

## AN OUTLINE OF THE PRESENCE OF SOURCES OF EUROPE IN SLOVENE LITERARY FOLKLORE AND LITERARY FOLKLORISTICS

Marija Stanonik\*

### I

It is convenient to start this outline with ancient Greece, the cradle of European civilization, and Urban Jarnik (1784-1844), the man whose written contributions were estimated to be the origin of Slovene scientific folkloristics. As early as 1811 he wrote about Slovene mythological beings such as "zalik žene" (kind of nymphs), defining them as Slovene sibyls.<sup>1</sup> Gregor Kerk (1840-1905) was the first Slovene who strived to raise the discourse in the modern sense of literary folkloristics on an academic level.<sup>2</sup> Among other things he wrote about the motif of Polyphemus in Slavic folklore tradition. In this connection he tries to explain the relatedness of products of literary folklore in a polygenetic way and on a psychological basis. The tragic problematics of Oedipus was dealt with by Ivan Grafenauer (1880-1964), who made thorough researches into this sombre motif not only within several Slovene cultural circles but also elsewhere in Europe.<sup>3</sup> The motif of Orestes's revenge found its expression in Slovenia in the subject of Roslin and Verjanko.<sup>4</sup> The widest diapason of Greek motifs which were gradually transformed into fragments of Slovene literary folklore has been achieved in Slovenia so far by Milko Matičetov (b. 1919) in his research work, as much as he has already presented the collected material from Resia (now in Italy).<sup>5</sup> The early Middle Ages can be introduced into this outline by the Benedictine monk Paulus Diaconus (8<sup>th</sup> cent.). He included into his book on the history of the Langobards (*Historia Langobardorum*) many a tale which even nowadays belong to the permanent repertoire of literary folklore among the Slovenes.<sup>6</sup>

Almost at the same time when Paulus Diaconus was writing down these tales which are now experienced as part of the oral tradition, two Greek Christian missionaries arrived in our country, the holy brothers Cyril and Methodius, who

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\* Centre of Scientific Research of the Slovene Academy of Science and Arts. Institut za Slovensko Narodopisje. SLO-61000 Ljubljana. Slovenia.

<sup>1</sup> Urban Jarnik, "Die slovenische Sibyllen", *Carinthia*, 21 (1813).

<sup>2</sup> Gregor Kerk, "Polyfem y narodnej tradiciji slovanskej", *Kres*, 2 (1882), pp. 42, 103, 155. His monumental work is *Einleitung in die slavische Literaturgeschichte*, 1887.

<sup>3</sup> Ivan Grafenauer, *Kratka zgodovina starejšega slovenskega slovstva* (A Short History of Older Slovene Literature), Celje, 1973.

<sup>4</sup> I. Grafenauer, *op. cit.*, p. 62.

<sup>5</sup> Milko Matičetov, "Elementi preslavi nella narrativa popolare Sovena", *Alpes Orientales* (Ljubljana), 5 (1969), pp. 207-208.

<sup>6</sup> Paulus Diaconus, *Historia langobardum/ Pavel Diakon, Zgodovina Langobardov*, Maribor, 1988 (The History of the Langobards), translated into Slovene by Fran Bradač, Bogo Grafenauer, Kajetan Gantar.

themselves were, in the course of time, turned into heroes of folk narratives, mostly with a tinge of legends.<sup>7</sup>

Most of all it was Ivan Grafenauer who dedicated his research to the problem of medieval literary folklore with the Slovenes. In the first place he investigated the genesis of subject matter which in the course of time became part of Slovene literary folklore, and the circumstances that led up to such results. In his medievalistic work the "Spanish cycle" is important, which includes interpretations of some excellent ballads and romances with Spanish motifs.<sup>8</sup> Here, Grafenauer also explains the meaning of the word-group "Spanish king" (actually the ruler of the Saracens, Arabs, Moors) in Slovene legend songs. When the period of Turkish inroads began, his role was taken over by the "Turkish czar". According to Grafenauer, the songs which include the "Spanish king" prove to be very old, all of them originating at least from the Middle Ages. A series of Grafenauer's articles was meant to be preparatory work for a monograph on the theme of "Lepa Vida" (Pretty Vida).<sup>9</sup> Equally thoroughly the author delved into the motif of Kralj Matjaž in Slovene literary folklore.

