Matija Murko's Research on the South Slavic Epic Tradition and Czechoslovakian Slavistics

Sylva Fischerová

Charles University, Faculty of Arts, Institute of Greek and Latin Studies, Nám. Jana Palacha 1/2, 116 38 Prague 1, Czech Republic
https://orcid.org/0000-0001-9554-223X
sylva.fischerova@ff.cuni.cz

This paper, devoted to Matija Murko's research on the South Slavic epic tradition, focuses primarily on relationships and facts hitherto unknown or only partially known. These include, for example, the role of Gilbert Murray and the Berlin conference of 1908 as an important impulse for Murko's further research, the fate of the wax cylinders from Murko's trips in the 1930s, and the Czech typescript of his Cesty za národní epikou srbsko-charvátskou v letech 1930–1932 *(published in 1951 in translation as* Tragom srpsko-hrvatske narodne epike: putovanja u godinama 1930–1932*). It also brings to light previously unpublished documents: the testimony of the diary of Murko's wife from their stay in Paris in 1928; the article from* Borba*, "Američki učenjak o jugoslavenskim narodnim pjesmama," which suggests that, probably toward the end of his life, Murko acknowledged that extensive research had been conducted by other explorers in the field of the South Slavic epic tradition in the Balkans as well. There is also the problematic testimony from the archives of the Czechoslovak secret police, introducing Roman Jakobson as having attended Murko's lectures after his arrival in Prague (as a part of Soviet mission) in 1920. The inspiring and amicable milieu of interwar Prague is also presented, as well as Murko's cooperation with major figures in Czech Slavistics. Just as important, however, is what did not happen—such as a meeting between Murko and Avdo Međedović in Bijelo Polje in 1924, or an unpublished book of Murko's works in English translation, planned by J. M. Foley.*

Keywords: comparative literature / oral tradition / South Slavic epic poetry / Murko, Matija / Czechoslovakian Slavistics

In this paper, I will focus on Matija Murko's research into the South Slavic epic tradition, beginning with his involvement in the *Das Volkslied in Österreich* project and concluding with his work *Cesty za národní epikou srbsko-charvátskou v letech 1930–1932* (Croatian translation: *Tragom*

srpsko-hrvatske narodne epike: putovanja u godinama 1930–1932 [*In the Footsteps of the Serbo-Croatian Folk Epic: Travels in the Years 1930–1932*], 1951; hereafter cited as *Cesty*), particularly in connection with the work of major figures in Czechoslovak Slavistics at the time.[1]

Das Volkslied in Österreich

During his tenure at the University of Graz, which began in 1902, Matija Murko[2] became involved in the extensive project *Das Volkslied in Österreich* (*The Folksong in Austria*), initiated at the beginning of the twentieth century by Universal-Edition L. L. C. of Vienna and later financed and organized by the Austrian Ministry of Culture and Education. The head of the Ministry at the time was Wilhelm August Ritter von Hartel, a classical philologist and professor at the University of Vienna (1839–1907), who served as head of the Ministerium für Kultus und Unterricht from 1900 to 1905. Being of Moravian origin, von Hartel was sympathetic to a project of this kind.[3] In 1902, he issued a resolution to all governorships, recommending the initiative to educational authorities, particularly teachers' institutes, music schools, music societies, and individual collectors, with a call to gather folk songs (Murko, "Veliká sbírka" 138). Murko initially served on the Slovenian committee under the leadership of Karel Štrekelj, acting as his deputy.[4] After Štrekelj's death in 1912, Murko became head of the committee. This monumental—and ultimately unfinished—project of a fading monarchy is described in detail by Murko in his study, first published in Slovenian and later in Czech translation as "Veliká sbírka slovinských lidových písní s nápěvy" ("A Large Collection of Slovenian Folk Songs with Melodies").

[1] This article further develops my previous research (see Fischerová, "*Habent sua fata*" and "Matija Murko").

[2] Murko mentions the beginnings of his interest in folk poetry already during his gymnasium studies in Ptuj (Serbian songs by Vuk Karadžić), as well as later interest in Russian *byliny* during his stay in Russia, etc. He also greatly appreciates the work of his predecessor Luka Marjanović (Murko, *Cesty* 1).

[3] It is worth noting that von Hartel was one of those who—together with Vatroslav Jagić and Richard Heinzel—proposed the creation of the Vienna Phonogrammarchiv, which a few years later was of great help to Murko and his fieldwork on the South Slavic epic tradition (Wünsch 246).

[4] The Slovenian working committee had sixty-two members, divided into eight collecting divisions according to the areas where the Slovenian population lived. Each collecting committee had its field workers—collectors, for whom Karel Štrekelj wrote the basic principles of collecting and a questionnaire (Doležán 24).

There were, naturally, many collaborators (among whom Murko particularly praises Franc Kramar), but it was not until 1913 that a phonograph was acquired for the project. In the end, the collection included more than 11,000 songs—specifically, 11,159 *napjeva* (Murko, "Veliká sbírka" 174). However, the outbreak of war and the subsequent collapse of the monarchy changed the situation. Murko reports that the *napjeva* are stored in the Ethnographic Museum in Ljubljana. He also notes that "among the successor states, the Czechoslovak Republic is the best organized" (153), praising both the establishment of the Státní ústav pro lidovou píseň (State Institute for Folk Song) and the fact that the results of the work of the Czech and Moravian committees were published after the war. He repeatedly highlights the contributions of Otakar Hostinský and Leoš Janáček, who were central to the work of the Czech (Hostinský) and Moravian (Janáček) committees.[5] Leoš Janáček also resolved the debate regarding the format of the books to be published: he proposed two editions, one in the language of the respective nation, and another that included a German translation, an introduction, indexes, and explanatory notes (Doležán 27). It was only in the second half of the twentieth century that the Slovenian Matica began publishing the series *Slovenske ljudske pesmi* (*Slovenian Folk Songs*), which continues to be published today under the auspices of the Glasbenonarodopisni inštitut ZRC SAZU (Institute of Music and National History of the Slovenian Academy of Sciences and Arts; see Doležán 31).

After many decades, the Austrian portion of the project (i.e., the songs sung mostly in German on Austrian territory) began to be published in Austria over the course of the past thirty years, under the title *Corpus Musicae Popularis Austriacae* (COMPA). The first volume, *Volksmusik in Niederösterreich, St. Pölten und Umgebung*, appeared in 1992, followed by *Steyerische Tänze* (1993), *Geistliche Lieder aus der Weinviertler Singtradition* (1994), and others. These include *Spricanje:*

[5] The project *Das Volkslied in Österreich, Lidová píseň v Rakousku* (in the Czech lands since 1905) constitutes a key event for the study of folk songs in Bohemia, Moravia, and Silesia. From this year on (when an order was given for the foundation of work committees) began the systematic and organized collecting, publishing and scientific analyzing of folk songs, instrumental music and dances, of the Czechs as well as the Germans. At the same time began the history of the institution that through a gradual transformation came to the current Institute of Ethnology of the Czech Academy of Sciences (Státní ústav pro lidovou píseň since 1919). In the period of 1905–1918, many thousands of items were collected and the phonographic recordings made. The sound recordings were digitalized in the last decades, treated with modern technologies and published (see Hostinský; Tyllner).

das Totenabschiedslied der Kroaten im Burgenland (1999), *Sprüche, Spiele und Lieder der Kinder* (2004) and *Sonderband: das Volkslied in Österreich* (*Neudruck des Probebandes aus 1918)* (2004).[6]

Among those who participated in the project was the Czech folklorist and artist Ludvík Kuba, a man of many talents—a painter and a well-trained musician—who conducted research on Serbo-Croatian territory (as well as in other regions) at the end of the nineteenth and the beginning of the twentieth century. Kuba was a close friend of Murko; they met in Vienna in 1892 and remained friends for many years (Kuba, *Zaschlá paleta* 231). Murko referred to him as "the best expert on Slavic folk song" (Murko, *Cesty* 11–12). Their mutual correspondence is archived by the Literární archiv Památníku národního písemnictví (Literary Archive of the Museum of Czech Literature) in Prague. Kuba was also in contact with Štrekelj, but in the end he published the musical notations of the Slovenian songs he had collected as part of his own monumental project *Slovanstvo ve svých zpěvech* (*The Slavs in Their Songs*), which was printed between 1884 and 1928 (see also Kuba, *Pjesme*).[7] Some of these notations were not published until the 1950s, when the first volumes of Milman Parry's and Albert B. Lord's research on South Slavic epic songs appeared, with the late Béla Bartók serving as editor of the musical portion. Bartók praised Kuba's work highly for its thoroughness and precision.[8]

Berlin conference, Wörter und Sachen, and Academy of Sciences in Vienna

However, Murko's engagement in the *Volkslied in Österreich* project—as a supervisor, not as a field worker—marked only the beginning of his research. In 1906, he wrote an extensive review for the *Archiv für*

[6] For more information on the project, see Österreichische Volksliedwerk.

[7] Kuba also published the songs he had collected from Czechoslovakia, Lusatia, Ukraine, Russia, Belorussia, and Poland in the original languages and in Czech translation. The first volume of his book *Cesty za slovanskou písní, 1885–1929* (*Journeys to Slavic Song, 1885–1929*), which has a similar title to that of Murko, was published by the Slavic Institute, under the auspices of Murko in 1933. Two years later, a volume devoted to the Slavic South was published, again by the Slavic Institute.

