their neighbours with songs, and reading out of song books has found its way into the coffee houses. Children bring the large, fat volumes of *Matica hrvatska* and other song collections even into the schools and read them secretly under the bench.⁷²

The old popular epic song is thus disappearing from the lips of the singers but is taking on a new lease on life thanks to the art of printing and is becoming a component of the national literature which was already strongly influenced by it before. Now also the great antithesis between Christians and Turks, or more correctly between Slavic Christians and Mohammedans, belongs to history. (In the opening session in Belgrade of the National Assembly of the new South Slavic State, the "Kingdom of Serbia, Croatia and Slovenia," priests or religious leaders representing the three respective religious faiths or faith communities — Orthodox, Catholic and Moslem — administered the oath to the members. Old freedom-fighters broke into

tears at the sight of this). But besides history, the popular epic songs that were collected (before it was too late) will in time bear witness to the olden times and certainly, for a long time to come, occupy the attention of scholars engaged in cultural research.

3. Notes

- 1) [Now Zagreb.]
- 2) [A region in south-western Croatia.]
- 3) [*Onda bilo, sad se spominjalo* or alternatively: *nekad bilo, sad se spominjalo*: a proverbial saying in Serbo-Croatian.]
- 4) [*Pasha* is a title formerly borne in Turkey by officers of high rank, such as military commanders and governors of provinces.]
- 5) "Bericht über eine Bereisung von Nordwestbosnien und der angrenzenden Gebiete von Kroatien und Dalmatien behufs Erforschung der Volksepik der Bosnischen Mohammedaner," *Sitzungsber. d. Kais. Akad. der Wissenschaften in Wien*. Philos.-Hist. Kl. Bd. 173, 3. Abh. Wien 1913; "Bericht über eine Reise zum Studium der Volksepik in Bosnien und Herzegowina im Jahre 1913," *ibid.* Bd. 176, 2. Abh. Wien 1913.
- 6) [Vuk Stefanović Karadžić (1787-1864) was an early collector and publisher of Serbian popular songs during the Serbian struggle for independence from Turkish rule in the first half of the 19th century. His collection was published in Vienna (1814-1815) and at Leipzig (1823-1824), and reviewed with enthusiasm by Jakob Grimm and Goethe; enlarged editions appeared in Vienna (1841-1865), and the Serbian State edition in 1891-1902. Karadžić was also the author of the first modern Serbian dictionary, grammar and reformed alphabet. See Wilson; for a bibliography of Vuk's work see Koljević. 5, 351ff. and Foley (1995). 69ff.]
- 7) *c* corresponds to *tz* or *ts*. [*tamburica* is the diminutive of *tambura*.]
- 8) [This error still persists in some modern standard works on Homer, e.g. Kirk. 84-85 refers to "Yugoslav oral singers or *guslari*."]
- 9) Here indeed I saw a famous female singer, Matija slipica (the blind woman), who would under no circumstances beg, but performed singing as her occupation, wandered around, and allowed herself to be called to sing, and was rewarded with money or other presents.
- 10) [Srem is a region in Serbian Vojvodina.]
- 11) [*Bey* (modern form of *Beg*) is a Turkish title meaning "prince, noble, governor."]
- 12) [Slovenian Rogaška-Slatina.]
- 13) [*Aga* also *agha* is the title of a Turkish commander. It was also used of civil officers and as a title of distinction.]
- 14) [*A dizdar* was a fortress commander.]
- 15) [Serbo-Croat *uskoci*: anti-Turkish guerrillas.]

