

BEFORE ETHNOMUSICOLOGY

The Opening Chapters of the
Miladinov Brothers'
Bulgarian Folk Songs (1861)

DOCUMENTARY PRESERVATION,
EDITORIAL ARCHITECTURE,
AND THE FOUNDATIONS OF
BULGARIAN ETHNOMUSICOLOGY



Before Ethnomusicology: *The Opening Chapters of the Miladinov Brothers' Bulgarian Folk Songs (1861)*

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First Edition

The Opening Document

The first document examined in this study is not a song but the title page of *Български народни пѣсни* (*Bulgarian Folk Songs*), published in Zagreb in 1861. Before a single text is presented, the volume identifies itself as a collection of Bulgarian folk songs, records that the material was collected by the brothers Dimitar and Konstantin Miladinov, notes that the book was published by Konstantin Miladinov, and identifies the printer, A. Jakić, together with the place and year of publication. The page contains no explanation of the collection, no statement of purpose, and no description of the repertory. Its language is entirely bibliographic. The oral tradition enters the historical record first as a printed object.¹

The distinction made on the title page between collecting and publishing deserves attention. The wording attributes the gathering of the songs to both brothers while assigning publication specifically to Konstantin. The document therefore preserves two separate stages in the history of the collection. The first belongs to the work of recording songs from oral tradition; the second belongs to the transformation of those manuscripts into a printed book. Later scholarship frequently cites *Bulgarian Folk Songs* simply as a publication, yet the title page records that publication as the final stage of a much longer documentary process.²

Turning the page, the reader encounters neither songs nor commentary but the organization of the volume itself. The contents divide the material into clearly identified groups long before any individual text is read. Heroic songs, church songs, wedding songs, seasonal songs, pastoral songs, laments, customs, beliefs, riddles, proverbs, games, and personal names appear as separate headings. The arrangement is editorial. The repertory has already been classified before the reader reaches the first song. The organization of the book therefore forms part of the evidence examined in this study.³

Only after this documentary framework has been established does Konstantin Miladinov address the reader in the preface. The opening pages are occupied not with literary criticism or musical description but with the circumstances under which the collection was assembled. The preface repeatedly returns to the practical work of gathering songs from different localities and preserving them before they disappeared from oral circulation. It records travel, correspondence, and collaboration as ordinary features of collecting rather than as exceptional achievements. The document is concerned first with how the collection came into existence.⁴

Among the best-known passages in the preface is Miladinov's observation that the repertory continually exceeded the expectations of the collectors. After copying large numbers of songs from one locality, they repeatedly believed that the available material had been exhausted, only to discover another body of songs elsewhere, "as if from a new spring." The comparison appears while describing the experience of collecting rather than the poetic qualities of the repertory itself. The image belongs to the documentary history of the book. Every completed notebook became evidence that additional material still remained beyond it.⁵

The preface also identifies many of the places from which songs entered the collection. Ohrid, Struga, Prilep, Veles, Kostur, Kukush, Strumica, and other towns are listed in succession without extended discussion of their musical differences. The accumulation of place names functions as documentation. Before readers encounter the repertory, they are shown the geographical path by which the repertory reached the printed page. The collection preserves songs, but the preface preserves the history of their collection.⁶

One feature of the document is equally important because of its absence. The subscription notice published before the appearance of the volume announced that the book would include musical notation for several dance melodies. The printed edition, however, contains almost exclusively song texts. The difference between the prospectus and the finished volume belongs to the documentary history of the publication itself. The announcement records an editorial intention; the printed book records what ultimately reached the press. The comparison reveals that the history of *Bulgarian Folk Songs* extends beyond the finished volume to include the process by which it was produced.⁷

The opening documents of the book—the title page, contents, preface, and subscription notice—precede the songs themselves. They establish the conditions under which the repertory should be read before the reader encounters the first text. For that reason, this study begins with these pages rather than with the songs they introduce. The documentary history of Bulgarian ethnomusicology begins not with an analytical theory or a field recording but with the publication of a book that records how oral tradition first entered a durable scholarly form.

The Preface as Documentary Evidence

The preface opens with an explanation of the circumstances under which the collection came into being rather than with a discussion of the songs themselves. Konstantin Miladinov identifies the work as the product of several years of collecting undertaken across numerous localities, immediately directing the reader's attention away from literary appreciation and toward the process by which the repertory entered the book. The songs are presented as the result of travel, correspondence, transcription, and editorial labor before they are presented as objects of reading.⁸

One passage has attracted repeated attention because it records the collectors' experience with unusual precision. After describing the continual accumulation of material, Miladinov observes that each time they believed the available repertory had finally been exhausted, another locality yielded an entirely different body of songs, "as if from a new spring." The comparison appears within a practical description of collecting rather than within an attempt to praise the poetry of the songs themselves. The metaphor belongs to the work of documentation. A spring continues to flow after water has been drawn from it; the repertory likewise continued to expand after notebooks had been filled. The observation records the collectors' growing realization that oral tradition could not be reduced to a finite corpus.⁹

The geographical list that follows deserves to be read with the same care. Ohrid, Struga, Prilep, Veles, Kostur, Kukush, Strumica, and additional places are named in succession as sources for the collection. The passage offers almost no commentary on regional style or musical difference.