[8] Kuba's work, according to Bartók, "towers high above that of Kuhać [his predecessor], and his contribution of approx. 1,400 melodies to the stock … is indeed invaluable, in spite of some idiosyncrasies in his notation. He has a keen sense of observation for certain very characteristic phenomena which almost entirely escaped the attention of Kuhać (line or syllable interruption, 'swallowing' the last syllable of a line)" (qtd. in Parry, *Serbo-Croatian Folk Songs* 26; see also Stanislav).

slavische Philologie titled "Die serbokroatische Volkspoesie in der deutschen Literatur" ("Serbo-Croatian Folk Poetry in German Literature"), which, as Murko later reflected in his memoirs, was

> of fundamental importance because it shows what opinions I had formed about Serbo-Croatian national poetry from literary sources before my travels in search of South Slavic national poetry. From literary sources I also studied the national poetry of the Bosnian Mohammedans, who call themselves Muslims, and gave a lecture on it at the International Historical Congress in Berlin in 1908. The lecture attracted a lot of attention, especially from Germanists and Romanists, and I received an enquiry from the classical philologist G. Murray from England, asking where he could read more on the subject. This interest gave me the impulse to further study national epics, first Muslim (Mohammedan) and then Christian in Bosnia and Herzegovina. (Murko, *Paměti* 134)[9]

The "classical philologist G. Murray," who expressed such keen interest in the subject, could only have been Gilbert Murray (1866–1957), the prominent British classical scholar who served as Regius Professor at Oxford from 1908 to 1936. A leading intellectual figure in the first half of the twentieth century, Murray was also active in public life; a friend of George Bernard Shaw, he became one of the founders of the League of Nations, and an authority in his field.[10] Thus, the Berlin conference emerges as the first decisive moment for Murko's further studies on South Slavic folk songs.[11]

Not long afterward, Murko began his research trips. In 1909, while collaborating with the journal *Wörter und Sachen*, he travelled to Bosnia and Herzegovina, where he met and interviewed the Muslim singer Bečir Islamović—one of the well-known performers whose songs were included in the folk song edition published by Matica hrvatska. Murko worked with him for a week, and it was during this time that he first observed how the singer would modify and, to some extent, recreate his songs depending on his mood, environment, and the moment in which he performed (Murko, *Paměti* 136).[12] However, as Murko himself admits,

---

[9] Unless stated otherwise, all translations are by the author.

[10] E. R. Dodds always remembered Murray's lessons on the *Bacchae* as the most stimulating intellectual experience in his student days at Oxford (qtd. in Scalera McClintock). Murray's editions of Euripides' tragedies are still in use. For more about Murray, see Stray.

[11] The conference contribution later appeared as "Die Volksepik der bosnischen Mohammedaner" ("The Folk Epic of the Bosnian Muslims") in *Zeitschrift des Vereins für Volkskunde*.

[12] For more on Murko's early trips to the Balkans, see Talam and Miholić in this issue.

> I did not commit myself to the systematic study of the national epic until two years later, when I unsuccessfully applied for support from the Ministry of Cult and Education for a trip to Russia to study the manuscripts of the *Tales of the Seven Sages* that had been discovered in the meantime. I turned to the Balkan Commission of the Vienna Academy [Kaiserliche Akademie der Wissenschaften in Wien], which only sent linguists from among the Slavists to study Serbo-Croatian and Bulgarian languages. My request that representatives of other scientific disciplines should also receive travel support was granted, and so, at the suggestion or at least with the consent of V. Jagić, I was the first to receive such support for the study of Serbo-Croatian epic. In 1912, I travelled through some parts of Croatia, north-western and central Bosnia, and the adjacent parts of northern Dalmatia. I was unable to travel to eastern Bosnia in 1913, as cholera had appeared there. So I went to Herzegovina, where I sought out as many Muslim, Catholic and Orthodox singers as I could, and listened to their singing, but in addition I also learned many things from them and from the audience about the singers themselves and about what, when, where and how they sing, how they change old songs and how they create new ones, especially in Herzegovina and Montenegro, where epic life is still preserved in the borderlands. A very important question was also how epic songs disappear. (136–137)

The results of these research trips—Murko's *Berichte* for the Academy and its Phonogrammarchiv (four in total: two from 1913 and two from 1915)—stand as examples of meticulous fieldwork, though not without their limitations. Murko employed a parlograph of German manufacture, along with a dictaphone that recorded onto wax discs. The operation of this equipment was later described by Milman Parry, who, after conducting his own experiments with it, ultimately found the machine unsatisfactory:

> The singing, which itself brings out the vowels and obscures the consonants, was completely drowned out by the sound of the gusle. It was only when I had an electrical phonographic apparatus with a device for cutting down the low frequencies of the vowels and of the gusle and a high-pitched microphone which could be placed near the singer's mouth and directed away from the head of the gusle that I was able to get transcribable recordings. (qtd. in Lord, "General Introduction" 7)

Murko was fully aware of the limitations of his technical equipment, a point he repeatedly emphasized in his reports to the Academy of Sciences in Vienna. The Academy had provided him with the phonographic apparatus, along with a set of instructions outlining how the recording process should be conducted. First, the text of the song was to be written down prior to recording; then the apparatus was to be tested; only after these steps was the actual recording to take place

(Murko, *Poésie* 16–17). In his report, Murko explicitly laments the inadequacy of the equipment for his purposes:

> [O]n a disc one could record from 20 to 30 decasyllabic lines at most. But since a song, its poem and accompaniment by a primitive musical instrument (tambura … or … gusle) also demand time and space, for one song with a scope of about 1,000 lines one would then need at least 50 discs but in most cases even more. (Murko, "Bericht über phonographische Aufnahmen epischer" 1–2)

Thus, Murko adds, recording a single long epic song would have required all 350 discs that the Phonogrammarchiv—the first institution of its kind in Europe—had at its disposal for all of its expeditions![13] Nevertheless, Murko endeavored, within these constraints, to proceed as effectively as possible. He chose to record various versions of the opening lines of the same song performed by the same singer (typically ranging from 30 to 40 lines), in order to trace changes and variations. He also focused on different versions sung by various performers, including women singers. All of this led him to the conclusion that a true singer is an improviser, continuously re-creating the song anew from the traditional material.

In my view, however, the recordings themselves were not at the very center of Murko's interest. The primary goal—*le but essential* of his undertaking, as he would later write in his French monograph—was to understand how national epic poetry lives: who its singers are, to whom, how, and when they perform; whether new songs still arise; and why folk epic disappears and dies (Murko, *Poésie* 8). For these reasons, he also created a rich photographic archive, documenting individual singers, musical instruments, and other details of what he repeatedly referred to as *la vie épique*—the epic life. At that time, life in certain regions of Bosnia and Herzegovina and elsewhere was indeed quite particular, marked by blood feuds and constant danger. The third and final part of his *La poésie populaire épique en Yougoslavie au début du XXe siècle* (*Epic Folk Poetry in Yugoslavia at the Beginning of the Twentieth Century*), titled "La vie épique" ("The Epic Life"), is devoted to exploring this complex and often perilous world (52ff.). I believe this ethnographic and human-centered approach deeply influenced Milman Parry and the way he conducted his "conversations" (*pričanja*) with the

[13] At that time, the activities of the Phonogrammarchiv and its radius were quite extensive—it included (apart from Europe) New Guinea, India, the African Kalahari, Morocco, the Caucasus, Nubia, Greenland, etc. The collection *Varia* was also specific: it included voices of animals, children, and eunuchs (Graf 24–25).

singers, which are included in the volume *Serbocroatian Heroic Songs* and serve as a first-class testimony to the lived experience of this epic tradition and its practitioners.

Unsurprisingly, Murko's *Berichte*—his reports on these research trips—attracted well-deserved attention, as contemporary responses clearly show.[14] In his 1916 review, the leading Czech Slavist Jiří Horák wrote that Murko's sober and well-supported accounts disqualify many prevailing assumptions, overturn fixed opinions (which were often based solely on printed versions of the songs), and offer a wealth of new information about the content and form of the national epic and its singers. According to Horák, these reports "open a new epoch in the research of the South-Slavic epic" (Horák 354).

Murko in Prague and in Paris; research trips in 1924, 1927, 1930–1932

Murko was able to return to fieldwork only after the war, when he moved to Prague and became the first professor of South Slavic languages at the Faculty of Arts, Charles University. He was also a co-founder of the Slavonic Institute and of the journal *Slavia*, a publication he initiated following the closure of the *Archiv für slavische Philologie* (Zelenka, "Matija Murko" 37).

In the 1920s, Murko undertook two research trips to the Balkans. His 1924 journey was particularly adventurous, especially in the Novopazarski sandžak (the Sanjak of Novi Pazar). As he recounts in his memoirs, he received considerable attention from military and other official circles during the trip. According to his own words, had he known in advance what awaited him—due to the post-war turmoil and, above all, the lingering effects of blood feuds—he would not have undertaken the journey at all (Murko, *Paměti* 187). It is also worth noting that he received no financial support for this expedition.[15]

During this trip, Murko also visited Bijelo Polje, the village where, a few years later, Parry and Lord would discover their most celebrated

[14] The first report in 1913 attracted the most attention (five responses in all), but new responses followed each time in journals, such as *Listy filologické*, *Časopis pro moderní filologii*, *Národopisný věstník československý*, *Časopis vlasteneckého muzejního spolku v Olomouci*, and *Lubljanski zvon* (see Bečka and Zelenková 127–128).