- 16) [Serbo-Croat. *hajduci*: anti-Turkish highwaymen.] According to Vuk Karadžić, *Srpski rječnik* (Serbian dictionary): "a bandit, brigand (highwayman); in this district he was treated with less abhorrence and more like a hero." In the opinion of the people, which is also expressed in the songs, the *hajduks* are a result of the Turkish violence and injustice, and accordingly also attacked first and foremost the Turks; cf. the Greek *Klephs*. [Also *Klefts* (*Kleftis*). Translated literally the word *Klephs* (*Kleft*) means "robber" but in the Greek War of Independence (1821-1828) against the Turks the mountaineers — called Klephs or Klefts/Kleftis — were the most stubborn and effective adversaries of the Turks and were accordingly considered as national heroes.]
- 17) [Dialectal form of the word for "fishing." The title of the work is: *Ribanje i ribarsko prigovaranje i razlike stvaru ine* = Fishing and Fishermen's Conversations.]
- 18) *Apud Croatos et Serbos adhuc nobis pueris viguit aliqui istius Romanae consuetudinis initiatio. Vidi enim convivio assidentes nobiles et militares viros et post terga ipsorum stantes milites, qui canebant praedicatas maiorum laudes.* See V. Jagić, *Rad jugoslavenske akademije* XXXVII, 119. [On the Roman ancestral song we have two testimonies from antiquity, one of which goes back to the Elder Cato (234-149 B.C.) and the other derived from Varro (116-27 B.C.). Both authors agree in reporting that the praises of famous men were sung at banquets but according to Cato the guests at the banquet sang songs in turn while Varro says that the songs were sung by young boys. The relevant passages are:
- (a) Cato:
CICERO: *Tusculanae Disputationes*. 4, 2, 3
"*In originibus dicit Cato morem apud maiores hunc epulatum fuisse, ut deinceps, qui accubarent, canerent ad tibiam clarorum virorum laudes atque virtutes.*"
- CICERO: *Brutus* 19, 75:
"*atque utinam exstarent illa carmina, quae multis saeculis ante suam aetatem in epulis esse cantata a singulis convivis de clarorum virorum laudibus in Originibus scriptum reliquit Cato!*"
- VALERIUS MAXIMUS: *Factorum et Dictorum Memorabilium* 2, 1, 10:
"*maiores natu in convivis ad tibias egregia superiorum opera carmine comprehensa pangebant, quo ad ea imitanda inventum alacriorem redderent.*"
- (b) Varro:
NONIUS MARCELLUS: *De Compensiosa Doctrina* 2. p. 77M = 107 Lindsay:
"*Varro de vita populi Romani lib. II: in convivis pueri modesti ut cantarent carmina antiqua, in quibus laudes erant maiorum, et assa voce et cum tibicine.*"
- See Williams, 55.]
- 19) [Ban is the name given to the governor or viceroy of certain military districts in Hungary, Croatia, Slavonia, Serbia and others.]
- 20) [From medieval Greek nomokanon (νόμοκανών), a collection of the canons of Church councils, together with civil laws relating to ecclesiastical matters.]

- 21) [*Matica hrvatska* is the name of the Croatian cultural institution established in Zagreb for the purpose of collecting and publishing literature for the people and promoting culture. It was originally founded in 1839 as an association called *Matica ilirska* but changed its name to *Matica hrvatska*. Similar Maticeas were founded in Vojvodina, Moravia, Dalmatia, Czechoslovakia, Slovenia and Poland.]
- 22) In the period of courtly epic in France the *chansons de geste* so grew in scale "that their performance could take several days, like that of Huon of Bordeaux." [G.] Groeber's *Grundriss der romanischen Philologie* 2 I 2, 535.
- 23) [Now Zagreb.]
- 24) Cf. on the other hand, [E.] Drerup, *Homer*, 2nd edn. p. 148 note 44 [= *Homer: Die Anfänge der hellenischen Kultur*, 2. Aufl. Mainz: Kirchheim 1915]: "The memory of singers, which is frequently over-estimated, stores, according to known examples, from 4000 to at the most 15,000 verses, ... that is, not more than the extent of the *Iliad*."
- 25) [Serbo-Croat word borrowed from the Turkish language: "a long-stemmed pipe, *chibouk*."]
- 26) Correspondingly a singer can sing on the average roughly 1000 verses in an hour.
- 27) Thus *Matica hrvatska* had the song of a 25-year old prisoner from the vicinity of Bihać recorded and this numbered over 4400 verses, but that of his teacher roughly 1500. *Hrvatske nar. pjesme* III p. xxxiii.
- 28) This reminds us of the Alexandrian critic Zenodotus [of Ephesus, ca. 325-234 B.C.] who deleted the whole description of the shield of Achilles in the *Iliad* [Book 18, 481f.]. G. Finsler: *Homer I* [*Der Dichter und seine Welt*, Teubner 1914], 343 = [*Homer I*] *Der Dichter und seine Welt* mit einer Ergänzung von E. Tietche, I. Hälfte: Vorfragen Homerkritik, Leipzig u. Berlin 1924, 73. On Zenodotus' critical work on Homer see Sandys, 119 f.; Pfeiffer, 105ff.]
- 29) [Luka Marjanović. On the basis of the materials in the archives of *Matica hrvatska* collected from north-west Bosnia in the years 1886-1888, he edited a selection with ample additions of variants under the title: *Hrvatske narodne pjesme*, Skupila i izdala Matice hrvatska, III/IV, Zagreb 1898-1899. This work earned special praise for its general introduction in which Marjanović described the singers and their work. It was thought to be the best that had been written since the time of Vuk Karadžić.]
- 30) [This refers, of course, to the specialist's descriptions of the maiden putting on her dress or the horse being saddled.]
- 31) [German *Schneiderstrophien*, a term used to describe the stanzas which contain detailed descriptions of the clothing, armament and adornments of the knights and other characters in the *Nibelungenlied*. See Bekker, 9, 11-14, 59, 116, 126, 149; Mackensen, 151ff.; Murko is here alluding to the theories of Karl Lachmann (1793-1851), one of the pioneers of the study of Germanic Philology, regarding the composition of the *Nibelungenlied*. See especially Lachmann's *Über die ursprüngliche Gestalt des Gedichtes von der Nibelungen Noth*, Berlin 1816, 7f, 14f; for a discussion of Lachmann's views on the *Nibelungenlied*, see Thorp 23f; cf. Anderson, 17, 149.]

