

REPORTS

The Index of Serbian Folktales. A Website.

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This June a new website has been launched: a digital AaTh/ATU index of Serbian folktales (snpindeks.weebly.com). This report presents the background to the project, what its aims are, how it looks, and what our plans are for the website. For a better understanding, it is important to contextualize this project in the history of Serbian and South Slavic folkloristics.

There is no published index of tale types in Serbian folklore studies. In the South Slavic area, there is a Bulgarian index, and the first volume of a Slovenian index has recently been published. Still, it does not mean there has been a complete lack of indexing. The classical scholar and folklorist Veselin Čajkanović based the order of tales in his two influential anthologies [1927; 1929] on Aarne's 1910 index. Over several decades (starting before World War II), the ethnomusicologist Ljubica Janković compiled a systematic and alphabetic index of "motifs, themes and cycles" using a system of her own [1969; n.d.]; only in the 1950s did she become familiar with both of Thompson's indices when she was given them by Thompson himself. Still, her project remained uncompleted and unpublished. As folk epic was in the limelight of Serbian folklore studies, Branislav Krstić completed a Balkan Slavs' songs motif index that was published by the Serbian Academy of Arts and Sciences (SASA) in 1984, relying on Thompson's motif index. After 1945, institutes for folklore were founded in the major cities of the former Yugoslavia, where activities included indexing too, and some folklorists published historical-geographic monographs on specific types of narratives or ballads.

Nada Milošević Djordjević (1934-2021), a folk literature professor at the Faculty of Philology in Belgrade, otherwise responsible for the move toward structuralism in Serbian folkloristics, indexed a large collection of tales from Southern Serbia from the manuscript of the priest Dragutin Djordjević. Published by SASA in 1988, this collection remains a model for critical editions of folklore texts. In 1992, Snežana Samardžija, another folk literature lecturer from Belgrade, included an index in her thesis at the Faculty of Philology that detailed every published collection of Serbian and Croatian folktales published before 1900. This impressive work encompassed more than 4000 tales from eighty-nine publications. However, that part of her thesis has remained unpublished. Some other publications have also included indexes of prose material, such as the ongoing project, started in 1990s, of publishing folklore material from nineteenth-century journals in book form, jointly run by the Institute for Literature and Arts in Belgrade and Matica Srpska in Novi Sad. Finally, some collections were

indexed as part of BA and MA studies at the Faculty of Philology of the University of Belgrade. Some thesis research has also included indices and/or work on specific tale types. For example, Nemanja Radulović defended his thesis [2010] at the University of Belgrade on ATU 930, 930A, 931, 934, and similar types, based on published and unpublished sources. Marina Mladenović Mitrović defended her thesis this year at the University of Belgrade on the tales in the Ethnographic Collection of the SASA Archives (up to 1914); the thesis included an index of a vast array of materials from thirty-four collections. Variants of some other tale types in Serbian-speaking areas have been listed and researched in other monographs and articles (e.g., ATU 505-508, 980, and 981).

This historical introduction is necessary for the sake of explaining the present project's aims. This decades-long work is scattered across various editions; many of them—published in old journals or kept in university libraries—are not readily available to researchers or even widely known to exist. The digital index of Serbian folktales aims to present this research in one place and make it more available to folklorists. The emergence of other digital indices has been a nudge in this direction—Irish [Duchas Project n.d.], Georgian [Dadunashvili n.d.], Dutch, Norwegian [Eventyr og sagn. n.d.], the *Maerchenlexikon*, and various indices available at the Russian website ruthenia.ru. All have served as an impetus or models for our endeavors. The idea—at least in this initial stage—is not to create an entirely new index using all folk sources, but to create a kind of aggregate in which difficult-to-access research is compiled into one convenient index. The abovementioned indices are included, like Samardžija's index, from published books and students' papers; the project's creators have also included materials from their theses.

The digital index encompasses ninety-five collections or similar sources, most of them in their entirety, some only in part so far. The types range from 1 to 2200, with some being absent of course. The oldest publication is from 1821 (Vuk Karadžić's first collection); the most recent is from 2007. Some are the product of recent professional folklorists' work, based on transcripts of informants' speech; some are the work of nineteenth-century amateurs in which the language was often changed in the process of publication. Some contain only a couple of tales, while others encompass a few hundred. The collection of Vuk Karadžić, the founding father of Serbian folklore studies, whose tales have a status comparable to those of the Grimms in German culture, is not unknown to the international readership of folklorists. It is interesting to mention that Karadžić's collection has been indexed three times: by the Czech folklorist Rudolf Lužik, the Croatian folklorist Maja Bošković-Stulli in her review of Lužik, and Samardžija in her thesis. Lužik and Bošković-Stulli's work was included in the critical edition of Karadžić's collection in 1988. Some others have been included in Thompson's or Uther's index editions, such as Dragutin Djordjević's 1988 publication or Friedrich Krauss' book of South Slavic tales in German translation. Some of the included sources are less well known even to folklorists, especially sources from materials in the SASA Ethnographic Collection, which is a folklore archive. Because the index includes research conducted in previous periods, in some cases

the index used is Aarne-Thompson 1961, though Uther's 2004 has been used in newer studies. In some instances, Eberhard-Boratav's index was used (for example, for type 126), and elsewhere the Bulgarian index by Daskalova-Perkovska and her collaborators proved more useful. Then there is a contamination of types occurring so often (e.g., ATU 735+460B+737B*) that it can be considered an ecotype.

The website is divided into five sections: 1) the main part is the index itself available in MS Word format in Google docs (no log-in needed); 2) an overview of the sources with an explanation of abbreviations; 3) a short history of indexing in Serbian and former Yugoslav folkloristics; 4) links to studies of specific types, if they are available online (ATU 313, 327, 505-508, 510A, 736, 431, 930, 934, 980, in Serbian mostly) and some studies on the sources themselves too; and 5) a project description. The website includes both Serbian (Cyrillic and Roman) and English versions. It is possible to search the index by scrolling or using the search option for a tale type number or a specific collection. If a tale from the archival collection has been published, this information is provided in parentheses as well.

The project's team members are Nemanja Radulović, Professor of Folk Literature at the Faculty of Philology, Belgrade; Marina Mladenović Mitrović, Researcher at Belgrade's Institute for Literature and Arts; and Ivan Praštalo, Assistant at the Faculty of Philology, Belgrade. The English version of the website is provided by Danijela Lekić (Institute for Literature and Arts). Praštalo is responsible for the visual and graphic elements, including the original main theme illustration that was created specifically for this project.

It is important to emphasize that this project has been conceived as an ongoing one with long-term aims in mind. The idea is to keep adding new materials. While this is currently being done with the remaining indexed materials, in the future the project will add unindexed sources. Thus, the integration of existing research should serve as a springboard for a more encompassing index. The entire project has been created on a free hosting site, and the Faculty of Philology at the Institute for Literature and Arts and the Association of Serbian Folklorists have provided friendly support to ensure greater visibility and links to the website.

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