[15] As Vladimir Murko, who accompanied his father on this trip (as a high school graduate), points out, his father had to learn to ride a horse at the age of 63, although he could not forget the domestic mare that almost trampled him to death in his youth (V. Murko, "Vzpomínky" 467).

singer—"our Yugoslav Homer," Avdo Međedović. A peasant farmer of about sixty, Međedović was capable of singing much longer and more stylistically refined songs than any other singer. In Bijelo Polje, Murko especially recalled the 86-year-old Hasan Ferizović, who, despite an invitation from the regional governor, refused to come to him, so Murko had to visit him at home (Murko, *Paměti* 190). As Murko frequently pointed out, the search for singers in the localities was always difficult. It required the cooperation of local residents, including the gendarmerie, and was often unsuccessful—even when the singers, as was later discovered, were living in the very same village. According to Vladimir Murko, it was particularly difficult to locate Mohammedan (i.e., Muslim) singers, likely due to their mistrust of the new Serbian and later Yugoslav authorities in regions that had been ruled by the Turks until 1912 (V. Murko, "Vzpomínky" 468). Hence, Murko and Avdo never met. What might have happened if they had met remains a matter of pure speculation (see Murko, *Cesty* 40–43).

In 1927, Murko visited Herzegovina and Dalmatia, continuing his stay in Makarska (see Doležán 52–53). These journeys provided him with valuable material for his subsequent works and lectures.

In 1928, another decisive moment occurred when Murko delivered a series of lectures at the Sorbonne, dedicated to South Slavic epic poetry and his fieldwork. Milman Parry, who was completing his doctorate at the Sorbonne,[16] saw the poster for Murko's lectures, as he later recalled, but at the time he could recognize in them "no great meaning for myself. However, Professor Murko, doubtless due to some remark of M. Meillet, was present at my *soutenance* and at that time M. Meillet as a member of my jury pointed out with his usual ease and clarity this failing in my two books. 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 in itself and to the heroic poems of the South Slavs" (Parry, *Making* 439).[17]

Among the preserved materials in Murko's estate at the Literary Archive of the Museum of Czech Literature, as described by Helena Mikulová, is a diary from Murko's stay in Paris in May 1928—the date

[16] The thesis was published as *L'épithète traditionnelle dans Homère: essai sur un problème du style homérique*.

[17] Let us add that Meillet himself had compiled a dictionary of Serbo-Croatian and for several years directed the *Revue des études slaves* (Vet 268); of great importance was also his study devoted to the Indo-European origin of the Greek meters discussing, among other topics, the formulaic nature of Homeric verse (see Meillet; Fischerová, "*Habent sua fata*" 78–79).

of the Sorbonne lectures (Mikulová 196). In fact, the diary is written by his wife, Jela Murko, in Slovenian. It includes accounts of visits to the Louvre and the Jardin du Luxembourg, meetings with Meillet, and a short note on Murko's lecture "L'état actuel de la poésie nationale yougoslave" ("The Current State of Yugoslav Folk Poetry"): "[Matija] received great applause." In the following sentence, she mentions that a gramophone recording of the singer Tanasije Vučić was played during the lecture. The lectures were later published as *La poésie populaire épique en Yougoslavie au début du XXe siècle*.

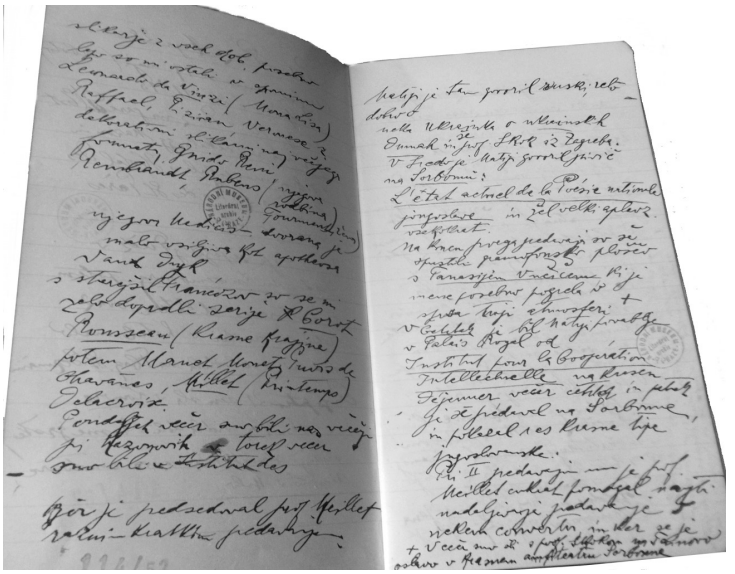


Figure 1: Jela Murko's diary from Paris, Matija Murko Fonds, Literary Archive of the Museum of Czech Literature.

As for Murko's expeditions to the Balkans in the early 1930s (1930, 1931, 1932), I consider them of great importance. Upon closer examination, one might say that Murko and Parry almost switched places—both travelling through some of the same regions. For instance, the singer Salih Ugljanin was recorded by both researchers. Murko documented Ugljanin's performance of "Dojčić kapetan iz Sinja oteo ljubu Mujovu" in both Serbian and Albanian, and Ugljanin's bilingualism made him a subject of particular interest (Murko, *Tragom* 1: 93–94). Thus, although Murko has often been referred to as Parry's "forerunner" (as noted by Kweku A. Garbrah), in some respects they were closer to co-runners!

Both Murko and Parry strove to secure the best available recording equipment. Murko first contacted the Vienna Archive and the phonetic laboratory in Prague, and in April 1930, he travelled to Germany to visit the Phonogrammarchiv in Berlin and the Telefunkenstation in Potsdam. That same year, he acquired two old Edison phonographs, which he considered the only truly portable devices. With two phonographs at his disposal and his own sons, Vladimir and Stanislav, taking turns as assistants (he was seventy!), Murko was finally able to record longer songs, something that had not previously been possible. Nevertheless, he still preferred recording only the beginnings of songs, with some exceptions (2: 533ff.; see also Murko, "Zpráva r. 1930," "Zpráva r. 1931," and "Zpráva r. 1932").

It is worth noting that during the 1930 trip, Murko was accompanied—at least for a time—by Frank Wollman, who was then working on his study of Njegoš's *deseterec* (Murko, *Paměti* 203). This arrangement was not coincidental. Murko, nearing retirement, needed to find a suitable successor to lead the Department of South Slavic Languages and Literatures, and Frank Wollman, then a professor at the universities of Bratislava and Brno, appeared to be a promising candidate. However, objections were raised, particularly because Wollman had not published any work on the South Slavic languages. Murko himself drew attention to this shortcoming, and this was the reason Wollman accompanied him that summer. Eventually, Wollman completed his study on Njegoš, which Murko then passed to Roman Jakobson for review—and the response was favorable (203–204).[18]

Speaking of Roman Jakobson: his Czechoslovak "period"—arguably foundational for his entire academic career—began in July 1920, when he arrived in Prague as part of the Soviet Red Cross mission. He subsequently worked for the Soviet embassy, while also studying at the German University in Prague, where he earned his doctorate in 1930 with the thesis *Über den Versbau der serbokroatischen Volksepen* (*On the Verse Structure of Serbo-Croatian Folk Epics*; see Kučera 872; Burda). In 1926, he co-founded the Cercle linguistique de Prague, the Prague Linguistic Circle. As Henry Kučera notes, "the post-war influx of new literary and cultural trends from both the West and the East allowed many new ideas to flourish freely in the Czech capital. All this was an ideal milieu for one of Jakobson's cosmopolitanism and intellectual scope" (Kučera 872).

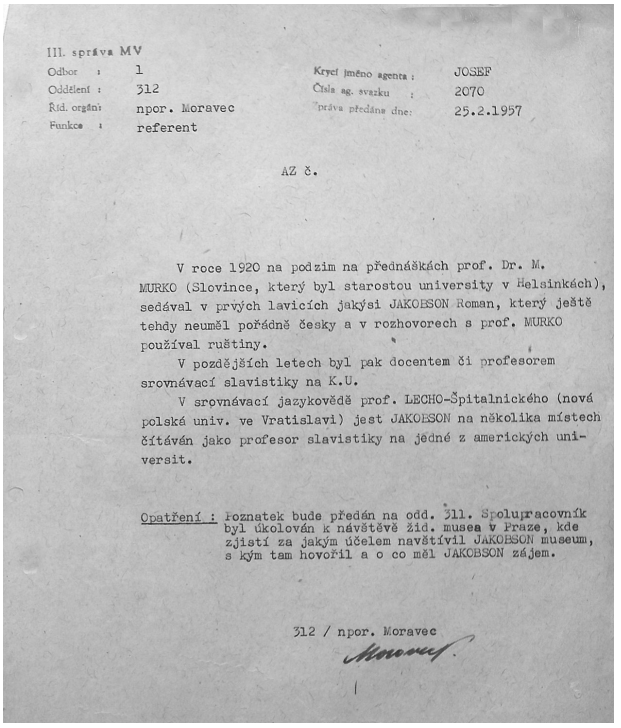
[18] For more details about Murko and Wollman, see Zelenka, "Matija Murko and Structural Aesthetics" in this issue.

