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## Murko's Lexicology as a Synthesis of Linguistics and Ethnology

Prispevek z leksikološkim izhodiščem skuša Matijo Murka predstaviti predvsem kot jezikoslovca, ki je v svojih etnološko-jezikoslovnih razpravah problemsko ovrednotil jezikoslovne, predvsem etimološke, dialektološke, pa tudi nekatere pravopisne razlage/rešitve svojih dveh učiteljev, F. Miklošiča in V. Jagića, pa V. Oblaka, K. Štreklja, J. Kollárja idr.; predstavil in ovrednotil je tudi slovarsko delo V. Karadžića, A. Murka in F. Miklošiča.

The paper, taking lexicology as its starting-point, aims to present Matija Murko primarily as a linguist who in his ethnological-linguistic studies critically evaluated linguistic, especially etymological, dialectological, and also as some orthographical explanations/solutions offered by his two primary mentors F. Miklošič and V. Jagić, as well as by V. Oblak, K. Štrekelj, J. Kollár, etc. He also presented and evaluated the lexicographical work of V. Karadžić, A. Murko and F. Miklošič.

Murko linked his ethnological field-work with questions of Slovene terminology—he studied the justifiability/suitability of the use of Slovene and Slavonic lexis in Slovene, Croatian and Serbian folk poems, including etymological discussions of the terminology in presenting so-called material culture, e.g., in his article on the Slovene house. He tackled questions concerning the development of linguistic register in Slovene and other Slavonic languages, and thus linked linguistics with language policy.

### 1 Murko's scientific and methodological principles

In the 1880s Matija Murko began to carry on the scholarly work of his teacher, F. Miklošič, the true initiator of comparative Slavonic linguistics. Murko encouraged his students to engage in philological study in the broad sense, including literary history, and he was interested in cultural phenomena and problems throughout the Slavonic region. While in Vienna he displayed a deepened interest in Slavonic folk poems.<sup>1</sup> In a variety of texts Murko regularly stressed the value and importance of philology in the broadest sense: national and comparative literary history, cultural and political history, and ethnography; however, he was also concerned with so-called pure linguistics.

Although Murko's philology was lively, contemporary, and relevant, he could still be methodologically characterized as a dedicated positivist and optimistic realist who believed in the Renaissance of Slavonic studies.<sup>2</sup> With his broad view of linguistic, literary and ethnographical problems among all the Slavs, he worked with

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<sup>1</sup> He experienced considerable support in this area. Murko was encouraged in his study of folk poems by Fran Miklošič, the Germanists Richard Heinzel and Erich Schmidt, and later by Vatroslav Jagić. During his time in Russia (1887–89) his interest in the folk poem was supported by Aleksandar N. Veselovskij in St. Petersburg, F. J. Buslajev in Moscow and A. N. Pypin.

equal zeal in the extensive area of Slavonic ethnology and ethnography, studying the relationship between material and spiritual culture. In compiling the *Rukovět' slovanské filologie* (Handbook of Slavonic Philology), as a counterweight to the *Grundriss der slavischen Philologie*, he endeavoured to go beyond bio-bibliographical methods, i.e., he aimed to write informative and comprehensive work with a compact synthesis of research done up to that time in all fields. Murko's linguistic and methodological activity can be considered in thematic divisions: 1. the idea of Slavonic reciprocity; 2. biographies of forgotten linguistic/cultural writers; 3. suppressed language cultures among the Belorussians, Ukrainians ("Little Russians"), and Lusatian Sorbs, 4. the linkage between philology and material culture, i.e., the fruitful project *Wörter und Sachen*, a periodical of which he was a co-founder.

**1.1** Murko warned that the German attitude towards the Slavonic languages would not be as many imagined or even desired, and consequently he recommended the study of as many Slavonic languages and cultures as possible (Murko 1937a: 487). He considered Kollár's proposition (Murko 1937a: 71)—that every Slavonic linguist as well as every historian should have a command of all the Slavonic languages—both demanding and understandable, and substantiated it with a generalized assertion of comparative linguistics.