Its immediate purpose is documentary. Each locality marks another point at which songs entered the manuscript. Read consecutively, the names form an itinerary of collecting rather than a geographical survey. The preface preserves the route by which the book itself was assembled.¹⁰

The subscription announcement published in *Dunavski Lebed* several months before the appearance of the book provides an instructive comparison. Prospective readers were informed that the collection would contain approximately seven hundred songs arranged in two columns, together with songs for church festivals, harvest, matchmaking, Lazarus Day, heroic narratives, songs of the fairies, shepherds' songs, humorous songs, lament songs, and eleven dance melodies accompanied by musical notation.¹¹ The finished volume preserves the textual repertory almost exactly as promised, but the musical notation announced in the prospectus is largely absent from the printed book. The comparison does not require speculation. It simply establishes that the editorial plan recorded before publication differs from the document ultimately placed before readers.¹²

The discrepancy invites attention not because it can be resolved with certainty but because it remains visible within the documentary record. The announcement survives. The printed volume survives. Between them lies an editorial decision that the available documents do not fully explain. Financial limitations, printing constraints, or changing priorities remain possible explanations, but the surviving documents do not identify a single cause. The evidence permits the observation that the projected contents and the published contents are not identical; it does not permit certainty about why the change occurred.¹³

The preface concludes without suggesting that the work of collecting had reached its natural end. Instead, the narrative leaves the impression of an undertaking interrupted by publication rather than completed by it. The book enters print because it must eventually be printed, not because the oral tradition has ceased to produce new material. The printed volume therefore occupies an intermediate position between oral performance and later scholarship. It preserves hundreds of songs, while simultaneously acknowledging that the repertory extended beyond the limits of the collection itself.¹⁴

The Repertory Begins

When the preface ends, the reader is not presented with a general anthology of miscellaneous songs. The editors have already determined the order in which the repertory will be encountered. The table of contents establishes this sequence before the first page of texts is reached, and the opening section follows that arrangement closely. The transition from editorial explanation to the songs themselves is abrupt. There is no commentary introducing individual pieces, no discussion of performance practice, and no attempt to interpret the material. The documentary voice of the preface gives way immediately to the voices preserved within the songs.¹⁵

The first entries are identified only by their place within the editorial organization of the collection. Titles are concise, numbering is continuous, and the texts follow one another with little interruption. The layout encourages continuous reading while simultaneously presenting each song as an independent document. Unlike later folklore publications, the editors rarely surround

individual texts with explanatory notes or extensive commentary. Their editorial presence recedes once the repertory begins. The printed page becomes almost entirely occupied by the collected texts themselves.¹⁶

This restraint deserves attention. The Miladinov brothers had numerous opportunities to explain historical references, identify singers, or compare regional variants, yet such interventions are comparatively rare. The documentary value of the collection rests primarily upon preserving the songs rather than interpreting them. Readers are expected to encounter the texts directly. Editorial authority remains visible through arrangement and transcription more than through commentary.¹⁷

The absence of musical notation becomes increasingly apparent as the collection progresses. Rhythm, melodic contour, vocal ornamentation, tempo, and timbre remain outside the printed page. Dialogue, poetic structure, repetition, and narrative survive because they can be represented typographically. Performance does not. The distinction is visible without requiring comparison to later ethnomusicological methods. The printed document preserves language with extraordinary care while leaving the sounding dimensions of the repertory largely beyond its reach.¹⁸

The decision is particularly striking because the songs themselves frequently contain internal references to singing, dancing, instrumental performance, and communal celebration. Readers repeatedly encounter descriptions of musical activity while remaining unable to hear the melodies that accompanied those events. The book therefore documents music through language. The repertory continually points toward performance while simultaneously demonstrating the limits of nineteenth-century print as a medium for preserving it.¹⁹

The organization of the songs also encourages comparison. Heroic narratives stand beside religious songs, wedding repertoires beside seasonal customs, laments beside humorous texts. The sequence allows recurring images, formulas, and expressions to emerge gradually across many pages rather than through editorial explanation. Repetition belongs to the tradition itself. The editors rarely interrupt that accumulation by drawing attention to it. The documentary strategy depends upon sustained exposure to the repertory instead of analytical commentary.²⁰