By sheer coincidence, I came across a curious and unexpected document in the archives of the Czechoslovak Secret Police (StB, State Security). In 1957, many years after fleeing Czechoslovakia in 1939 to escape Nazism—first finding refuge in Scandinavia and then in the United States—Jakobson visited Czechoslovakia again. His stay was closely monitored by the secret police, who (wrongly) suspected him of being an American agent. The resulting surveillance files, compiled under the operation codenamed "Akce BOR" ("Action BOR"), are now preserved in the archives.

Jakobson visited Czechoslovakia twice that year: once in January–February and again in the autumn. According to Robert Dittmann, it remains unclear who exactly initiated the operation, and the surveillance did not begin until roughly ten days after Jakobson's arrival in late January (Dittmann, "Jakobsonova" 22). On 4 February, Jakobson reportedly met Jiří Weil,[19] probably during a visit to the Jewish Museum (36). As for the anonymous testimony preserved in the files, claiming that "in the autumn of 1920, at the lectures of Prof. Dr. M. Murko (a Slovenian who was the mayor of the University of Helsinki), a certain Jakobson Roman, who did not yet speak Czech properly and used Russian in his conversations with Prof. Murko,[20] sat in the first rows of seats" (Akce BOR)—its reliability is debatable. Like many documents of this kind, it should be handled with caution. After all, it is just as credible as the claim that Murko "was the mayor of the University of Helsinki."

[19] Jiří Weil was a Czech writer of Jewish origin, author of the first testimony (in the form of a novel) about the political processes in the Soviet Russia in the 1930s *Moskva–hranice* (*Moscow–The Border*; the book was translated into German, Italian, Dutch, Russian, Hungarian), of a testimony about the life of Jews in the Protectorate Böhmen und Mähren *Život s hvězdou* (*A Life with a Star*; translated into German, English, French, Polish, Dutch, Italian, Swedish, Catalan), and other works. He was one of the few who managed to fake his own death, then hide and survive.

[20] Murko himself recalls that his lectures were attended by many Russians at that time, probably because he could converse with them in Russian (Murko, *Paměti* 167).



III. správa MV
Odbor : 1 Krycí jméno agenta : JOSEF
Oddělení : 312 Čísla ag. svazku : 2070
Říd. orgán: npor. Moravec Správa předána dne: 25.2.1957
Funkce : referent

AZ č.

V roce 1920 na podzim na přednáškách prof. Dr. M. MURKO (Slovince, který byl starostou university v Helsinkách), sedával v prvých lavicích jakýsi JAKOBSON Roman, který ještě tehdy neuměl pořádně česky a v rozhovorech s prof. MURKO používal ruštiny.

V pozdějších letech byl pak docentem či profesorem srovnávací slavistiky na K.U.

V srovnávací jazykovědě prof. LECHO-Špitalnického (nová polská univ. ve Vratislavi) jest JAKOBSON na několika místech čítáván jako profesor slavistiky na jedné z amerických universit.

Opatření : Poznatek bude předán na odd. III. Spolupracovník byl ukolován k návštěvě žid. musea v Praze, kde zjistí za jakým účelem navštívil JAKOBSON museum, s kým tam hovořil a o co měl JAKOBSON zájem.

312 / npor. Moravec

Figure 2: Akce BOR, surveillance file, State Security Service Central Office Fonds, Security Services Archive.

What follows, is the reaction of (probably) Jiří Weil, then an employee of the Jewish Museum: "Yes, Jakobson was here, he certainly couldn't have attended Murko's lectures with you in the autumn of 1920, age would agree, perhaps he's hiding it. He stopped here to talk to Muneles, he is preparing a work on Czech words in early medieval Hebrew writings, a matter of far-reaching importance, etc." (Akce BOR).[21]

In any case, whether or not Jakobson attended Murko's lectures in the autumn of 1920, it is clear that the two were later in contact in Prague. A few pieces of their correspondence are preserved in Murko's estate as well as in the archive of the journal *Slavia*, housed in the Literary Archive of the Museum of Czech Literature (Mikulová 192; Zelenka, "Matija Murko" 36). Such a connection was, of course, only natural: they shared common interests, including Slavic (folk) poetry, orality, and the mechanisms underpinning oral traditions. Jakobson and Petr Bogatyrev had already contributed, in 1922, to the first issue

[21] For more information on Akce BOR, see Vévoda; Dittmann, "Příjezd."

of the newly founded *Slavia* with a survey on Slavic philology in contemporary Russia (see Jakobson and Bogatyrev).

Another joint work by the duo appeared in 1929: the article "Die Folklore als eine besondere Form des Schaffens" ("Folklore as a Special Form of Creativity"). This piece deserves closer attention, both for its theoretical significance and for the responses it provoked, which are revealing of the intellectual climate of the time. In the article, Bogatyrev and Jakobson apply the Saussurean distinction between *langue* and *parole* to folklore. Oral performances, rooted in an inherited tradition, are understood as a kind of *langue*, a collective system, whereas the poet—operating within the literary paradigm—produces individually distinct instances of *parole*. The nature of oral literature, they argue, is fundamentally different from that of written literature; and for that reason, our approach to oral texts must be thoroughly reconsidered. "So werden die gewohnten Vorstellungen egozentrisch auch ins Gebiet der Folklore projiziert," they assert—pointing to the persistent projection of individualistic literary values onto collective oral traditions (Jakobson, *Slavic Epic Studies* 5). How groundbreaking these ideas were at the time is perhaps best illustrated by the review published in 1929 by the prominent Czech Slavist Jiří Polívka. At the close of his brief and cautious commentary, he clings to a "traditional" stance, maintaining that the essential difference between oral and written literature lies simply in the anonymity of the former: that we do not know the author's name (Polívka 281).[22]

According to Murko, Jakobson, along with Gerhard Gesemann and Gustav Becking, both professors at the German University in Prague,[23] listened to his phonograms from the 1930 trip a year later, as part of their work on the metrics of South Slavic folk poetry. All of them were acquainted primarily on the diction of Tanasije Vučić, the renowned singer whom Gesemann had brought to Prague—and later to Berlin—from Montenegro.[24]

[22] Lord, however, years later in his *The Singer of Tales* rejected the distinction proposed by Bogatyrev and Jakobson and argued that in the case of oral epic performance, "we have something that is neither *langue* nor *parole*, but some third form"—or, as he proposes, inspired by Lévi-Strauss, that it is both *langue* and *parole* at the same time (Lord, *Singer* 279–280n7).

[23] Gerhard Gesemann (1888–1948) was a German Slavist and folklorist, with an interest in the culture of the South Slavs, who also made phonographic recordings of Bosnian music. Gustav Becking (1894–1945), a respected German musicologist, highly appreciated Murko's work, as is clear from his correspondence with Erich von Hornbostel. In one of his letters, he writes (about Murko): "The old man is extraordinary" (qtd. in Kunej et al. 39n13).

[24] It is also worth noting that Vučić was received by President Masaryk, an encounter which would later inspire one of Vučić's songs (Murko, *Cesty* 200).

Murko's magnum opus

Murko had intended to begin work on a major book devoted to his final research trips focused on the South Slavic epic soon after retiring from his position at Charles University in 1931. However, his plans were interrupted when he was asked by his colleagues to assume the role of chair of the Slavonic Institute. In his memoirs, he reflects on this moment:

> This offer went against all my intentions, because I wanted to use the last years of my life to complete my various works and especially to write a great work on the Serbo-Croatian national epic. These reasons did not help me, however, and Prof. Niederle [his predecessor as head of the institute] exclaimed in a haughty voice: "The presidency of the Slavonic Institute is a post that is not to be refused." (Murko, *Paměti* 208)

On 31 May 1932, Murko was officially appointed head of the Institute—a role that would keep him fully engaged for several years. With the arrival of the Nazis, the position of the Slavonic Institute grew precarious. Following a controversy with Wilhelm Saure, the rector of the German University in Prague, Murko eventually resigned from his post. This conflict is well documented in a letter Murko wrote to Saure on 3 March 1941, discovered years later in Jiří Horák's estate and published in a special issue of *Slavia* dedicated to Murko (see Bečka, "Postoj"). Only then did Murko finally have the "time enough" to devote himself fully to completing his magnum opus. Nearly eighty years old, he was no longer able to write the work by hand and dictated most of the typescript. This text—undoubtedly the most valuable part of his estate held in the Czech Republic—is preserved in the Literary Archive of the Museum of Czech Literature in Prague (actually in Litoměřice, where the archives are located).

Cesty za národní epikou srbsko-charvátskou v letech 1930–1932 is a typescript with partial pagination (chapters are individually numbered). The diplomatic transcript runs to roughly 700 standard pages; it contains numerous additions and marginal insertions, but it remains legible throughout.