**1.2** In connection with the necessity of knowing as many Slavonic languages as possible Murko emphasized the great importance of Slavonic ethnography, where the work of collecting material (one of his basic activities) was highly significant for a knowledge of the Slavonic nations, their life, and activity (Murko 1937a: 489). He added that ethnography could not simply be the work of individuals, but must be organized in such a way that the nature of "national material" be established and described, and also where it is found—everything, in fact, must be recorded and described. His methods of complex research and recording of texts with phonographs and photographs have remained exemplary to the present day.

## **2 The evaluation of primarily linguistic works by his predecessors and contemporaries**

Murko typically wrote precise, learned biographies and bibliographies of well-known contemporary and past linguists, but he generally rejected the bio-bibliographical treatment in modern histories of literature and insisted that such literary histories must show primarily the development of literature, synthesize its main problems and at the same time develop their own method (Murko 1911: 5). His exhaustive study and evaluation of the work of J. Kopitar, V. S. Karadžić, F. Miklošič, V. Jagić, V. Oblak, K. Štrekelj, J. Kollár, etc., gives proof of Murko's wide linguistic horizons and penetrating thought.

In his writings Murko often stressed that he gained his firm linguistic Slavistic foundation directly from Miklošič. In his extensive and detailed biography and bibliography of Miklošič he additionally emphasized his teacher's invaluable contribution to Slovene lexicography. In commenting on the relationship between Kopitar and

<sup>2</sup> Although precisely a Renaissance of Slavonic studies was not typical of the period 1890–1914, which literary history labels a time of positivism and political realism (of modernized Austro-Slavistic realism) among the Slavonic nations, when romantic pan-Slavism was already dying out (Slodnjak 1954: 41).

Miklošič, i.e., that of teacher–student, Murko attributes the comparative method in linguistics and, consequently, comparative grammar, to Miklošič and not to Kopitar as Miklošič's teacher.

Murko was also well acquainted with the work of Miklošič's student V. Jagić, who together with his immediate predecessors would constitute “a triumvirate of the Viennese or Austrian Slavicist school” (Slodnjak 1954: 70). Among other things he mentioned Jagić's lexicological work. Certainly trio Kopitar–Miklošič–Jagić, according to Murko's statements, e.g., in Russia, represented in the Slavonic world the concept of the Viennese or Austrian Slavicist school.

As a Slavicist with a pan-Slavonic education, Murko did not limit himself only to Slovene Slavicists in his bio-bibliographical studies. Among foreign Slavicists and eminent men in general in the Slavonic world he presented the Czech lawyer and philologist Josef Konstantin Jireček, who was primarily an editor of old Czech texts, a literary historian, a grammarian, and a dialectologist.

With his commentaries on Oblak's linguistic work (Oblak having been Jagić's student), Murko pushed aside his own knowledge of phonetic and phonological problems. His comments on Oblak's dialectological studies show his linguistic-ethnological appreciation; he also admired the early correspondence between V. Oblak and J. Baudouin de Courtenay (Murko 1937a: 265). In discussing Oblak's work, Murko indirectly brings into the foreground his own conviction that the explanatory key for the great majority of linguistic phenomena in the Slavonic languages and in Slovene lies in a good knowledge of dialects and dialectal speech. In his presentation and commentary of the pair Oblak–Škrabec (although this mostly involved interpretations of what was already known and thus only partly Murko's own judgments are given) his good knowledge of developmental Slavonic phonetics is apparent (Murko 1899: 182–83).

Murko also acknowledged that Oblak's follower K. Štrekelj had a solid knowledge of living Slovene dialects. In fact he highly valued Štrekelj's philological breadth and the way he linked extensive philological knowledge in different areas of activity—in phonology, morphology, syntax and semantics (Murko 1962: 165). Thus, for example, he ascertains how etymological knowledge served him in explaining orthographical questions in the commentary to Levec's orthography, and he planned the eagerly anticipated historical grammar of the Slovene language, which was supposed to be the basis for all school grammars.