Reading the opening sections consecutively also reveals a second characteristic of the collection. Individual songs often conclude without explanation, immediately followed by another text from the same category. Narrative closure belongs to each song, not to the collection. The volume advances through accumulation rather than synthesis. Hundreds of individual documents gradually form a repertory whose breadth becomes apparent only through continued reading. The editorial structure encourages the reader to discover relationships independently rather than through prefatory interpretation.²¹

For the modern historian, these pages preserve two kinds of evidence simultaneously. They preserve the songs themselves, but they also preserve nineteenth-century editorial practice. Numbering, classification, orthography, spacing, and sequence all belong to the documentary history of the book. The collection may therefore be read not only as a repository of oral tradition but also as evidence of how oral tradition was transformed into print. Every editorial decision

remains visible because the editors generally refrain from explaining it. The printed page records the results of those decisions while leaving many of the deliberations behind them unstated.²²

Reading the First Section

The opening pages of the repertory are striking for what they do not contain. There are no dates of collection, no names of singers, no villages attached to individual texts, and no descriptions of performance. The reader receives the song almost exactly as it appears in the manuscript prepared for the press. Editorial intervention has already occurred through selection, transcription, spelling, and arrangement, but that intervention is largely invisible within the printed text itself. The book presents the songs with remarkable restraint. The documentary labor that produced the collection remains in the background while the repertory occupies the foreground.²³

The numbering of the songs immediately establishes another editorial principle. Every text becomes part of a continuous sequence extending across the entire volume rather than remaining confined within a local or regional collection. Individual songs retain their independence, yet the numbering encourages the reader to regard them as members of a single documentary corpus. The editors could have restarted the numbering with each category or divided the repertory into separate collections. Instead, they preserved continuity across the volume. The decision transforms hundreds of individual performances into one ordered archive.²⁴

The layout of each page reinforces this impression. Songs follow one another with relatively little interruption. Decorative elements are almost entirely absent. The eye moves from one text to the next without encountering lengthy editorial commentary or explanatory footnotes. White space is used sparingly. The page is organized to preserve the greatest possible amount of material rather than to emphasize individual compositions. Even before the reader begins comparing texts, the physical appearance of the volume communicates abundance. The document records not isolated examples but an extended repertory whose scale becomes visible only through accumulation.²⁵

One consequence of this editorial economy is that comparison becomes the reader's responsibility. The book rarely identifies recurring formulas, parallel narratives, or shared poetic structures. Instead, these relationships emerge gradually as similar expressions reappear across successive songs. Repetition is therefore experienced through reading rather than explained through annotation. The editors preserve the conditions under which comparison becomes possible without directing the reader toward particular conclusions. Their silence is methodological.²⁶

The language of the songs likewise remains remarkably close to regional usage. Variations in vocabulary, morphology, and orthography survive throughout the collection despite the obvious editorial effort required to prepare such a large volume for publication. The preservation of these linguistic features gives the repertory value extending beyond folklore alone. Philologists, historians, and linguists have repeatedly returned to the Miladinov collection because the texts preserve evidence of spoken language alongside narrative, custom, and poetic form. The editors do not advertise this broader scholarly usefulness. It becomes apparent through the texts themselves.²⁷

Another feature becomes noticeable only after several pages have been read consecutively. Narrative transitions that modern editors often smooth or explain are left untouched. Songs begin abruptly, conclude without summary, and are immediately followed by another text. The collection therefore preserves something of the rhythm of oral transmission itself. Individual performances remain discrete, yet together they accumulate into a documentary landscape whose coherence depends less upon editorial explanation than upon repeated exposure to the repertory.²⁸

The printed page also records the limits of what nineteenth-century publication could preserve. Readers encounter dialogue, imagery, refrains, and narrative sequence with remarkable fidelity, but melody remains absent. Rhythm survives only insofar as it is embedded in language. Tempo, vocal color, ornamentation, and performance practice disappear at the point where oral performance becomes typography. This limitation is visible on every page of the collection. The songs repeatedly point toward musical events that the document itself cannot reproduce. The book preserves the words that were sung while leaving the sound of singing outside its pages.²⁹

For that reason, the opening section of *Bulgarian Folk Songs* should not be read simply as the beginning of a repertory. It is also the beginning of a documentary method. The editors preserve texts with extraordinary care while accepting that other dimensions of musical life remain beyond the possibilities of print. Later Bulgarian scholars would confront those absences directly through notation, archival practice, recording technology, and ethnographic fieldwork. Those later developments do not diminish the achievement of the Miladinov collection. They begin from the documentary boundary established here.³⁰

Classification Before Interpretation

The table of contents establishes the architecture of the collection long before the reader reaches the first text. Categories are announced in sequence, and the sequence itself becomes part of the evidence. The editors do not explain why one group precedes another or provide a theoretical justification for their arrangement. They simply present an ordered repertory. The decision to classify the songs before presenting them is editorial rather than descriptive. The organization belongs to the book, not to the singers whose performances supplied its contents.³¹