The first five chapters of *Cesty* were written by Murko himself and edited by Dr. Jan Svoboda, secretary of the Slavonic Institute. However, as Murko notes in his memoirs: "I have already dictated the introductory summary of the fifth chapter to the editor Rudolf Lužík, as well as the largest part of the book. The full text was checked by Prof. Rudolf Havel from the Dictionary of the Czech Language, who made only minor changes" (Murko, *Paměti* 228). During the war,

Murko's German colleague Gerhard Gesemann considered publishing a German translation of *Cesty*—there was even a Ukrainian translator working on it—but Murko objected. The book should be published in Czech, he explained, because the research trips had been sponsored by Czech institutions; and, he added, "Czech literature has room for a work like this" (237).

Despite this, the book never appeared in its original Czech version. This was likely due to the political situation following the Communist coup d'état of 1948, after which the Slavonic Institute lost its publishing rights, and Yugoslavia became a kind of ideological enemy (S. Wollman, "Osobní vzpomínky" 10). Probably for these reasons, Murko decided to publish a Croatian translation instead—prepared by his daughter Jelka Arneri together with Ljudevit Jonke—which eventually appeared in Zagreb in 1951. The second volume of the Croatian edition includes a complete inventory of the phonograms recorded by Murko and his sons during the 1930s (a total of 349; see Murko, *Tragom* 2: 540–555), accompanied by rich photographic documentation.

The fate of these phonograms is a mysterious and compelling story deserving closer attention. The earliest recordings, made for the Vienna Phonogrammarchiv, have a clearer trajectory: they number 82 in total (see V. Murko, "Sudbina" 115) and were incorporated into the archive, with some galvanized and now available on CD (see Lechleitner and Liebl).[25]

The recordings from Murko's 1930s fieldwork, however, had a more complicated history. According to Murko, during the war a selection of these cylinders was sent from Prague to Berlin for galvanization. He writes: "In Berlin, the Russian Igor Arbatsky promised that he had the tools for galvanizing, so Prof. Gesemann sent him 50 cylinders of my choice and his own, but the material was burned in the air raids on Berlin. But there were still nearly 200 cylinders left to be studied" (Murko, *Paměti* 232).[26]

The fate of these remaining 200 cylinders became tightly intertwined with that of the Slavonic Institute itself. In 1943, by decree of the Reich Protector, the Institute's assets were transferred to the

[25] In the course of the Second World War, Murko's original wax discs were destroyed (together with all other recordings housed by the archive), but the metal copies (nickel-plated copper negatives) and the related protocol documents survived (Kunej et al. 37; see also Ziegler, *Wachszylinder* and "List."

[26] According to Vladimir Murko, the total number of the cylinders was 53 and they were destroyed during a street fight in 1945 (V. Murko, "Sudbina" 118). Arbatsky is designated by him as *Tontechniker* and Russian émigré.

Reinhard Heydrich Foundation. The Institute was forced to vacate its headquarters in the Lobkowicz Palace on Vlašská Street in Lesser Town; its holdings were redistributed across several locations—the St. Thomas Monastery in Lesser Town, the building that now houses the French Embassy, and the Nostitz Palace (Bečka, "Slovanský ústav v letech" 362). The Lobkowicz Palace had been requisitioned by K. H. Frank to serve as an Offiziersheim, or officers' quarters for the German military. Ultimately, the Heydrich Foundation proved largely inactive after 1944 due to the departure of its scientific personnel to the front. As a result, the assets of the Institute were left intact—aside from a loan of 120,000 CZK taken at the end of the war, which was later returned to the Institute (362).

After the war, the Slavonic Institute faced an uncertain and ultimately bleak future. A return to its original home in the Lobkowicz Palace was not possible, so the Institute was provisionally relocated to part of the Česká spořitelna building on Národní třída. Following the Communist takeover in 1948, the Institute was forced to change its legal status—from a public association to a state-controlled institution—and lost its independent publishing rights. Some personnel cleansing followed. In 1952, the Institute was incorporated into the newly established Czechoslovak Academy of Sciences, formed along Soviet model, and had to vacate its offices on Národní třída. It was moved into an apartment building on Valentinská Street, where it would remain until its dissolution. This relocation was carried out with great urgency to make way for the Presidium of the new Academy. As a result, much of the Institute's inventory was mishandled, damaged, or destroyed. An official complaint submitted by the Institute described the situation vividly:

> A crystal chandelier was found in a rubbish dump in the building's yard at Národní, which the department had purchased before the war for more than 30,000 CZK. The chandelier had been stored in the attic without blemish and was now found completely smashed and destroyed. It had apparently been thrown down from the second floor by a rope or even dropped. The books were lowered down the rope in buckets, having been trodden on before. It was only after the intervention of the university library representative … that the books were handled more carefully. (qtd. in Míšková 163)[27]

Slavomír Wollman, son of Murko's esteemed colleague Frank Wollman, later recalled an episode from around that time, most likely before the Institute's move to Valentinská Street in 1952:

[27] The Institute's complaint to the Presidium of the Czechoslovak Academy of Sciences was submitted on 26 October 1952 (Bečka, "Slovanský ústav a pokusy" 416).

> When Murko's book *Tragom* arrived … in then hostile Prague, we remembered its author and his collecting activities over a cup of coffee with Josef Bečka, Bohumila Zástěrová, and Bohumil Rejzek, who had worked at the Institute continuously since 1930, first as an attendant, later as a versatile technical officer with the title of curator. It was sometime in the second quarter of 1952. When it came to the sound recordings, Rejzek fished out of his bottomless cupboards a dilapidated box containing about two dozen dusty, partly broken or deformed cylinders, mostly undescribed, and said that this was all that was left. It looked pitiful, but still we immediately wondered what could be done about it. (S. Wollman, "Osobní vzpomínky" 10–11)

Coincidentally, Wollman's wife, who was on the phone with him at the very moment of this discovery, worked in the music department of Czechoslovak Radio, where a collection of historical recordings was being built up at the time. The department had access to state-of-the-art equipment and skilled sound engineers. Wollman selected the best-preserved cylinders and brought them to the radio. Nevertheless, the judgment of time was relentless: after twenty years of fluctuating storage conditions, the cylinders contained no audible material that could offer hope of future restoration. Wollman later conveyed this disappointing result to Vladimir Murko in response to his written inquiry (S. Wollman, "Osobní vzpomínky" 10–11).

The story seems curious and somewhat implausible—how could the outcome of several extensive research trips be reduced to merely twenty cylinders, even acknowledging that some were lost during the war in Berlin? Fortunately, Vladimir Murko was not one to give up easily. In his article on the fate of his father's estate, he recounts his persistent efforts to contact members of the Institute and to have the remaining cylinders transferred to Yugoslavia for proper preservation. He notes that the cylinders were brought to the Institute's "new premises" in 1955; while there, some were allegedly destroyed in a fire. (As the Institute did not acquire any new premises in 1955, this probably refers to the earlier 1952 move from Národní třída to Valentinská Street, although no mention of a fire appears in available studies or archival documents.) Vladimir Murko also records the closure of the Slavonic Institute in 1963. This information is accurate: the Institute underwent a radical reorganization that year, which effectively meant its liquidation, with deeply unfortunate consequences.[28]

[28] Historians and Byzantologists from the Slavonic Institute were transferred to the Institute of the History of European Socialist Countries (Ústav dějin evropských socialistických zemí), experts in philological and literary disciplines were incorporated into the newly formed Institute of Languages and Literatures (Ústav jazyků a literatur),

In the end, Vladimir Murko's efforts were successful—an outcome that, given the circumstances, borders on the miraculous. In 1966, the Yugoslav Academy of Sciences succeeded in acquiring the surviving cylinders. Of the original 138, 129 had not been completely destroyed and were galvanized; today, they are preserved in Zagreb (Kunej et al. 40).

Yet a question remains: where were the recordings stored in the intervening years—between the closure of the Slavonic Institute in 1963 and their eventual transfer to Yugoslavia in 1966? Were they housed at the Institute of the History of European Socialist Countries, or perhaps at the newly established Institute of Languages and Literatures? These institutions appear to be the most likely custodians, but no definitive answer has emerged. The mystery thus remains unsolvable on the basis of the available archival evidence.[29]

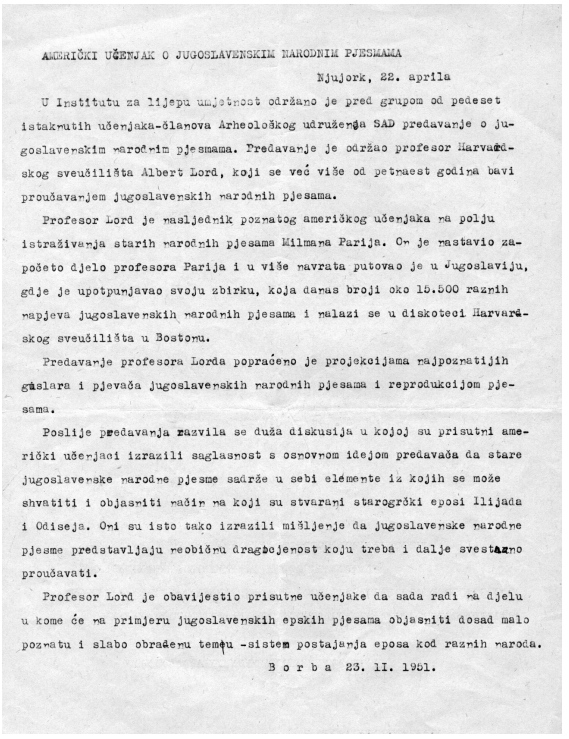
At the top of the typescript of *Cesty* held at the Literary Archive of the Museum of Czech Literature, one finds a typed transcription of a newspaper article from *Borba* (23 February 1951) entitled "Američki učenjak o jugoslavenskim narodnim pjesmama" ("American Scholar on Yugoslav Folk Songs"). The article reports on Lord's lecture at the Institut za lijepu umjetnost (Institute of Fine Arts), mentioning his fifteen years of research and the fact that a collection of approximately 15,500 different songs (*raznih napjeva*) of Yugoslav folk tradition is now housed at Harvard. Parry is also named. On the reverse side of the sheet, there is the beginning of a letter dated 5 May 1951, written in Zagreb on a typewriter—either by Murko himself or by someone close to him.[30] Murko passed away the following year, so it is reasonable to conclude that he and Lord never met in person.