As a philologist Murko linked both linguistics and ethnology, thus he could distinguish in a scientifically critical way between ethnological and linguistic study. For example, he deemed Antun Mihanović merely an etymologist, one who never engaged scientifically in phonetics. As a kind of synthesis of ethnology and linguistics he also discussed Jan Kollár, who in Murko's opinion wrote the most comprehensive dictionary of “Indian, Gypsy and Slavonic words having the same meaning” (1839), and wondered how such a faithful defender of pan-Slavicism and “Slavonic reciprocity” could find the mother of the Slavonic Slavs in the goddess Suaha or Swaha (Murko 1937a: 95–97). Still more interesting for him was the explanation that *Svaha* derives from the interjection *svāhā*, which in the St Petersburg Sanskrit dictionary is explained as *altes Wunschwort: glücklich, günstig; als Zuruf Heil! Segen!* Murko further commented that among some uncritical researchers of Kollár's

work, the unsubstantiated idea about the Indian origin of the Slavs and the identification of Slavonic mythology with Indian was held for an unusually long time (Murko 1937a: 97; 1962: 60). In Murko's opinion the ideal Slav for Kollár would be A. Bohorič, who in his grammatical and lexicological work eulogized the relatedness, if not the unity, of the Slavonic languages. In general he admitted that in his opinion he had been very fortunate to have experienced such a great upswing of Kollár's idea about Slavonic reciprocity—in a greater measure than he himself could have expected (Murko 1962: 348).

### 2.1 Noteworthy linguistic (grammatical and lexicological) comments

Murko called himself a lover of words in the sense of the Alexandrian school (Murko 1937a: 453). He treated Slavonic philology as the “younger sister” of Germanic and Romance philology. In the linguistic development of a particular language he considered it necessary to see to what extent this language was treated in the spoken, lexical and dialectological fields, and from this viewpoint he put Czech in the top position among the Slavonic languages (Murko 1937a: 484).

Alongside traditional historical grammar he placed in the forefront “studying the living language” (Murko 1899: 215). In general, in commenting on and evaluating normative handbooks, Murko remarked that orthography for the ordinary non-scientific user ought not to be complicated but primarily such as was already established in everyday use (Murko 1899: 280), and that orthographic arguments were always something terrible, because fervent defenders of everything established are always to be found, and that the saying “Habit is a straitjacket” holds good nowhere so firmly as precisely in orthographic arguments (Murko 1937a: 10). He touched on language register when speaking of the incomprehensible translations of professional or scientific terminology, where Slavonicizing at all costs, circumventing the Slovene mentality, was certainly not worthwhile (Murko 1937a: 64). In commenting on concrete morphological examples from the standpoint of their historical development also in the methodological and didactic sense, he stressed the importance of knowing the oldest Slovene manuscripts for grammar and lexicon (Murko 1899: 150, 170–71, 177).

**2.1.1** In particular he set out Oblak's findings that one cannot speak of “the special life of some dialect, but only about the boundaries of this or that linguistic particularity of very different geographical extent and very different age” (Murko 1899: 245), and the realization that “language itself does not mark nationality, which is too often forgotten in the period of nationality conflicts” (Murko 1899: 248), since “where there are still no sharply defined.

**2.1.2** In connection with the somewhat fashionable study of Sanskrit, he tackled linguistic comparisons between Slavonic and Sanskrit. Murko (1937a: 93) also quoted the name of Antonín Jungmann and his study *On Sanskrit* (1821), which affirmed that Sanskrit is the source of all the later languages in Persia and Europe. Miklošič would not have contradicted ideas about language relationships between Sanskrit and the Slavonic languages, but at the same time he argued the necessity of first having a good linguistic knowledge of the relation between individual Slavonic languages and of ascertaining which of them is the most universal from the grammatical standpoint, and only then of tackling the comparison with non-Slavonic languages.

### 3 Slovene language and language policy

Murko linked terminology and language policy by showing the establishment and development of individual terms.