32) [Latin *figura etymologica*: a stylistic device frequently employed especially in Early or Archaic Latin. It consisted in the juxtaposition of etymologically related words in a phrase or a sentence e.g. *pugnam pugnare*, lit. "to fight a fight," i.e. "to engage in a fight." See Hoffmann, 790f.]

33) *Werden und Leben des Volksepos*, [Halle 1909] 4.

34) *ibid.* 20. Incidentally, [F.] Wollner [*Untersuchungen über die Volksepik der Grossrussen*] borrowed this statement from the Russian proverb which runs thus: *byl' ne skazka: iz neja slova ne vyklesnes*, that is to say, "a story or narrative of what has happened is not a fairy tale: from it one may not take a letter of the alphabet." That speaks well for the high regard for the *byliny* and historical songs, but should not be taken literally.

35) [See Krauss.]

36) To the credit of the adherents of the Romantic doctrine of the national spirit composing verses it should be mentioned that already H. Steinthal has made the following statement: "Popular poetry is something fluid, it cannot be written down but only an accidental variant of it can be given fixity." G. Finsler, *Homer* I² p. 395 [= I³ p. 125]. Similarly, [F.] Miklosich ("Die Darstellung im slavischen Volksepos," *Denkschriften der Wiener Akademie* [Phil.-Hist. Kl.] XXVIII, 4 [1889]) thought: "Of every epic song there exist as many variants as singers who sang it."

Certainly the limitation to the singers does not approach the reality.

37) The song was sung "to the accompaniment of the *tambura*," an instrument which was therefore common also in Slavonia in the 18th century.

38) [*Satiri i tiri drevi čovik*, Osijek 1779]. The poet, an Austrian frontier officer, was in internment in the Seven Years War and wanted to use his experiences to benefit his countrymen in Slavonia by criticising their weaknesses after the model of J. M. Moscherosch and in the spirit of the Age of Enlightenment. The poem was written and printed in Dresden in 1761 in the usual epic metre which the author justifies as follows: "because my countrymen also are all singers and poets by nature: they sing the praises of all in their heroic deeds and preserve them in songs."

39) [*Vojvoda*, pl. *vojvode*: a governor or a general. According to Wilson, 346 n.1 "The *Vojvoda* were originally the leaders of the armed forces in a clan. In 1804 they were district commanders, and later the most senior generals or *Marshals* in the Serb Army."]

40) [*Pleme Kuča u narodnoj priči i pjesmi*, Belgrade 1904].

41) [German *Sagevers* — a term used by Sievers (1918-1919, and 1924) to cover the German "spoken" as opposed to the "sung" verse assumed by him for Old High and Early Middle German poetry. It was of varying length, could dispense with alliteration and end-rhyme, and was freer than both the alliterative and the end-rhymed verses. According to Sievers, it was probably employed in the Sagas, in all Old High German alliterative and in a few Early Middle High German end-rhymed poems. See Wilpert, 806f.]