---

while archaeologists and ethnographers were transferred to their respective academic institutes. Further reorganizations took place in the following years, resulting in a profound decline in Slavic studies. For more details, see Bečka, "Slovanský ústav v letech"; S. Wollman, "Osudy."

[29] However, the recordings are not the only remaining part of Murko's research. There are still Murko's notes and diaries from his research trips, which form a part of the estate, deposited for the most part in Zagreb or Ljubljana (see Talam and Miholić). Of the highest importance are the words of "A. Lord"—as he is quoted in the text—mentioned by Murko's son Vladimir in his short sketch about his and his father's joint travels in search of the South Slavic epic. According to Lord, Murko's diaries and especially his remarks, made, however, with the very special stenographic technique, the so-called Gabelsberger's system, ought to be published because they offer first-class evidence of the whole topic (V. Murko, "Vzpomínky" 465).

[30] As Josef Matl witnessed, the last letters he had received from Murko in September and December 1948 and in August 1949 were not written by Murko (Matl 230).



AMERIČKI UČENJAK O JUGOSLAVENSKIM NARODNIM PJESMAMA

Njujork, 22. aprila

U Institutu za lijepu umjetnost održano je pred grupom od pedeset istaknutih učenjaka-članova Arheološkog udruženja SAD predavanje o jugoslavenskim narodnim pjesmama. Predavanje je održao profesor Harvardskog sveučilišta Albert Lord, koji se već više od petnaest godina bavi proučavanjem jugoslavenskih narodnih pjesama.

Profesor Lord je nasljednik poznatog američkog učenjaka na polju istraživanja starih narodnih pjesama Milmana Parija. On je nastavio započeto djelo profesora Parija i u više navrata putovao je u Jugoslaviju, gdje je upotpunjavao svoju zbirku, koja danas broji oko 15.500 raznih napjeva jugoslavenskih narodnih pjesama i nalazi se u diskoteci Harvardskog sveučilišta u Bostonu.

Predavanje profesora Lorda popraćeno je projekcijama najpoznatijih gusara i pjevača jugoslavenskih narodnih pjesama i reprodukcijom pjesama.

Poslije predavanja razvila se duža diskusija u kojoj su prisutni američki učenjaci izrazili saglasnost s osnovnom idejom predavača da stare jugoslavenske narodne pjesme sadrže u sebi elemente iz kojih se može shvatiti i objasniti način na koji su stvarani starogrški eposi Ilijada i Odiseja. Oni su isto tako izrazili mišljenje da jugoslavenske narodne pjesme predstavljaju neobičnu dragocjenost koju treba i dalje sistematski proučavati.

Profesor Lord je obavijestio prisutne učenjake da sada radi na djelu u kome će na primjeru jugoslavenskih epskih pjesama objasniti dosad malo poznatu i slabo obrađenu temu - sistem postajanja eposa kod raznih naroda.

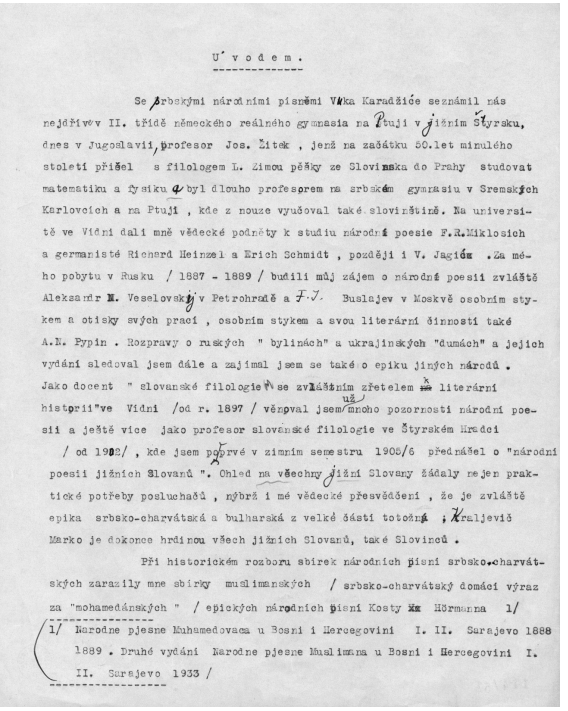
B o r b a 23. II. 1951.

Figure 3: Transcription of the article "Američki učenjak o jugoslavenskim narodnim pjesmama," Matija Murko Fonds, Literary Archive of the Museum of Czech Literature.

Tucked beneath the *Borba* transcript is a letter dated 2 June 1942, which concerns the circulation of four copies of the typescript of *Cesty*, then still a work in progress. The letter outlines where each copy should be deposited: one at the Slavonic Institute, one with Professor Gesemann, another with Professor Horák, and the last to remain in the possession of the author. Regarding the work's development, Murko explains that he is adding two chapters—"Phonographing" and "Illustrations"—to the already completed sections, noting their particular importance. The chapters still to be written include: "Form and Performance of National Epic Songs"; "Geography and History in National Songs"; "Cultural History in National Songs" (possibly to be merged with the previous); "The Birth of National Songs"; and "The Decline of National Songs." These themes, as Murko explains, had already been addressed in part in earlier chapters and were developed further in his study "Nouvelles observations sur l'état actuel de la poésie populaire épique en Yougoslavie" ("New Observations on the Current State of Epic Folk Poetry in Yugoslavia") and in his

preface to K. Viskovatyj's *Pogłosy historji polskiej v epice jugosłowiańskiej* (*Echoes of Polish History in the Yugoslav Epic*). As both the Czech original and the Croatian translation show, Murko succeeded in completing these remaining chapters in the years that followed.

The good news is that the Czech typescript of *Cesty* has already been transcribed into electronic form. Once a careful editorial review is completed, the book is set to be published by the Publishing House of the Faculty of Arts, Charles University—the very institution where Matija Murko spent the final years of his long and distinguished university career.



Úvodem.

Se srbskými národními písněmi Vuka Karadžiće seznámil nás nejdříve v II. třídě německého reálného gymnasia na Ptuji v jižním Štýrsku, dnes v Jugoslavii, profesor Jos. Čitek , jenž na začátku 50.let minulého století přišel s filologem L. Zimou pěšky ze Slovinska do Prahy studovat matematiku a fysiku a byl dlouho profesorem na srbském gymnasiu v Sremských Karlovcích a na Ptuji , kde z nouze vyučoval také slovinštině. Na universitě ve Vídni dali mně vědecké podněty k studiu národní poesie F.R.Miklosich a germanisté Richard Heinzel a Erich Schmidt , později i V. Jagić . Za mého pobytu v Rusku / 1887 - 1889 / budili můj zájem o národní poesii zvláště Aleksandr N. Veselovskij v Petrohradě a F.J. Buslajev v Moskvě osobním stykem a otisky svých prací , osobním stykem a svou literární činností také A.N. Pypin . Rozpravy o ruských " bylinách" a ukrajinských "dumách" a jejich vydání sledoval jsem dále a zajímal jsem se také o epiku jiných národů . Jako docent " slovanské filologie " se zvláštním zřetelem k literární historii"ve Vídni /od r. 1897 / věnoval jsem mnoho pozornosti národní poesii a ještě více jako profesor slovanské filologie ve Štýrském Hradci / od 1902/ , kde jsem poprvé v zimním semestru 1905/6 přednášel o "národní poesii jižních Slovanů ". Ohled na všechny jižní Slovany žádaly nejen praktické potřeby posluchačů , nýbrž i mé vědecké přesvědčení , že je zvláště epika srbsko-charvátská a bulharská z velké části totožná ; Královič Marko je dokonce hrdinou všech jižních Slovanů, také Slovinců .

Při historickém rozboru sbírek národních písní srbsko-charvátských zarazily mne sbírky muslimanských / srbsko-charvátský domácí výraz za "mohamedánských " / epických národních písní Kosty Hörmanna 1/

1/ Narodne pjesne Muhamedovaca u Bosni i Hercegovini I. II. Sarajevo 1888 1889 . Druhé vydání Narodne pjesme Muslimana u Bosni i Hercegovini I. II. Sarajevo 1933 /

Figure 4: First page of the typescript of *Cesty*, Matija Murko Fonds, Literary Archive of the Museum of Czech Literature.

Postscriptum: Foley's intended work

Let us end with a curious bibliographic footnote. In the bibliography of his 1988 book *The Theory of Oral Composition: History and Methodology*, John M. Foley—an authority in the field of comparative oral tradition—lists as the final item among his own works a publication dated a year in the future: "1989. *Matija Murko and South Slavic Oral Epic*

Tradition: A Translation of His Major Writings with Commentary. Irvine, California: Charles Schlacks" (139).