The Friulian historian M. A. Nicoletti reported as early as the mid-16<sup>th</sup> century how the inhabitants of Tolminsko in Western Slovenia sang among others also songs about Kralj Matjaž. The tempting question why songs of older origin took over the name of the Hungarian king Matthias Corvin, i.e., Kralj (king) Matjaž in Slovene, was dealt with by Simon Rutar.<sup>10</sup> King Matjaž was not only successful in fighting against the enemy Turks but also in holding back the high lords and protecting the burghers and peasants. All this had a soothing effect on the Slovenes, too, when for almost a decade Matthias Corvin, after fighting against Friedrich III, became the ruler over the eastern parts of Carniola and Styria.

The Slovene song about the trials which a girl has to endure, disguised as a soldier, has its immediate relatives on the Iberian, Apeninian and Balkan Peninsulas. The subject matter of Slovene ballads is sometimes related to other European nations, so these very likely do not originate in our country; there are other ballads that have no parallels in any other country, while some are shared only with other

<sup>7</sup> Marija Stanonik, "Sveta brata Ciril in Metod v slovenski slovstveni folklori" (The holy brothers St.s Cyril and Methodius in Slovene literary folklore), *Kopitarjev zbornik* (International symposium on the linguist Jernel Kopitar and his Age, Ljubljana, 29 June - 1<sup>st</sup> July 1994), Ljubljana, 1996, pp. 229-239.

<sup>8</sup> Ivan Grafenauer, "Slovenska narodna romanca o romanju svetega Jakoba Kompostelskega" (A Slovene folk romance on pilgrimages to Santiago de Compostella), *Dom in svet*, 50 (1937-1938), pp. 338-347; *id.*, "O Zariki in Sončici in še kaj o 'španskih' junakih" (On Zarika and Sončica, and more on "spanish" heroes), *Dom in svet*, 51 (1939), pp. 33-89; *id.*, "Poljska kraljica" (The Queen of Naples), *Dom in svet*, 51 (1939), pp. 224-228.

<sup>9</sup> Ivan Grafenauer, *Lepa Vida, Študija o izvoru, razvoju in razkroju narodne balade o Lepi Vidi* (Pretty Vida: A study on the origin, development and disintegration of the folk ballad about the Pretty Vida), Ljubljana, 1943.

<sup>10</sup> Ivan Grafenauer, *Slovenske pripovedke o Kralju Matjažu* (Sloven tales on King Matjaž), Ljubljana, 1951.

Slavic nations, e.g. the one about a herdsman whose heart is torn out of his breast by three witches. Variants on this theme can be found with all Southern Slavs.

The four years of Illyrian Provinces (1809-1813), i.e. the French rule over our country, left numerous traces in our literary folklore. Slovene cultural history retains fond memories of that time because of the French positive attitude towards the Slovene language. In literary folklore an interesting phenomenon can be observed: no songs were composed on Frenchmen but only prose narratives, still popular even today, for example the ones about a French officer being rocked in a cradle, French soldiers planting pear-trees throughout our country, or Slovene hidlers who refused to serve in Napoleon's army, etc, etc.

## II

Naturally, the Germans, who were our neighbours, also participated into Slovene literary folklore. Many a ballad became part of Slovene tradition through German influence, such as the motif of the German Ulinger, originally the dutch Helewijn, whose name was changed in Slovene into Jelengar or Lajnar.

The first step towards a fruitful collaboration on a reflective if not intellectual level was made by Hieronimus Wegiser, who was a contemporary of the first generation of Slovene protestants. As a result of their contacts, Slovene was also included into his four-language dictionary, together with German, Latin and Italian.