42) [Examples of singers "reversing the blows" occur in the heroic poetry of other peoples. For instance there is a Russian *bylina* in which it is evident that the singer had reversed the blows: the historical background of the song is the capture of the Russian capital of Kiev by

the Tartars under Khan Batu in 1240. From the prelude to the song it is quite clear that it was this incident, i.e. the capture of Kiev, which was described. But in the *bylina*, which was taken down by the collector, it is related in a burlesque tone how a drunkard from the Russian army defeats the Tartars. See Trautmann, 169 ff. *Byline* 6. We have possibly an instance of this "reversal of blows" even in the *Iliad* of Homer (Book XX, 1-352). It seems that in the episode of the duel between Aeneas and Achilles described here, originally Aeneas was the victor. But in the *Iliad* as we have it, Achilles almost defeats Aeneas who is saved by the intervention of Poseidon. For a discussion of this episode see Merkelbach.].

43) [Marko Kraljević or Prince Marko was a hero of South-Slavic popular songs and the greatest hero of the Serbians. See Low, Subotić, Wilson, Koljević, 52 ff., A. Pennington.]

44) [For the sentiment cf. Hesiod: *Works and Days* lines 21-26:

"For when someone whose work falls short looks towards another, towards a rich man who hastens to plough and plant and manage his household well, then neighbour vies with neighbour as he hastens to wealth: this Strife is good for mortals.

So potter is piqued with potter, joiner with joiner, beggar begrudges beggar, and singer singer."

See Hesiod, 37].

45) [German *Auftakte*. The phenomenon is also known as *anacrusis*.]

46) [This phenomenon is known as *enjambement*. For its definition and use in Homer and the history of scholarship on it see now: Higbie, 4 f.]

47) [German *zerdehnt*, properly "distended." *Zerdehnung* is a metrical term which (in Homer) refers to the division or resolution of a sound which has become monosyllabic by contraction into its older disyllabic form for metrical reasons. This distribution of a contracted vowel over two syllables as a concession to contemporary pronunciation is also known as "distraction" or *diectasis* (French *distension*). See Chantraine, 46ff; cf. Palmer, 1962. 96f.]

48) In the scholarly literature one usually thinks only of the cycle of the Kosovo battle and of Kraljević Marko, which gives rise to completely false opinions about Serbo-Croatian popular epic. P. Popović: *Pregled srpske književnosti* counts ten cycles excluding that of the Mustaj-bey, but one can distinguish still more.

49) [On the *uskoci* see note 15 above.] Among the songs about the *uskoks* there are several with international motifs, among others the Penelope-motif in a beautiful song is linked to a captivity of Stojan Janković in Constantinople (?). (Vuk Karadžić: *Srpske nar. pjesme*, Belgrade, III, 162-167). On similar songs among the Russians and Serbo-Croats cf. T. Maretić: *Naša narodna epika*, 232-33.

50) [I.e., Ivan Franjo Jukić and Ljubomir Hercegovac: *Narodne pjesme bosanske: hercegovacke*. U Osijeku 1858.]

51) [*Narodne junačke pjesme iz Bosne i Hercegovine*. Sarajevo 1915.]

52) [See note 15 above.]

53) [See note 19 above.]

54) [Andrija Kačić Mitić: *Razgovori ugodni naroda slovenskoga (Pleasant conversations of the Slavonic people)*. The first known printed edition was in 1756, second enlarged edition Venice, 1759).]

55) [Kotari is "a place in Dalmatia between the rivers Zrmanja and Krka, the sea and the Bukovica region." See *Rječnik Hrvatskoga ili Srpskoga jezika na svijet izdaje Jugoslavenska Akademija Znanosti i umjetnosti* obradnje p. Budmani, Dio V, Zagreb 1898-1903, 895. It should not be confused with *kotari* (sg. *kotar* or *kotarski*) which are administrative districts in certain parts of Yugoslavia.]

56) [Who the brothers were, or whether they were cousins is unclear. Murko, in the present article, (291, note 1), identifies one of them, Maksim M. Sobajić, with Simo M. Sobajić who was born in 1828 in the clan Bjelopavlici in the village of Šobajići, educated in a cloister and travelled as a very young man to Serbia where he was a teacher until 1875. He then returned to Montenegro and became a secretary to an army unit. For more than fifty years he devoted himself to literature and published interesting works of important literary and historical value. In the spirit of popular songs he wrote several heroic songs in which were described the individual battles of the Montenegrin leadership. According to Murko, he was probably the author of *Osveta Kosovka. Junačke pjesme srpske*, Beograd: Izdanje N. Jovanovića (without date). He died on 27th June 1917.]