The headings deserve to be read as documents in their own right. They are concise, functional, and largely free of explanation. Heroic songs, church songs, wedding songs, shepherds' songs, harvest songs, laments, humorous songs, and other categories appear as working labels that guide the reader through the volume. The headings do not define genres in analytical terms. They identify groups of material assembled by the editors for publication. The classification therefore records an editorial view of the repertory without explicitly arguing for it.³²

This arrangement also determines how comparison becomes possible. Songs associated with weddings appear beside other wedding songs; heroic narratives remain together; ritual materials occupy their own sections. The reader encounters repetition through proximity. Similar images, formulas, and narrative patterns become visible because the editors have placed related texts within the same documentary space. The printed order encourages comparison without directing its conclusions.³³

The documentary value of the headings becomes clearer when compared with the songs that follow them. Individual texts frequently resist neat categorization. A wedding song may contain religious imagery; a heroic narrative may include lament; seasonal customs may overlap with domestic ritual. The headings nevertheless remain fixed. They reflect editorial judgment rather than immutable properties of the repertory. The book preserves both the songs and the principles by which the editors chose to arrange them.³⁴

One consequence of this editorial structure is that the collection can be consulted as well as read. A reader searching for wedding repertory, heroic narratives, or ritual songs does not need to proceed page by page through the entire volume. The contents page transforms a large body of oral tradition into an organized reference work. This practical function receives little attention in the preface, yet it is immediately apparent in the physical construction of the book. The collection was designed to be used repeatedly rather than read only once from beginning to end.³⁵

The contents page therefore performs two tasks simultaneously. It guides the reader through the volume, and it records the editorial logic governing the arrangement of the repertory. The songs remain products of oral tradition, but the order in which they are encountered belongs entirely to the printed book. That distinction is fundamental to understanding *Bulgarian Folk Songs* as a historical document. The repertory is inherited from oral performance; its organization is inherited from the editors.³⁶

Reading the First Songs

The first song in the collection occupies an important position simply because it is first. The editors could have opened the volume with any number of texts drawn from hundreds of available songs. Their decision to begin here therefore belongs to the editorial history of the collection. The reader's first encounter with the repertory is determined not by chance but by arrangement. Before questions of melody, performance, or historical origin arise, the song functions as the opening document within the larger corpus.³⁷

The page itself deserves attention before the text is interpreted. The song is presented without introductory commentary, biographical note, or explanation of provenance. A number identifies its place within the collection, but no singer is named, no locality accompanies the transcription, and no date of collection is supplied. The editorial apparatus remains almost entirely absent. What survives on the printed page is the text alone. Modern readers may regard these omissions as limitations, yet they also reveal the documentary priorities of the publication. The editors sought first to preserve the repertory itself. Questions that later ethnomusicologists would regard as essential remained outside the documentary scope of the volume.³⁸

The language of the opening text immediately confirms that the editors resisted the temptation to reshape the repertory into polished literary prose. Regional vocabulary, grammatical forms, and poetic repetition remain visible throughout the transcription. The printed page preserves speech that still bears the marks of oral performance. The editorial labor required to transform a spoken tradition into print is considerable, yet the editors consistently avoid presenting

the songs as refined literary compositions. Their intervention is evident in transcription and arrangement rather than stylistic revision.³⁹

Repetition performs a structural function within the song itself. Lines return with only slight variation, phrases recur at regular intervals, and parallel constructions organize the movement of the narrative. Such repetition is not ornamental. It belongs to the compositional language of oral tradition. The printed text preserves patterns that would have assisted memory during performance while simultaneously providing the reader with visible evidence of oral composition. The song therefore records traces of performance even where performance itself cannot be reproduced typographically.⁴⁰

Dialogue occupies a similarly important place. Voices alternate rapidly without explanatory narration, allowing characters to emerge through speech rather than description. The printed page reproduces this movement directly. Readers are required to recognize changes in speaker from the language of the text rather than from editorial intervention. The economy of presentation reflects confidence in the conventions of the repertory. Little explanation is required because the editors assume familiarity with the forms they preserve.⁴¹

The relationship between text and melody is equally revealing because it is defined by absence. Nothing on the page indicates tempo, contour, rhythm, or vocal ornamentation. Yet the structure of the verses strongly suggests that the text originated in song rather than prose. Refrains, repeated formulas, balanced poetic lines, and regular patterns of expression continually point toward musical performance. The reader encounters language shaped for singing while remaining unable to recover the sound through the printed document alone. The page therefore preserves one dimension of performance while silently acknowledging the disappearance of another.⁴²