Some two hundred years later a remarkable compliment was paid to the Slavs on the German side, exactly from the viewpoint of later literary folkloristics. In his *Ideen zur Philosophie der Geschichte der Menschheit* of 1791, Johann Gottfried Herder, a critic, aesthete, cultural historian and philosopher, wrote favourably about the Slavs and the necessity to collect their literary folklore, in which he mainly stressed its easthetic dimension. In the Klagenfurt paper *Carinthia* Urban Jarnik published in 1812 Herder's chapters on the Slavs, adding some comments and an appendix with a call for collecting Slovene literary folklore.<sup>11</sup>

Jacob Grimm is a second German personality, who had already direct connections with a Slovene native, Jernej Kopitar. They shared an interest in etymological studies and a comprehension of mythology and literary folklore as a whole. Their correspondence was even published in a special book. In the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century a bridge was built between the Slovene and the German cultural spheres by Anastasius Grün, i.e. Anton Alexander Graf Auersperg, a German poet and politician. He translated a selection of Slovene folk songs and published them in 1850.<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>11</sup> Urban Jarnik, "Slavische Völker, Geschildert von Herder", *Carinthia*, 23 (1812).

<sup>12</sup> *Volkslieder aus Krain*, übersetzt von Anastasius Grün, Leipzig, 1850.

In the second half of the 18<sup>th</sup> century a number of papers in German were published, treating our literary folkore, which point to the attempts of Slovene cultural workers to prevent their isolation in their professional and national strivings.

It always turns out to be a very delicate issue to assess the relationship of motifs in literary folklore at the crossroads of two or more nations. The idea that one only receives and another only gives is positively wrong; the fact is that the influence is mutual. A contribution to a sound balance in this sense is given by Jakob Kelemina's treatise on Slovene folk narratives among the Germans.<sup>13</sup> Considering possible biased interpretations, so much more gratifying is the comprehensive work by Leopold Kretzenbacher, whose books and papers make a fair evaluation of Slovene materials without concealing anything, that is to say professionally correctly, and quoting passages also in the original language. His name can also be found in the group of ethnologists and folklorists of several nationalities who used to meet after 1956, on the initiative of Slovene colleagues, at special working meetings called *Alpes Orientales*. The name itself reveals that it was the matter of collaboration among the experts from the countries lying in the Eastern Alps. The findings of this free working community were published regularly during all the time of its existence in the periodical entitled with the same name: *Alpes Orientales*.<sup>14</sup> Unfortunately the last meeting of the community took place in 1975 in Resia; it seems as if the younger generation felt no need for such fruitful contacts.

The life and professional orientation of Milko Matičetov was decisively influenced by Arturo Cronio, the Italian Slavist at the University of Padua, who taught the former the "alphabet of scientific work". It is evident from the bibliography of the authoritative Slovene folklorist that he returned the kindness of his Italian teacher, for Matičetov published a great deal in Italian language and in Italian periodicals, also wishing "to contribute his share to establishing good neighbouring relationships between Slavic (Slovene and Croatian) and Italian folklorists".<sup>15</sup>

A considerable share to the knowledge of Slovene literary folklore was participated by Balthasar Hacquet (1739-1815),<sup>16</sup> a Frenchman by birth and feeling, but writing his books in German, extending and deepening in them a view of Slovene culture in its civilizational sense, about a hundred years later than Johann Weichart Valvasor, the famous Carniola polymath.

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<sup>13</sup> Jakob Kelemina, "Slovenska narodne propovedke med nemci" (Slovene folktales among the Germans), *Ethnolog* (Ljubljana), 2 (1928), pp. 90-92.

<sup>14</sup> Leopold Kretzenbacher, *Legende und sozialgeschichte zwischen Mittelalter und Barock*, Wien, 1977; *id.*, *Südost-Überlieferungen zum Apokryphen "Traum Mariens"*, Munich, 1975; *id.*, *Mürztaler Passion*, Wien, 1988; *id.*, "Der Zeuge aus der Hölle (Smlendniška legenda)", *Alpes Orientales* (Ljubljana), 1, 1956, pp. 33-78.

<sup>15</sup> Milko Matičetov, "Attila fra italijani, croati e sloveni", *Ce fastu?*, 24/25 (1948), pp. 116-121.

<sup>16</sup> Vilko Novak, "Balthasar Hacquet in slovenska ljudska kultura" (B. Hacquet and Slovene culture), *Traditiones* (Ljubljana), 3 (1974), pp. 17-18.