Unfortunately, this work never appeared. Perhaps Foley changed his mind or eventually reconsidered the feasibility of the project. I do not know any further details.[31] Still, speaking for myself, I agree with his idea that such a volume—a carefully curated selection of Murko's most important studies on the South Slavic oral epic tradition, translated into English from the many languages in which he wrote (German, French, Slovenian, Czech)—SHOULD be published.[32] Not only as a long-overdue tribute to Matija Murko, but also as an invaluable resource offering scholars, students, and readers of many backgrounds the opportunity to learn more about this unique cultural tradition, and about the unique way in which it has been explored.

ARCHIVAL SOURCES

Akce BOR. Surveillance file. Ústředna Státní bezpečnosti, Archiv bezpečnostních složek, ABS, f. 305 ÚStB, arch. č. 305-739-4.

Murko, Matija. *Cesty za národní epikou srbsko-charvátskou v letech 1930–1932*. Matija Murko, Rukopisy (vlastní), Literární archiv Památníku národního písemnictví, LA PNP 1147, 3a.

Murko, Matija. Personal fonds. Literární archiv Památníku národního písemnictví, LA PNP 1147.

WORKS CITED

Bečka, Jiří. "Postoj M. Murka vůči nacistům v době okupace (příspěvek k dějinám slavistiky)." *Slavia*, vol. 72, no. 1, 2003, pp. 115–122.

Bečka, Jiří. "Slovanský ústav a pokusy o likvidaci slavistiky." *Slavia*, vol. 64, no. 4, 1995, pp. 357–369.

Bečka, Jiří. "Slovanský ústav v letech 1922–1963." *Slavia*, vol. 68, no. 3–4, 1999, pp. 401–420.

Bečka, Jiří, and Anna Zelenková. "Výběrová bibliografie Matiji Murka." *Slavia*, vol. 72, no. 1, 2003, pp. 123–168.

Bogatyrev, Petr, and Roman Jakobson. "Die *Folklore* als eine besondere Form des Schaffens." *Donum Natalicium Schrijnen*, edited by St. W. J. Teeuwen, Dekker en Van de Vegt, 1929, pp. 900–913.

Burda, Milan, editor. *Prague entre l'Est et l'Ouest: l'émigration russe en Tchécoslovaquie, 1920–1938*. L'Harmattan, 2001.

[31] For more on Foley's translation of Murko, see Zabel in this issue.

[32] Aaron Tate complained that "unfortunately, the majority of Murko's publications, including his classic two-volume study from 1951, *Tragom*, have not been translated into English" (Tate 333).

Dittmann, Robert. "Jakobsonova první poválečná návštěva Československa roku 1957 ve světle archivů StB." *Bohemica Olomucensia*, vol. 9, no. 2, 2017, pp. 8–54.

Dittmann, Robert. "'Příjezd do ČSR mu nebude napříště povolen': Jakobsonova druhá poválečná návštěva Československa v roce 1957 ve světle archivů StB." *Sborník Archivu bezpečnostních složek*, vol. 18, 2020, pp. 93–154.

Doležán, Libor. *Matija Murko a jeho výzkumy lidových písní jižních Slovanů*. 2007. Masarykova univerzita, MA thesis.

Fischerová, Sylva. "*Habent sua fata inventiones*: The Role of Czechoslovakian Slavistics in the Forming of the Parry-Lord Oral-Formulaic Theory." *Roman O. Jakobson: A Work in Progress*, edited by Tomáš Kubíček and Andrew Lass, Palacký University, 2014, pp. 77–101.

Fischerová, Sylva. "Matija Murko, Roman Jakobson in Parry-Lordova teorija ustnega pesništva." *Clotho*, vol. 1, no. 1, 2019, pp. 23–53.

Foley, John Miles. *The Theory of Oral Composition: History and Methodology*. Indiana University Press, 1988.

Garbrah, Kweku A. "The Forerunners of Milman Parry: I. Matthias Murko on South-Slavic Popular Epic." *Canadian Review of Comparative Literature*, vol. 27, no. 1–2, 2000, pp. 274–306.

Graf, Walter. "Aus der Geschichte des Phonogrammarchivs der Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften." *Bulletin phonographique*, vol. 6, 1964, pp. 9–39.

Horák, Jiří. Review of *Bericht über eine Reise zum Studium der Volksepik in Bosnien und Herzegowina im Jahre 1913* and *Bericht über phonographische Aufnahmen epischer Volkslieder im mittleren Bosnien und in der Herzegowina im Sommer 1913*, by Matija Murko. *Listy filologické*, vol. 43, 1916, pp. 352–354.

Hostinský, Otakar. "Lidová píseň v Rakousku." *Český lid*, vol. 16, no. 4, 1907, pp. 161–164.

Jakobson, Roman. *Slavic Epic Studies*. *Selected Writings*, vol. 4, Roman Jakobson, Mouton, 1966.

Jakobson, Roman. "Über den Versbau der serbokroatischen Volksepen." *Archives néerlandaises de phonétique expérimentale*, vol. 8–9, 1933, pp. 44–53.

Jakobson, Roman, and Petr Bogatyrev. "Slavjanskaja filologija v Rossii za gody 1914–1921." *Slavia*, vol. 1, no. 1, 1922–1923, pp. 171–184, 457–469, 626–636.

Kuba, Ludvík. *Cesty za slovanskou písní, 1885–1929*. Vol. 1, *Slovanský západ a východ*, Slovanský ústav, 1933.

Kuba, Ludvík. *Pjesme i napjevi iz Bosne i Hercegovine*. Edited by Cvjetko Rihtman, 2nd ed., Svjetlost, 1984. Originally published in *Glasnik Zemaljskog muzeja u Bosni i Hercegovini*, vol. 18–22, 1906–1910.

Kuba, Ludvík. *Slovanstvo ve svých zpěvech*. 1884–1928.

Kuba, Ludvík. *Zaschlá paleta: paměti*. Státní nakladatelství krásné literatury, hudby a umění, 1955.

Kučera, Henry. "Roman Jakobson." *Language*, vol. 59, no. 4, 1983, pp. 871–883.

Kunej, Drago, et al. "The Importance of Matija Murko's Research for Understanding the Musical Tradition of Bosnia and Herzegovina." *Traditiones*, vol. 49, no. 2, 2020, pp. 31–52.

Lechleitner, Gerda, and Christian Liebl, editors. *Epic Folk Songs from Bosnia and Herzegovina: The Collection of Matija Murko (1912, 1913).* Verlag der Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, 2017. Gesamtausgabe der Historischen Bestände 1899–1950 16 / Tondokumente aus dem Phonogrammarchiv 40.

Lord, Albert B. "General Introduction." *Serbocroatian Heroic Songs*, vol. 1, *Novi Pazar*, Milman Parry, edited and translated by Albert B. Lord, Harvard University Press / Serbian Academy of Sciences, 1954, pp. 3–20.

Lord, Albert B. *The Singer of Tales*. Edited by Stephen Mitchell and Gregory Nagy, 2nd ed., Harvard University Press, 2000.

Matl, Josef. "Zum 100. Geburtstag Matthias Murkos: Matthias Murkos Leistung und Bedeutung für die Südostforschung." *Südost-Forschungen*, vol. 20, 1961, pp. 225–244.

Meillet, Antoine. *Les origines indo-européennes des mètres grecs*. Presses universitaires de France, 1923.

Mikulová, Helena. "Matija Murko a sbírky Památníku národního písemnictví." *Matija Murko v myšlenkovém kontextu evropské slavistiky*, edited by Ivo Pospíšil and Miloš Zelenka, Masarykova univerzita, 2005, pp. 188–197.

Míšková, Alena. "Slovanský ústav v ČSAV v letech 1952–63 (od reorganizace k likvidaci)." *Slavia*, vol. 62, no. 2, 1993, pp. 157–174.

Murko, Matija. *Bericht über eine Bereisung von Nordwestbosnien und der angrenzenden Gebiete von Kroatien und Dalmatien behufs Erforschung der Volksepik der bosnischen Mohammedaner*. Alfred Hölder, 1913. Sitzungsberichte der Kaiserlichen Akademie der Wissenschaften in Wien: Philosophisch-Historische Klasse 173/3.

Murko, Matija. *Bericht über eine Reise zum Studium der Volksepik in Bosnien und Herzegowina im Jahre 1913*. Alfred Hölder, 1915. Sitzungsberichte der Kaiserlichen Akademie der Wissenschaften in Wien: Philosophisch-Historische Klasse 176/2.

Murko, Matija. *Bericht über phonographische Aufnahmen epischer, meist mohammedanischer Volkslieder im nordwestlichen Bosnien im Sommer 1912*. Alfred Hölder, 1913. Berichte der Phonogramm-Archivs-Kommission 30.

Murko, Matija. *Bericht über phonographische Aufnahmen epischer Volkslieder im mittleren Bosnien und in der Herzegowina im Sommer 1913*. Alfred Hölder, 1915. Sitzungsberichte der Kaiserlichen Akademie der Wissenschaften in Wien: Philosophisch-Historische Klasse 179/1 / Mitteilungen der Phonogramm-Archivs-Kommission 37.