At the beginning of the migration period, the term for all the Slavs should be Slovene, until today this name should be preserved only for the Slovenes. The Protestants used the terms *slovienski*, *slovinski* and *slavinski* for the languages used on this territory. Even names like *Ilir*, *Ilirija*, *ilirski* were welcome (or apolitical) for a time because of their generality or neutrality, but when comparative linguists proved that Illyrians were not Slavs, they also dropped this terminology. Instead of *Ilir* the fairly neutral name *Jugoslaven* was suggested in 1839; this ought to have been *Jugosloven* according to phonetic rules (Murko 1937a: 519), since the form with *a* is derived from the Russian variant of Old Church Slavonic from words like *Slavjanin*, *slavjanskij*. He drew attention to Kopitar's naming or defining of Slovene and the Slavonic languages (Murko 1937a: 68–84), e.g., *slawischer Volksstamm*, *slawische Sprache*, *slawische Volkzweige*, which in Murko's opinion should have been normal at the beginning of the 19th century. He most often appealed to Linde's dictionary, where the author used the expressions *język słowiański* and *dialekty słowiańskie*. In Murko's judgment, Miklošič's term "altslovenische Sprache" for Old Church Slavonic was correct as regards old sources, but not his term "neuslovenische Sprache" for Slovene, as this is by no means the successor to Old Church Slavonic (Murko 1937a: 183). Murko considered it of practical importance to observe even such a detail, as he termed it, as preserving for the months of the year the internationally used Latin names, and not the Slavonic names, which cause only impractical confusion among the Czechs, Poles, Croats and Slovenes. Here practicality is essential, but in all other spheres fine Slavonic words can be preserved: "let us guard what is truly national, let us create new words in the spirit of the Slavonic languages and eradicate the really unnecessary foreign words" (Murko 1962: 306–7).

3.1. From the latter point Murko's wish can be clearly discerned, namely, that Germans should become acquainted with Slavonic literature from other fields of activity; one could say that he wanted to stress the development of language register within Slovene and other Slavonic languages, and thus to anchor these languages more firmly in all areas of everyday life (Murko 1937a: 492). In this way he puts forward the very important question of the development of professional language.

### 4 Slovene lexis within the lexicology-ethnology pair, linked by etymology

Murko's etymological inclination always led him to explain first of all the etymology of his terminology when discussing a particular phenomenon. Thus in dealing with a seminar for Slavonic philology, since he himself organized a model Slavacist seminar, he first explained the origin of the expression "seminar", which should be derived from Latin *seminarium*, which originally would indicate a seminary as well as the education of an upper-class child (Murko 1937a: 439).

4.1 "A contribution to lexicology and lexicography and to the study of the national epic" is the working sub-title of his article "The verb *knaditi*," published in Belić's volume (1937b: 225–29), in which he derived etymology from the narrowly philological linguistic field. Particular lexicological features stimulated him to investigate them with particular pleasure. Thus for the basic verb *knaditi* ('to create') and its various transformations from the lexicological viewpoint, by collecting data in the

field from folk reciters, i.e., from an ethnographic viewpoint, he searched for different semantic explanations for this verbal lexeme, whether simple or compound. Through his study of folk poetry he became convinced that the verb *knaditi* was still used throughout Herzegovina, where in conversation with gifted individuals—especially the reciters of heroic poems—he considered more usual words and phrases such as *pjesmu ispjevati*, *spjevati*, *iskriti*, *izmisliti*, *sastaviti*, *sastavljati*, *sklopiti*, *skrojiti*, *stvoriti* (*jedan fratar stvorio*), *stvarati* (*iz svoje glave raditi*). On other fieldwork expeditions, e.g., around Korčula, he heard *izumiti*, *složiti*, *krojiti*, *sklapati*, *sklepati nešto*, *skrpiti*, *komponiti* in addition to *ispevati*, *spivati*, and *izmišljati*, while among reciters “of all three faiths” he also heard quite unusual expressions such as *isknaditi*, *sknaditi*, *knaditi* and *isknaduje*. His fieldwork involved collecting the different contexts of the lexeme in question as well as the meanings for it: *pjesmu isknaditi* means ‘to create’, *pjesmu pjevati* means ‘to sing a melody’, *knaditi*—‘to create a text’, *pjesmu sknaditi*—‘se sasvim izmisliti bez događaja’ (226), *isknaditi pjesmu*—‘umije sastaviti’ (227). All the above meanings of the lexeme (/i/s)knaditi express the sense ‘to create, devise or compose’. But in individual examples or contexts the verb *sknaditi* means ‘to embellish, improve’ a poem, so that he heard examples like “malo treba priknaditi, onda je pjesma složnija” (228), and also “svaki pjevač zna da sknadi, malo doda, da ljepše izgleda, da prituri i svoje i izostavi što ne valja” (229). Taking into account the available dictionaries, Murko established that the lexeme was used only among Serbs and Croats, and was geographically restricted to Herzegovina (229).<sup>3</sup> From the etymological viewpoint he saw a common semantic origin only in the Polish verb *knować*, *knuję* with a new infinitive *knuć*, with which P. Skok also agrees in his *Etimologijski rječnik hrvatskoga ili srpskoga jezika* (Zagreb 1972, K-affixes with the headword *knaditi*). Important data from Skok’s etymological dictionary, which substantiate Murko’s explanation, indicate that compounds such as *isknaditi*, *sknaditi* are also used with the same meaning. According to Skok, the lexeme developed from the pre-Slavonic root \**кънь* or \**кънь*, which in Croatian and Serbian was extended with the rare suffix \*-ada to give \**кънда* in the meaning ‘pile of long pieces of tree-trunks’, and from this the derivative with \*-iti: *knaditi*, which has the meaning ‘to put tree stumps together into a pile’. The meanings established by Murko in his fieldwork are also confirmed by more recent dictionaries: in J. Jurančić’s Serbo-Croatian–Slovene dictionary (<sup>2</sup>1972): *knaditi*—‘to compose a poem’, *sknaditi*—‘to cobble together (a poem)’, (<sup>3</sup>1986): *knaditi*, (expressive)—‘to compose, knock together a poem’, *sknaditi*—‘to put together, compile’; in the *Rečnik srpskohrvatskoga književnog jezika* (Novi Sad 1967, vol. 2, Ž–K, 1973, vol. 5, P–S): *knaditi* (stylistic)—‘sastavljati, pevati pesmu’, *sknaditi*—‘sastaviti, složiti’. Besides their reciting to gusla or tambourine accompaniment, Murko commented that *kazivaju*, *kazuju* (i.e., they recite) poems, while uneducated people typically can only recite poems and do not know how to remake any work in a narrative fashion—they are like a machine which must finish its task and then begin it again (Murko 1951: 57, 223–24). Murko also added that the cult of *gusle* and *guslarji* (i.e., the instrum-