57) [Vuk Vrećević (1811-1882) served as secretary to Prince Danilo of Montenegro and to the Austrian vice-consul at Trebinje and was an amateur collector of folklore and customs. He was one of Vuk Karadžić's (see note 6 above) trusted agents and collaborators in the collection of popular songs of Serbia. He himself collected and edited popular literature. See Wilson, 341.]

58) It is totally incorrect when E. Drerup (Homer, 25) expresses the opinion that among the Serbians, at the time when Vuk was collecting the popular songs, the stage of improvisatory singing had already been passed, for it was still flourishing just during the War of Independence in Serbia ... and down to the most recent times in Herzegovina and in Montenegro.

59) [Tyrtaeus, a Greek elegiac poet of the 7th century B.C., led the Spartans in the Second Messenian War and helped to retake Messene. His poems contained war-songs and exhortations in elegiac verse. For the fragments of 'Tyrtaeus' poems see *Iambi et Elegi Graeci ante Alexandrum cantati* ed. M. L. West, vol. II, 2nd edn. Oxford: Oxford Univ. Press 1992, 169-84; for a translation see *Greek Lyric Poetry* translated with Introduction and Notes by M. L. West, Oxford: Oxford University Press 1994, 23-30. See also Lesky, 118-21; Fränkel, 153-59; and Barron and Easterling, 130-33.]

60) [See note 10 above.]

61) [See note 56 above.]

62) [Wilhelm Scherer — author of a popular history of German literature.]

63) [See note 19 above.]

64) [See note 4 above.]

65) [Omer Paša Latas (1806-1871) was a Turkish general of Serbian extraction. He was born in Plaško in 1806 and his real name was Mihailo-Mica Latas (Michael Lattas). He began his

military service in the Austro-Hungarian army but in 1827 fled to Bosnia, converted to the Islamic faith and joined the Turkish army. As a result of his several military successes he became Marshal in 1845 and was governor of Bagdad (1857-1859) and war minister (1868-1869). In 1851 he suppressed an insurrection of the Beys in Bosnia and in 1852 and 1861 he headed punitive expeditions into Montenegro, where he defeated the Prince of Montenegro in 1862. He commanded an army in the Crimean War and was commander in 1867 against the insurgents in Crete. He died in 1871 in Istanbul.]

66) In Dalmatia an end was put to it — by the telegraph, which at once caused bayonets to appear from all sides, while it "was easy to fight, so long as a mare sets justice in motion."

67) [See note 16 above.]

68) [Turkish: long dagger, dirk.]

69) [See note 13 above.]

70) [Or *švačo* (Serbo-Croat) — pejorative terms for a German.]

71) For this reason singers sometimes met me with distrust which was dispelled when I assured them that I did not want to record their songs.

72) When Drerup (Homer, 36) expresses the opinion that "collections made purely in the interest of science, which have no connection with the people, such as those of Rybnikov*, Hilferding* and Radloff*, are "naturally irrelevant" for considering the question of the decline of the popular epic, he is very much in error, as is shown by these examples, likewise by the circumstance that various reprints in small volumes are also being prepared from the collections of Russian *byliny* that he refers to. Also popular songs fixed in print receive no such overwhelming "canonical validity," for they too are exposed to changes on the lips of the singers, as I have convinced myself especially during the phonograph recording sessions. [a.] *Pavel Nikolaevich Rybnikov (1831-1885) was a Russian folklorist and ethnographer and pioneer collector of narrative poetry relating to the Russian Heroic Age. In 1859 and 1860 he collected folk epics, stories, songs and ballads among the peasants of Olonets (on the shores of Lake Onega), and published them in four volumes under the title "Songs Collected by P.N. Rybnikov" (1861-1867). His collection includes lyrics and ceremonial songs, and is distinguished for its accuracy and for the copious, interesting information which he recorded about the singers themselves. This work opened the way for extensive research in ethnography. See Chadwick, II, 7-8.