Another such "border" example is the book *Sagen aus Friaul und den Julischen Alpen*, published in 1922 by Anton von Maily, a Frenchman by his father and a Slovene by his mother, while the title shows that the book was written in German.<sup>17</sup> It comprises literary folklore from the territory where four ethnic/linguistic groups meet: the Italians, Friulians, Slovenes and Croats. The belonging of individual records was only partly stated in the first, i.e. German edition of Maily's book. Thus, sixty years later when it was published in Italian translation, mostly thanks to and carefully edited by Milko Matičetov, he explores in detail which item belongs to which linguistic group. Although Matičetov does not spare his criticism on Maily, he is obviously favourably inclined towards him, for Maily was "among the first who set to present (not in theory but in practice) the narratives of different ethnic groups of the territory as equivalent materials".<sup>18</sup>

At first sight it seems surprising that there are also some traces of the English cultural sphere in Slovene folklore and folkloristics. Without going into further details, we should mention at least the fact that the English word "folklore" was also adopted into Slovene terminology. It was first used in 1887 by Karel Streckelj in his famous petition for folk products: "In recent times the English word folklore has often been used to denote folk products and their study."<sup>19</sup> Streckelj concludes his appeal with the invitation to join him, "everyone who cares that in this respect we, too, rank among other cultural nations that cultivate nowadays their "folklore" with admirable diligence, discovering what the spirit of the nation has saved and preserved from the ancient past ..."<sup>20</sup>

How are the Slavic nations explicitly present in our folklore and folkloristics? It is fair to begin with the Czechs, mostly because of the priority given to folk songs until today. Ladislav Čelakovsky (1799-1852), the Czech poet of Romanticism, kindly collaborated with Prešeren's cultural circle. In 1827 he also published Slovene examples in the third volume of *Slavic folk songs*.<sup>21</sup> Matija Majar-Ziljski, in his pan-Slavic enthusiasm, used to send Carinthian folk songs and tales to various Slavic papers. Also the Czech writer Božena Němcová asked him to send some, and she published them.

A most notable role in Slovene folkloristics was played by the Poles: the first one was Emil Korytko (1813-1839). During his two-year stay in Ljubljana as a political deportee, he made several shorter travels — as much as he was allowed by

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<sup>17</sup> Anton von Maily, *Leggende del Friuli e delle Alpi Giulie*, pubblicate con la collaborazione di Johannes Bolte, edizione critica a cura di Milko Matičetov, Gorizia, 1993<sup>4</sup>.

<sup>18</sup> Milko Matičetov, "Anton von Maily, Leggende del Friuli. . .", *Traditiones* (Ljubljana), 17 (1988), pp. 395-396.

<sup>19</sup> Karel Streckelj, "Prošnja za narodno blao" (A request for collecting folk motifs), *Ljubljanskizvon*, 7 (1887), p. 629.

<sup>20</sup> K. Streckelj, *op. cit.*, p. 632.

<sup>21</sup> František Ladislav Čelakovský, *Slowanské narodnj pjsně*, III, Prague, 1822-1827.

the police — and collected Slovene folk songs which were written down for him mostly by his friends who published them after Korytko's death, in five volumes entitled — in English translation — *Slovenian songs of the Carniolan nation* (1839-1844).<sup>22</sup> He also published three essays on these songs in German papers. When Oskar Kolberg visited Slovenia in 1857 he must have already heard about his compatriot and his premature death, so that he made some notes. The Pole with a French name, Jean Baudouin de Courtenay (1845-1929) visited Slovenia for the first time in 1872. He got so attached to Resia that he felt at home there. He visited the Slovenes as much as seven times. It is characteristic of J. B. de Courtenay that he combined dialectology and folkloristics in his work. Of special value are his notes on fieldwork experiences.<sup>23</sup>

What was the exchange of ideas connected with literary folkloristics between Slovenia and the Eastern Slavs? One of the first Russians who left trace in our literary folkloristics, besides researches into Slovene dialects, was Ismail Sreznjevskij. Also he, among many others, was fascinated by Resia and he dedicated a special treatise to it.<sup>24</sup> A great enthusiast who was connected with Russia was Gašper Križnik (1848-1904), the first Slovene collector of folk narratives. He wrote them down in dialects, as instructed by Jean Baudouin de Courtenay, his mentor and university teacher in St. Petersburg to whom Križnik sent his records as material for Slavic linguistic studies, but also with a hope to be published. Thus, a great deal of Križnik's material is now preserved in the Russian Academy of Sciences, at the department of St. Petersburg.<sup>25</sup> Today, materials of Slovene folklore are included in the research work of Nikita Tolstoy.<sup>26</sup>

It was in the Ukraine that Slovene folkloristics was paid special attention. In 1986 Eugene M. Pashtschenko published in the miscellany of literary sciences and folkloristics a survey entitled *From the History of Slovene Folkloristics*.<sup>27</sup> The author's precision is amazing. He also carefully calls attention to those elements in the development of Slovene literary folkloristics that are connected with other Slavic nations.