Murko, Matija. "Nouvelles observations sur l'état actuel de la poésie épique en Yougoslavie." *Revue des études slaves*, vol. 13, no. 1–2, 1933, pp. 16–50.

Murko, Matija. *Paměti*. Fr. Borový, 1949.

Murko, Matija. *La poésie populaire épique en Yougoslavie au début du XXe siècle*. L'Institut d'études slaves, 1929.

Murko, Matija. "Die serbokroatische Volkspoesie in der deutschen Literatur." *Archiv für slavische Philologie*, vol. 28, 1906, pp. 351–385.

Murko, Matija. *Tragom srpsko-hrvatske narodne epike: putovanja u godinama 1930–1932*. Jugoslavenska akademija znanosti i umjetnosti, 1951. 2 vols.

Murko, Matija. "Veliká sbírka slovinských lidových písní s nápěvy." *Rozpravy z oboru slovanského národopisu*, Matija Murko, edited by Jiří Horák, Orbis, 1947, pp. 135–187.

Murko, Matija. "Die Volksepik der bosnischen Mohammedaner." *Zeitschrift des Vereins für Volkskunde*, vol. 19, 1909, pp. 13–30.

Murko, Matija. "Zpráva prof. M. Murka o vědecké cestě po Jugoslavii r. 1930." *Ročenka Slovanského ústavu 1930*, vol. 3, 1931, pp. 103–104.

Murko, Matija. "Zpráva prof. M. Murka o vědecké cestě po Jugoslavii r. 1931." *Ročenka Slovanského ústavu 1931*, vol. 4, 1932, pp. 107–110.

Murko, Matija. "Zpráva prof. M. Murka o vědecké cestě po Jugoslavii r. 1932." *Ročenka Slovanského ústavu 1932–1934*, vol. 5–7, 1935, pp. 148.

Murko, Vladimir. "Sudbina literarne ostavštine i fonografskih snimaka srpskohrvatskih epskih pjesama Matije Murka." *Narodna umjetnost*, vol. 2, no. 1, 1963, pp. 107–137.

Murko, Vladimir. "Vzpomínky na cesty Matyáše Murka za jihoslovanskou epikou." *Franku Wollmanovi k sedmdesátinám*, edited by Artur Závodský, Státní pedagogické nakladatelství, 1958, pp. 464–473.

Österreichische Volksliedwerk. "*Corpus Musicae Popularis Austriacae* (COMPA)." *Volksmusik (er)leben*, https://volksliedwerk.at/corpus-musicae-popularis-austriacae-compa/. Accessed 9 June 2025.

Parry, Milman. *L'épithète traditionnelle dans Homère: essai sur un problème du style homérique*. Les Belles Lettres, 1928.

Parry, Milman. *The Making of Homeric Verse: The Collected Papers of Milman Parry*. Edited by Adam Parry, Clarendon Press, 1971.

Parry, Milman. *Serbo-Croatian Folk Songs*. Edited by Albert B. Lord and Béla Bartók, Columbia University Press, 1951.

Parry, Milman. *Serbocroatian Heroic Songs*. Vol. 1, *Novi Pazar*, edited and translated by Albert B. Lord, Harvard University Press / Serbian Academy of Sciences, 1954.

Polívka, Jiří. Review of "Die *Folklore* als eine besondere Form des Schaffens," by Petr Bogatyrev and Roman Jakobson. *Národopisný věstník československý*, vol. 22, 1929, pp. 279–281.

Scalera McClintock, Giuliana. Review of *Gilbert Murray Reassessed: Hellenism, Theatre, and International Politics*, by Christopher Stray (editor). *Bryn Mawr Classical Review*, 10 Mar. 2009, https://bmcr.brynmawr.edu/2009/2009.03.10/.

Stanislav, Josef. *Ludvík Kuba: zakladatel slovanské hudební folkloristiky*. Panton, 1963.

Stray, Christopher, editor. *Gilbert Murray Reassessed: Hellenism, Theatre, and International Politics*. Oxford University Press, 2007.

Talam, Jasmina, and Irena Miholić. "Voices from the Past: Musical Tradition of Bosnia and Herzegovina Through the Research of Matija Murko." *Primerjalna književnost*, vol. 48, no. 2, 2025, pp. 179–201.

Tate, Aaron Phillip. "Matija Murko, Wilhelm Radloff, and Oral Epic Studies." *Oral Tradition*, vol. 26, no. 2, 2011, pp. 329–352.

Tyllner, Lubomír. "Z historie Etnologického ústavu Akademie věd České republiky: sběratelský podnik 'Lidová píseň v Rakousku' v letech 1905–1918." *Český lid*, vol. 92, no. 2, 2005, pp. 113–127.

Vet, Thérèse de. "Parry in Paris: Structuralism, Historical Linguistics, and the Oral Theory." *Classical Antiquity*, vol. 24, no. 2, 2005, pp. 257–284.

Vévoda, Rudolf. "Muž, který byl nepohodlný aneb od agenta III. Internacion.ly k agentovi FBI /I. část/." Středn. Evropa, vol. 12, no. 64, 1996, pp. 65–75.

Vévoda, Rudolf. "Muž, který byl nepohodlný aneb od agenta III. internacionály k agentovi FBI /II. závěrečná část/." Střední Evropa, vol. 12, no. 65, 1996, pp. 88–100.

Wollman, Frank. "Njegošův deseterec." *Slavia*, vol. 9, no. 4, 1930–1931, pp. 737–791.

Wollman, Slavomír. "Osobní vzpomínky na Matyáše Murka." *Slavia*, vol. 72, no. 1, 2003, pp. 5–12.

Wollman, Slavomír. "Osudy Slovanského ústavu od jeho zrušení v roce 1963 do současnosti." *Slavia*, vol. 68, no. 3–4, 1999, pp. 421–426.

Wünsch, Walther. "Matthias Murko und die Prager Südosteuropa-Forschung." *Südost-Forschungen*, vol. 20, 1961, pp. 245–247.

Zabel, Blaž. "Matija Murko in ameriška komparativistika." *Primerjalna književnost*, vol. 48, no. 2, 2025, pp. 25–41.

Zelenka, Miloš. "Matija Murko a česká literární komparatistika." *Slavia*, vol. 72, no. 1, 2003, pp. 27–40.

Zelenka, Miloš. "Matija Murko and Structural Aesthetics." *Primerjalna književnost*, vol. 48, no. 2, 2025, pp. 143–162.

Ziegler, Susanne. "List of the Berlin Phonogramm-Archiv's Cylinder Collections." *The Berlin Phonogramm-Archive 1900–2000: Collections of Traditional Music of the World*, edited by Artur Simon, Verlag für Wissenschaft und Bildung, 2000, pp. 228–238.
Ziegler, Susanne. *Die Wachszylinder des Berliner Phonogramm-Archivs*. Staatliche Museen zu Berlin, 2006.

Murkove raziskave južnoslovanske epike in češkoslovaška slavistika

Ključne besede: primerjalna književnost / teorija ustnosti / južnoslovanska ustna epika / ljudsko slovstvo / Murko, Matija / češkoslovaška slavistika

Prispevek se posveča Murkovim raziskavam južnoslovanskega ljudskega slovstva, pri čemer se osredotoča zlasti na doslej slabo znane ali celo neznane povezave in dejstva. Mednje denimo sodijo vloga Gilberta Murrayja in berlinske konference leta 1908 kot pomembne spodbude za Murkovo nadaljnje raziskovanje ter usoda voščenih valjev z njegovih potovanj v tridesetih letih in češkega tipkopisa njegovega dela *Cesty za národní epikou srbsko-charvátskou v letech 1930-32*, ki je bil leta 1951 preveden in objavljen pod naslovom *Tragom srpsko-hrvatske narodne epike. Putovanja u godinama 1930–1932* (*Po sledeh srbohrvaške ljudske epike*). Poleg tega prispevek predstavi doslej neobjavljeno gradivo: pričevanje iz dnevnika Murkove žene o njunem bivanju v Parizu leta 1928 in članek iz *Borbe* z naslovom »Američki učenjak o jugoslavenskim narodnim pjesmama« (»Ameriški učenjak o jugoslovanskih ljudskih pesmih«), ki nakazuje, da je Murko proti koncu svojega življenja priznaval, da so tudi drugi raziskovalci opravili obsežno raziskovalno delo na področju južnoslovanskega ljudskega slovstva. Ob tem članek obravnava problematičen dokument iz arhivov češkoslovaške tajne policije, ki navaja, da se je Roman Jakobson po prihodu v Prago leta 1920 udeležil Murkovih predavanj. Predstavljeno je tudi navdihujoče in prijateljsko praško okolje v obdobju med obema vojnama ter Murkovo sodelovanje z osrednjimi osebnostmi češke slavistike. Prav tako pomembno pa je tisto, kar se ni zgodilo – denimo srečanje med Murkom in Avdom Međedovićem v Bijelem Polju leta 1924 ali neobjavljena knjiga Murkovih del v angleškem prevodu, ki jo je načrtoval J. M. Foley.

1.01 Izvirni znanstveni članek / Original scientific article
UDK 821.163.4.09-1:82.091Murko M.
DOI: https://doi.org/10.3986/pkn.v48.i2.11