<sup>3</sup> In general the improvising ability of folk reciters is also affirmed by his more usual expressions such as *izmijenim*, *dodam*, *dodajem*, *priturim*, *dopunim*, *sam priložim*, *gradim*, *izostavim*, *odbacim*. In Dalmatia he heard “... da malo bistriji pjevač umije sklanjati pjesme” (Murko 1951: 254–55). There was frequent confirmation of Murko’s view that the true folk reciter was always to some extent an improviser as well.

ents and the performers) was over-emphasized and indeed exaggerated, since the artistic value is hidden primarily in the content of the work and in its execution and not in the instrument itself (Murko 1951: 47).

Proof for widespread reciting also without an instrument is provided by the so-called "itinerant reciting" in company with draught horses (Murko 1951: 225). In general Murko devoted a fair amount of commentary to lexis about reciting and listening, all of it interwoven with etymologizing about the origin of this or that term. Thus he observed that women and girls did not dare to recite love poems, or, rather, they avoided the term and instead of love poems used the general expression *versi*, *versinje*, the verb *versat* and the phrase *u versima pjevati* (Murko 1951: 192). Following the instrumental prelude came *pretpjev*, which he also identified as *pripjev*, *pripev*, which the reciter improvised with regard to the immediate circumstances (Murko 1951: 226). He distinguished alternate reciting, when one continues (*predvodi*) and the other joins him later (*prihvati*) or one can *pjeva* and the other *odgovara* (Murko 1951: 260–61). While gathering material, he established that it is sufficient for a true folk reciter if he hears the poem—however long it may be—only once. At the very first hearing he learns it—in this connection the relevant phrases are *pesem primiti*, *primati*, *naučiti* (Murko 1951: 66). Much folk vocabulary is linked with the coming into being of folk poems—Murko (1951: 497) calls it "terminologija za stvaranje epskih pjesama." There was also corroborating evidence for the so-called group/collective creating/reciting, especially of battle poems when the fighting was over (Murko 1951: 503).

4.2 A special linkage of linguistics and ethnology is presented by Murko's ethnographical writings, as he termed them—here the ethnological descriptions are threaded with etymological explanations of the vocabulary used. One of such "ethnographical writings" is most certainly his *Hiša Slovencev*. His descriptions of *gusle*, *tamboure* and other folk instruments had a similar etymological colouring (Murko 1951: 322–39).

His thorough knowledge of Pleteršnik's dictionary is obvious from his explanations, while his commentaries on dictionary solutions reveal his critical reading. By means of his etymological explanations Murko sharpened the linguistic standards as well as the sense and sensitivity for Slovene terminology.