This outline, pointing at motifs and people that were (and are) in any way connected with Slovene folklore and literary folkloristics, can be concluded with our

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<sup>22</sup> Emil Korytko, *Slovenske pesni krajnska naróda*, I-III, Ljubljana 1839-1844.

<sup>23</sup> Jan Baudouin de Courtenay, *Materialien zur südslavischen Dialektologie und Ethnographie*, Petersburg, 1895.

<sup>24</sup> Izmail I. Sreznjevskij, "Zpráva o Rezjanech", *Časopis Českého Museu*, 15 (1841), pp. 341-344; *id.*, "Rezijane", *Moskvitjainin*, 1844, pp. 207-215.

<sup>25</sup> Marija Stanonik, "Gašper Križnik", *Enzyklopädie des Märchens*.

<sup>26</sup> Milko Matičetov, "Ob izgubi Nikite I. Tolstoja (1923-1996)" (On the departure of Nikita I. Tolstoy, 1923-1996), *Traditiones* (Ljubljana), 25 (1996), pp. 479-482.

<sup>27</sup> Evgenij M. Paščenko, "Z istorij slovenskoj folkloristiki", *Slov'janskie literaturoznavstvo I folkloristika*, 15 (1986), pp. 80-89.

closest neighbours. If we are bound to some by the proximity of their country, and to others by remote tribal or linguistic relatedness, both are true of the Croats.

The greatest Slavic philologist of his time, Jernej Kopitar (1780-1844), encouraged Vuk Stefanovic to work on Serbian literary folklore, thus helping him and the Serbian folk song to gain worldwide recognition.<sup>28</sup> The Serbs themselves seemed to be aware of this, since there is no other reasonable explanation for their aim to transport Kopitar's mortal remains together with Vuk's to Belgrade. An important enterprise by the authors Janez Majciger, Maks Pleteršnik and Božidar Raič, an attempt to make a synthesis of Slavic folkloristics, was the book entitled *Slovanstvo* (Slavism) of 1874.<sup>29</sup> Unfortunately it remained a torso because only the South Slavic part about the Slovenes, Croats, Serbs and Bulgarians was published. Some chapters also included literary folkloristics of all four nations.

When in 1895 the first volume of Slovene folk songs, edited by Karel Štrelelj, was published it gave rise to great enthusiasm all over the Slavic world and elsewhere.<sup>30</sup> Vatroslav Jagič, Miklošič's successor at Vienna, also joined the general joy, admitting that this book set the model for similar editions.<sup>31</sup>

In the 19<sup>th</sup> century the only Slovene to mark the folkloristic field among the Southern Slavs was Jernej Kopitar. In the 20<sup>th</sup> century it was Matija Murko (1861-1951). The novelty of his research is mainly field work performed by himself in Bosnia and Herzegovine, Dalmatia, Montenegro, so that, after Vuk Karadžič, he presented to the Yugoslav nations and to the world the most vivid picture of Serbian and Croatian folk epics. He summed up the results of his work, which is surprisingly close to the concepts of the "new" American folkloristics, in three books.<sup>32</sup>

After World War II, the material of Slovene folklore was most correctly observed in the treatise of the Croat folklorist Maja Bošković-Stulli who is beyond any doubt theoretically the most proficient of all her colleagues.<sup>33</sup>

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<sup>28</sup> Matija Murko, *Izbrano delo* (Selected Works), Ljubljana, 1874.

<sup>29</sup> Janez Majciger, Maks Pleteršnik, Božidar Raič, *Slovanstvo*, Ljubljana, 1874.

<sup>30</sup> Cf. France Kotnik, "Pregled slovenskega narodopisja" (An outline of Slovene Ethnology), in *Narodopisje Slovencev* (Ethnology with the Slovenes), I, Ljubljana, 1944, p. 38.