Only after several songs have been read consecutively does the editors' broader method become apparent. Individual texts differ in narrative, imagery, and dramatic situation, yet they are presented with remarkable consistency. Numbering, spacing, typography, and transcription remain stable from one song to the next. The documentary framework changes very little even as the repertory itself changes continually. Editorial consistency allows the reader to concentrate upon the songs rather than upon the apparatus surrounding them. The physical stability of the page becomes one of the defining characteristics of the collection.⁴³

For the historian, these opening texts preserve evidence at several levels simultaneously. They preserve oral poetry, they preserve nineteenth-century transcription practices, and they preserve editorial decisions concerning what aspects of performance were considered capable of entering print. None of these forms of evidence is announced explicitly. They emerge only through sustained reading of the document itself. The first songs therefore function not merely as examples of Bulgarian oral tradition but as evidence for the documentary methods through which that tradition entered the scholarly record.⁴⁴

Reading the Opening Song

The first song in the collection bears the heading “Юванъ Поповъ и Самовила. Отъ Струга.” (*Jovan Popov and the Samovila. From Struga.*) The heading occupies a single line and

performs only two documentary functions. It identifies the principal figures of the narrative and records the locality from which the text was collected. No singer is named, no date of collection is supplied, and no explanatory note accompanies the heading. The editors deliberately allow the song to enter the collection without interpretive mediation. The title and the place-name become the entire documentary apparatus surrounding the opening text.⁴⁵

The narrative begins immediately:

“Кинисал ми Јоан Попов,
да ми одит на Велигден,
на Велигден на оранье;
и ми дойде до полпъти,
и излезе Самовила,
Самовила самогорска,
пътищата му предстрети.”⁴⁶

*“Jovan Popov set out
to travel on Easter Day,
on Easter Day to plow the fields.
When he had reached the middle of the road,
a Samovila appeared,
a mountain Samovila,
and stood across his path.”*

The opening sentence is remarkable for its economy. The narrative does not begin by introducing Jovan Popov, explaining his social position, or describing the landscape through which he travels. Instead, the first verb immediately establishes movement. Jovan sets out before the reader knows anything about him. The journey precedes explanation. Only after the journey has begun does the supernatural interruption occur. The appearance of the Samovila is therefore not the beginning of the story but the disruption of an action already in progress.⁴⁷

The temporal setting is equally concise. The phrase “на Велигден” (*on Easter Day*) appears twice in successive lines, first identifying the feast itself and then connecting it with agricultural labor through the phrase “на оранье” (*to plow the fields*). The repetition is not merely stylistic. It fixes sacred time and ordinary labor within the same narrative moment before the supernatural figure enters the scene. The song assumes that its audience understands the significance of Easter without explanation. Neither the singer nor the editors interrupt the narrative to clarify its meaning.⁴⁸

The supernatural encounter is introduced with equal restraint. The text simply states “и излезе Самовила” (*and a Samovila appeared*), immediately followed by “Самовила самогорска” (*a mountain Samovila*). No description accompanies her appearance. The narrative does not explain what a Samovila is, describe her appearance, or justify her authority. The singer assumes a shared cultural vocabulary between performer and audience. The editors preserve that assumption in print by refusing to annotate the figure or interrupt the narrative with commentary.⁴⁹

The first direct speech belongs to the Samovila:

“Врати се, врати, Јоан Попов,
не оди ми на Велигден,
на Велигден на орање.”⁵⁰
*“Turn back, turn back, Jovan Popov.
Do not go on Easter Day,
on Easter Day to plow the fields.”*

The command appears without explanation. The Samovila gives no reason for the prohibition, and the narrator offers no interpretation of its significance. The dramatic force of the passage lies precisely in its abruptness. The reader encounters the command exactly as Jovan encounters it. The dialogue proceeds without editorial intervention, preserving the directness characteristic of oral performance.

Jovan answers with equal brevity:

“Бегай, бегай, Самовило...”⁵¹
Away with you, Samovila...
Be gone, Samovila...

His response rejects the warning without negotiation. The exchange is constructed through short imperatives rather than extended description. Character is revealed through speech instead of narration. The editors reproduce this alternation faithfully, allowing dialogue rather than commentary to propel the narrative forward.

Reading the passage aloud reveals another feature that remains invisible during silent reading. The repeated imperatives—“Врати се” (*Turn back*) and “Бегай” (*Go away*)—together with the recurring phrase “на Велигден” (*on Easter Day*), create an audible pattern of repetition. The printed page preserves these verbal repetitions with precision, but it cannot preserve the melody to which they were sung. Rhythm survives within the language; pitch, tempo, vocal ornamentation, and timbre do not. The document therefore records only one dimension of the original performance.⁵²

The opening song consequently introduces the reader to more than a narrative concerning Jovan Popov and the Samovila. It introduces the documentary method governing the entire collection. The editors preserve the spoken text with remarkable fidelity while refraining from supplying historical explanation, ethnographic commentary, or musical notation. The printed page records the words of the performance, leaving later readers to imagine the sound that once accompanied them.⁵³