Translated by Margaret Davis

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### Murkova leksikologija kot sinteza jezikoslovja in etnologije

Matija Murko je bil slovanski filolog v najširšem pomenu – zanimali so ga kulturni pojavi in problemi vsega slovanskega sveta. Poleg tega, da je bil priznan jezikoslovec, je deloval tudi na širokem področju slovanske etnologije. Prav zaradi strokovne širine je njegovo jezikoslovno in etnološko delovanje mogoče ovrednotiti tudi z leksikološkega vidika, čeprav je izraz leksikologija oz. leksikografija v zvezi s svojim delom redko eksplicitno uporabil, npr. v Belićevev zborniku je leta 1937 izšla razprava *Glagol knaditi* s podnaslovom *Prilog leksikografiji i proučavanju narodne epike*.

Prispevek z leksikološkim izhodiščem skuša Matijo Murka predstaviti predvsem kot jezikoslovca, ki je v svojih razpravah, največkrat z zgledi iz slovanskih ljudskih pesmi, problemsko a) ovrednotil jezikoslovne, predvsem etimološke, dialektološke, pa tudi nekatere pravopisne, razlage/rešitve svojih dveh učiteljev F. Miklošiča in V. Jagića, pa tudi V. Oblaka, J. Kollárja in K. Štreklja, npr. v razpravah *Prvi uspoređivači sanskrita sa slovenskim jezicima* (1897), *Kollárova vzajemnost slovanská* (1893), *Eine Jacob Grimm fälschlich zugeschriebene Rezension serbischer Volkslieder* (1904); b) predstavil in ovrednotil slovsko delo V. Karadžića, A. Murka, F. Miklošiča; c) povezoval vprašanja slovenske terminologije in jezikovne zvrstnosti z jezikovno politiko, npr. v člankih *Slovenski jezik v Jugoslaviji* (1922), *Jméno »Jugoslavija«* (1929); č) proučeval upravičenost/ustreznost uporabe slovenske in slovanske leksike v slovenskih, hrvaških in srbskih ljudskih pesmih, npr. v člankih *Tragom naše narodne epike* (1931), *Zgodovinski podatki o slovenskih narodnih pesmih* (1937); sem sodijo še



obravnave, tudi etimološke, slovenske leksike pri predstavljanju t. i. materialne kulture, npr. v članku o slovenski hiši.

### Murko's Lexicology as a Synthesis of Linguistics and Ethnology

Matija Murko was a Slavic philologist in the broadest sense, having interested himself in cultural phenomena and problems of the entire Slavic world. Moreover, he was a ranking linguist active also in the field of Slavic ethnology. Because of his wide-ranging expertise, his linguistic and ethnological activity can be evaluated from the perspective of lexicology. However, he rarely used the term lexicology or lexicography explicitly, e.g., his article in the 1937 *Beličev zbornik*, "Glagol *knaditi*," was followed by the subtitle "Prilog leksikografiji i proučavanju narodne epike."

Matija Murko primarily as a linguist who in his articles mostly employed examples from Slavic folk verse to treat: a. linguistic (mostly etymological), dialectological, as well as certain orthographic solutions of his two mentors, F. Miklošič and V. Jagić, as well as V. Oblak, J. Kollár, and K. Štrekelj, e.g., "Prvi uspoređivači sanskrita sa slovenskim jezicima" (1897), "Kollárova vzájemnost slovanská" (1893), "Eine Jacob Grimm fälschlich zugeschriebene Rezension serbischer Volkslieder" (1904); b. the presentation and evaluation of the dictionary work of V. Karadžić, A. Murko, and F. Miklošič; c. the connection of Slovene terminology and linguistic genre to language policy, e.g., in his articles "Slovenski jezik v Jugoslaviji" (1922), "Jméno 'Jugoslavija'" (1929); d. the study of the appropriateness of the use of Slovene and Slavonic lexicon in Slovene, Croatian, and Serbian folk verse, e.g., in his article "Tragom naše narodne epike" (1931), "Zgodovinski podatki o slovenskih narodnih pesmih" (1937). To this category belong his treatments, including etymologies, of Slovene lexicon in the presentation of material culture, e.g., in his article on the Slovene house.