[b.] *Aleksander Fedorovich Hilferding (also transcribed as Gilferding) 1831-1872, was a Russian slavist and a collector of and researcher into *byliny*. Following Rybnikov's example Hilferding (Gilferding) went into the same region with the purpose of finding material to supplement Rybnikov's collection. He went much farther to the north and to less accessible regions which Rybnikov had not approached and was in consequence able to augment Rybnikov's collection with new material. He published his collection at St. Petersburg in three volumes under the title "*Byliny* of Onega recorded by A. F. Hilferding/Gilferding" (1875). It

is said that his was the most comprehensive collection of *byliny* relating to the Russian Heroic Age. See Chadwick, 7-8.

(c) *Friedrich Wilhelm Radloff (1837-1918), known to Russian scholars as Vasilii Vasilievich Radlov, was a German born Orientalist, Turcologist, ethnologist and archaeologist who spent the greater part of his life in Czarist Russia. After studying Turkish languages at the University of Berlin and obtaining a doctorate from the University of Jena in 1858 he went to Russia to acquire a deeper and more solid knowledge of some of the Altaic languages. In 1859 he accepted a teaching post which took him to Barnaul in Western Siberia on the shores of the river Ob where he stayed almost continuously until 1871, teaching German and Latin at the local college. During his stay there he made extensive trips into the Altai, Siberia, Kazakhstan and Central Asia and collected data on the languages, folklore, ethnology and archaeology of the Turkic people. On the basis of the materials he collected Radloff published a series of sagas and poetry relating to the Tartar tribes of the mountains and steppes of Central Asia in ten volumes under the title *Proben der Volksliteratur der nördlichen Türkischen Stämme* gesammelt und übersetzt von Dr. W. Radloff (1866-1907) with a German translation, which is partly in verse (*Specimens of popular literature of the northern Turkish tribes*). Radloff's translations made Turkic epics available to scholars of many countries, all of whom used his work as their source. He also published a *Dictionary of Turkish Dialects* in four volumes (1882-1909). See Chadwick, III, 1940, 16-17; Chadwick and Zhirmunsky 271 ff.; and Temir.]

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¹⁰ In the translation of Murko's text, his own references are left unchanged and are not repeated in the Works Cited.

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*STEVEN TÖTÖSY DE ZEPETNEK, MILAN V. DIMIĆ with IRENE SYWENKY, eds. *Comparative Literature Now: Theories and Practice*. Paris: Honoré Champion Éditeur, 1999. Pp. 935. FF 670,06; EUR 102,15, hard cover.

Scholars seeking to inform themselves about the nature and range of comparative literature today, as well as about the discipline's likely future, could not find a more representative and comprehensive guide than this volume. Consisting of 77 papers selected from the 1994 ICLA Congress at the University of Alberta, the volume includes a 58-page bibliography of theories, methods and histories prepared by its co-editor Professor Tötösy de Zepetnek. On the whole, the contributors move beyond the familiar complaints about the crises besetting comparative literature to reveal a discipline in the process of redefining itself.

As the subtitle suggests, the volume's seven sections are roughly divided between theoretical considerations and practical criticism. By far the most frequently cited theorist is Mikhail Bakhtin whose concepts of dialogism, polyphony, and heteroglossia are repeatedly invoked. The more provocative theoretical essays suggest new regional, geographic, and global contexts for approaching literary works beyond traditional national and linguistic categories. Thus Amiya Dev debates the value of the concept "Indian literature" given that country's 22 major languages and literatures and 221 language groups, while Sylvie André and Walter F. Veit respectively insist that the concepts of African and Australian literature are only meaningful when, in Veit's words, not only their "intra-cultural strands" are "intertwined," but their "extra-cultural interrelations" are recognized (430). The equally problematic notion of "European literature" is tackled by Jacques Dugast who sees a need to discern "une dimension européenne, afin de dépasser les représentations passionnelles qui animent souvent les comportements identitaires collectifs" (80).

The Goethean ideal of *Weltliteratur* comes in for a good deal of rethinking. It is critiqued as a culturally specific — and thus a culturally exclusive — category by Marián Gálik (102), who instead proposes the concept of "interliterariness" as a rationale for comparatist study, with its focus on trans-ethnic, trans-national, and ultimately on "geoliterary development as a whole." (Supposedly, the Bible's "high level of interliterariness" enabled it to become "the 'book of books' in Western literature" [97-98]). And instead of prophesying a global literature that would supersede