Dialogue, Repetition, and Documentary Economy

The conversation between Jovan Popov and the Samovila unfolds almost entirely through alternating speech. Narrative description becomes increasingly sparse once the dialogue begins. The narrator identifies the speaker only when necessary, allowing the exchange itself to carry the dramatic movement of the song. This economy of narration is characteristic of the opening text. The singer does not pause to explain motives or psychological states. Instead, character emerges

through command, refusal, and repetition. The Miladinov brothers preserve this structure without editorial expansion, allowing the cadence of oral performance to remain visible on the printed page.⁵⁴

The repeated command “Врати се” (*Turn back*) is especially significant because it appears before any explanation has been offered. The imperative does not persuade through argument; it demands immediate obedience. The repetition intensifies the warning while preserving the rhythmic balance of the verse. Likewise, the repeated phrase “на Велигден” (*on Easter Day*) fixes the temporal setting through recurrence rather than exposition. The listener is not reminded of the importance of the feast through commentary but through the continual return of the words themselves. Memory is reinforced by repetition instead of explanation.⁵⁵

Jovan's response is equally economical. His reply, “Бегай, бегай, Самовило” (*Away with you, Samovila! Away with you!*), mirrors the structure of the supernatural warning. Both speakers employ doubled imperatives. Neither attempts extended persuasion. The dramatic tension arises from the collision of two commands rather than from a debate. Oral narrative frequently depends upon this balance of repeated phrases, and the editors preserve those repetitions exactly as they occur in the collected text.⁵⁶

The language of the exchange also illustrates the editors' editorial restraint. Dialect forms remain intact throughout the transcription. Vocabulary, morphology, and syntax have not been regularized into a standardized literary language. The printed page therefore preserves linguistic features that belonged to the performance tradition from which the song was collected. These forms possess value beyond the narrative itself. They record aspects of nineteenth-century vernacular speech that later scholars of language, folklore, and literature would examine alongside the songs. The Miladinov brothers do not identify these forms as objects of linguistic study; they simply preserve them.⁵⁷

The absence of explanatory annotation becomes increasingly noticeable as the dialogue develops. Modern editions frequently identify supernatural beings, explain regional customs, or supply glossaries for unfamiliar expressions. The 1861 edition generally does none of these things. Readers are expected to recognize the Samovila without definition, to understand the significance of Easter without commentary, and to follow the narrative without historical notes. The editors consistently privilege preservation over interpretation. Their confidence in the cultural knowledge shared by performers and readers becomes part of the documentary character of the volume.⁵⁸

The visual presentation of the song reinforces this editorial philosophy. Speech flows continuously across the page with only the punctuation and lineation necessary to distinguish one utterance from another. There are no marginal notes, analytical headings, or references directing the reader elsewhere in the volume. The song occupies the printed page almost entirely on its own terms. The physical layout therefore reflects the same documentary economy evident in the language itself. Editorial intervention has already occurred through collection, transcription, and arrangement; it rarely intrudes upon the reader's encounter with the text.⁵⁹

Reading the opening song as a document also reveals what the collection cannot preserve. The alternating voices strongly imply changes in vocal color, emphasis, tempo, and perhaps even melodic contour during performance. None of these dimensions can be recovered directly from the printed page. The editors preserve dialogue with remarkable precision, but they cannot preserve the sound through which that dialogue originally acquired much of its expressive force. The first song therefore illustrates the central limitation of nineteenth-century documentary practice. Print captures words with extraordinary fidelity while allowing the musical event itself to disappear.⁶⁰

For that reason, "Юванъ Поповъ и Самовила" (*Jovan Popov and the Samovila*) functions as more than the opening narrative of the collection. It establishes the documentary conditions under which every subsequent song will be encountered. The reader receives the words, their sequence, their repetitions, and their dialectal forms, but not the melodies that animated them in performance. The Miladinov brothers preserve what the printed page could contain and, by omission, reveal what nineteenth-century print could not yet preserve.⁶¹

Editorial Silence and the Printed Page

The heading "Отъ Струга." (*From Struga*.) occupies only two words, yet it is the only explicit statement of provenance attached to the song.⁶² The locality is preserved, but the path by which the text reached the editors is not. The page does not identify the singer, the intermediary who transmitted the text, the date of collection, or whether multiple versions were compared before publication. These absences are not editorial oversights so much as characteristics of nineteenth-century documentary practice. The Miladinov brothers consistently privileged the preservation of the repertory itself over the preservation of the circumstances surrounding individual performances. The printed page therefore records origin in geographical terms while remaining largely silent about the act of collection.