<sup>31</sup> "So ist die Ausgabe musterhaft nach allen Richtungen ausgefallen, nichts ihr gleichkommendes kennen die bisherigen slowenischen Publicationen, ja eine so zusammenfassende Arbeit existiert auch in der serbo-kroatischen oder bulgarischen, in der böhmischen und polnischen Literatur nicht. Am meisten wird man noch an die bekannte Ausgabe der kleinrussischen Volkslieder von Antonovič Dragomanov erinnert" From Vatroslav Jagič, *Archiv für slavische Philologie*, 24, pp. 623-624. Cited from Kotnik, "Pregled . . ." *cit.* (see note 30).

<sup>32</sup> Matija Murko, *La Poésie populaire épique en Yougoslavie au début du XXe siècle*, Paris, 1929; *id.*, *Tragom srpskohrvatske narodne epike* (Following the Tracts of Serbo-Croatian Folk Epics), I-II, Zagreb 1951.

<sup>33</sup> Maja Bošković-Stulli, "Hrvatske i slovenske usmene predaje o krsniku -kresniku" (Croatian and Slovene oral tales about the mythological being called "Krsnik-Kresnik"), *Usmena književnost kao umjestnost riječi*, Zagreb, 1975, pp. 205-227.

The present paper is a shortened version of the original, so not all individuals or nations could be mentioned that participated in Slovene literary folklore or literary folkloristics. Despite this I hope that a general idea has been conveyed of how in the space between the Alps and the Adriatic, the Pannonian and the Po lowlands, various influences from almost entire Europe are intertwined, yet Slovenia manages to save its originality also in the field of literary folklore.

#### RESUMO

*A primeira parte deste artigo trata dos ecos do passado europeu, desde a Grécia antiga até ao presente, que existem na literatura oral eslovena. Podemos encontrar motivos derivados da mitologia grega; motivos que aparecem mencionados por Paulo Diácono na sua História dos Longobardos; contos, datáveis da época da cristianização, sobre os santos Cirilo e Método, frades dos arredores de Salónica; baladas populares cujos motivos podem remontar quer até à Espanha quer até à Irlanda, em resultado das peregrinações medievais. A nossa literatura oral inclui recordações de Napoleão e dos seus soldados, de incursões turcas, e óptimas lembranças do rei húngaro Matias Corvino, popularmente conhecido na Eslovénia por Kralj (rei) Matjažn. São igualmente evocadas as três nações vizinhas: Itália, Alemanha e Croácia.*

*A segunda parte do artigo tenta dar uma ideia dos contactos de alguns intelectuais de várias nações europeias que vieram à Eslovénia, a partir da segunda metade do séc. XVIII, entrando em contacto com os nossos investigadores e influenciando o seu trabalho etnológico e folclorístico. Foi graças a esta interacção que a ciência conhecida hoje como "folclorística literária" se foi desenvolvendo gradualmente no nosso país. Neste âmbito, aparecem nomes da Alemanha, Austro-Hungria, Polónia, Sérvia, França, Itália, Rússia, etc.*

#### ABSTRACT

*The first part of the paper deals with the echoes of European past in Slovene literary folklore, from ancient Greece to the present day. We can find motifs derived from Greek mythology; there are motifs which are mentioned by Paulus Diaconus in his History of the Langobards; from the time of Christianization, very characteristic are tales about the holy brothers from the vicinity of Salonike, Cyril and Methodius; the result of medieval pilgrimages are folk songs the motifs of which can be traced as far as Spain on the one hand and Ireland on the other. Our literary folklore includes memories of Napoleon and his soldiers, of Turkish invasions, and fond memories of the Hungarian king Matthias Corvin, popularly known as Kralj (king) Matjaž in Slovene, and naturally memories of the other three neighbouring nations, the Italians, the Germans and the Croats.*

*The second part tries to outline the contacts of some intellectuals from several European countries who came to Slovenia, from the second half of the 18<sup>th</sup> century onwards, and met here with our cultural workers, thus exerting influence on the latter and their ethnological and*

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*folkloristic reflection. Proceeding from this basis, the branch of science known today as literary folkloristics gradually developed in our country, too. Within this frame, names from Germany, Austro-Hungary, Poland, Serbia, France, Italy, Russia, etc. are known.*