This silence becomes increasingly significant when compared with the preface. There, Konstantin Miladinov repeatedly describes travel, correspondence, and the practical labor of gathering songs from numerous localities. Once the repertory begins, however, those activities disappear almost entirely from view. The reader encounters finished texts rather than the process through which those texts entered the manuscript. The transition is deliberate. The preface documents the making of the collection; the songs allow the collection to stand on its own.

The editorial decision not to interrupt the text with explanatory notes also deserves attention. The Samovila appears without definition because the editors assume that the figure requires none. The same economy governs the references to Easter, plowing, and travel. These elements are presented as ordinary components of the narrative world rather than as ethnographic curiosities. Modern editions often surround such passages with glossaries or interpretive commentary, but the 1861 volume generally resists that impulse. Readers are expected to meet the song on its own terms.

That restraint has important consequences for the historian. Because explanatory material is largely absent, the language of the song assumes greater documentary importance. Repeated imperatives, formulaic expressions, and recurring images become the principal evidence through

which the structure of the narrative can be understood. The editors have not told the reader how to interpret the text; they have preserved the text with sufficient fidelity that interpretation may proceed from the document itself. Their editorial method is therefore one of presentation rather than explanation.⁶³

The placement of “Јованъ Поповъ и Самовила” (*Jovan Popov and the Samovila*) at the beginning of the volume also raises a question that the document itself does not answer. Nothing in the heading or surrounding pages explains why this particular song was selected to open the collection. The editors provide no introductory note identifying it as the oldest, the most representative, or the most important example. The evidence permits only the observation that it occupies the first position in the printed repertory. Any further explanation would require documentation beyond the volume itself. The document preserves the editorial choice but does not record the reasoning behind it.

That distinction is methodologically important. It is tempting to infer symbolic significance from the opening position of the song, yet the surviving evidence does not explicitly support such a conclusion. The historian's task is to distinguish between what the document records and what later readers might reasonably infer from it. In this instance, the document records placement, locality, and text. It does not record editorial intention. Recognizing that limit is part of reading the source historically rather than retrospectively.⁶⁴

As the narrative continues beyond the opening dialogue, the same editorial principles remain in force. Speech advances the action, narration remains economical, and the editors refrain from explanatory intervention. The printed page consistently privileges preservation over commentary. That consistency, established in the very first song, becomes one of the defining characteristics of the collection as a whole.⁶⁵

Repetition and Formulaic Structure

The exchange continues with Jovan's threat:

“Бегай, бегай Самовило!
Дан’ ти слезамъ отъ моя-ва,
Отъ моя-ва бжрза коня;
Дан’ те фатамъ за твоя-та,
За твоя-та руса коса...”⁶²
“Go away, go away, Samovila!
*Or I shall climb down from my swift horse,
From my swift horse;
Or I shall seize you by your,
By your fair hair...”*

The opening imperative, “Бегай, бегай” (*Go away, go away*), repeats the same verb without variation. The doubling intensifies the command while preserving the rhythm of the verse. Similar repetition appears immediately afterward in “Отъ моя-ва, / Отъ моя-ва бжрза коня” (*From my, / From my swift horse*) and again in “За твоя-та, / За твоя-та руса коса” (*By your, / By your fair*

hair). The repetitions are part of the text itself. The editors reproduce them without abbreviation or editorial smoothing, preserving the verbal structure of the performance.⁶³

The sequence of threats develops incrementally:

“Дан’ те вѣрзамъ бѣрзу коню,
Бѣрзу коню за опашка;
Дан’ те влечамъ, како брана.”⁶⁴
*“Or I shall tie you to my swift horse,
To the tail of my swift horse;
Or I shall drag you like a harrow.”*

The comparison “како брана” (*like a harrow*) introduces an agricultural implement familiar within the rural world of the song. No explanation accompanies the image. The comparison assumes that listeners understand what a harrow is and how it moves across the ground. The text leaves the simile unexplained, and the printed page preserves that economy without annotation.

The Samovila answers not with extended speech but through action:

“Сѣ разлюти Самовила,
Та отпуци руса коса,
Му сопнала бѣрза коня.”⁶⁵
*“The Samovila became angry.
She let down her fair hair.
She caused his swift horse to stumble.”*

The narration remains concise. Three successive actions are presented in three successive lines. The relationship between the Samovila's loosened hair and the stumbling horse is not explained. The text records the sequence without commentary. Readers are expected to accept the connection as part of the narrative world established by the song.

Jovan immediately fulfills the threat announced earlier:

“Сѣ налюти Јоанъ Поповъ,
Та ѣ фати Самовила,
Та ѣ фати за нейдзина,
За нейдзина руса коса...”⁶⁶
*“Jovan Popov became angry.
He seized the Samovila.
He seized her by her,
Fair hair...”*

The wording closely echoes the earlier threat. The phrase “руса коса” (*fair hair*) returns unchanged, and the action first announced conditionally is now narrated as completed. The repetition creates continuity within the song. Earlier speech becomes later action through the reuse of the same vocabulary.

The narrative then shifts abruptly from conflict to the household:

“Я излези, мила майко!
Ете ти нося невестица,
Невестица Самовилска.”⁶⁷
“Come out, dear Mother!
Here I bring you a bride,
A Samovila bride.”

The address “мила майко” (*dear Mother*) introduces a domestic setting immediately after the confrontation on the road. The word “невестица” (*little bride* or *young bride*) replaces the language of pursuit and capture without explanation. The text does not pause to reconcile the change. It simply records the next stage of the narrative.

This movement from road, to confrontation, to household occurs without editorial interruption. The printed page contains only the song. No note explains the figure of the Samovila, the significance of the household, or the transition from adversary to bride. The narrative remains entirely within the words of the collected text. That editorial restraint is one of the defining characteristics of the Miladinov collection and is already visible in its opening song.⁶⁸

The Household

The narrative changes location without transition. The road disappears, and the action moves immediately to Jovan Popov's home. The change is announced through direct speech:

“Я излези, мила майко!
Ете ти нося невестица,
Невестица Самовилска.”⁶⁹
“Come out, dear Mother!
Here I bring you a bride,
A Samovila bride.”

The address “мила майко” (*dear Mother*) is the first indication that another member of the household has entered the narrative. The mother is not introduced beforehand, nor is her presence explained. Like every other character in the song, she appears only when the narrative requires her. The text assumes no distinction between introduction and action. Characters enter the song through speech rather than description.

The noun “невестица” (*young bride* or *little bride*) deserves particular attention. Until this point the Samovila has been identified only as a supernatural being encountered on the road. Jovan now introduces her with a domestic title. The vocabulary changes, but the song offers no explanation for the change. The printed text simply records the new designation. The transition from adversary to bride occurs within the language of the narrative itself rather than through editorial comment.⁷⁰

The mother's reply is brief and practical:

“Добре дошла, невестице...”⁷¹
“Welcome, little bride...”

No expression of surprise accompanies the greeting. The text does not pause to question the extraordinary nature of the visitor. The household accepts the arrival through ordinary speech. Once again, the narrative advances through dialogue rather than explanation.

As the song continues, time begins to pass more rapidly than before. The encounter on the road unfolds line by line, yet the years within the household are compressed into only a few verses. The text states that the Samovila remains in Jovan's house, bears a son, and lives with the family. These events are reported with remarkable economy. Long periods of domestic life occupy fewer lines than the initial encounter on the road. The singer preserves only those moments necessary for the movement of the narrative.⁷²

One passage marks the passage of time explicitly:

“Три години...”⁷³

“*Three years...*”

The phrase appears without elaboration. The text does not describe the passing seasons, the growth of the child, or the daily life of the household. Three years are condensed into a single statement. The narrative rhythm therefore differs sharply from chronological time. Moments of confrontation receive detailed attention, while extended periods of ordinary life are reduced to only a few words.

The birth of the child likewise receives little description. The song records the event as part of the continuing narrative rather than as its climax. The child enters the story because he becomes necessary for what follows. The economy of narration remains consistent throughout the song. Important events are acknowledged, but rarely expanded. The document preserves sequence more carefully than description.

The Samovila eventually speaks again:

“Сега... нигде веке не побегвамъ,

Защо я си имамъ то'а мъшко дете.”⁷⁴

“*Now... I shall never run away anywhere again,*

Because I have this little son.”

The promise is expressed in direct language. The Samovila does not appeal to affection, obligation, or duty. She simply states that she will not flee because of her child. The narrator offers no indication whether the statement should be believed. The song records the words without comment, leaving the listener to discover their significance only through the events that follow.

The final episode begins almost immediately after this assurance. Once the opportunity presents itself, the Samovila departs:

“Дваш ми е трепнала,

треки път летнала,

и си оставила тоа мъшко дете,

и си е отишла, от ке е та дошла.”⁷⁵

“*Twice she fluttered,*

The third time she flew away.

*She left behind the little boy,
And went back to the place from which she had come.”*

The conclusion mirrors the opening movement of the song. At the beginning, the Samovila entered the human world by appearing suddenly on the road before Jovan Popov. At the end, she leaves that world just as abruptly. The text does not describe her destination beyond the simple phrase “от ке е та дошла” (*from where she had come*). The narrative closes by restoring distance rather than resolving it. The final image belongs not to the household but to departure.

The editors allow the song to end at precisely that point. No concluding explanation follows. No moral is supplied. No attempt is made to interpret the events or explain the behavior of either Jovan or the Samovila. The narrative ends when the song ends. The printed page passes immediately to the next text in the collection, preserving the same editorial restraint that has characterized the song from its opening lines.⁷⁶

The Closing Movement of the Song

The final verses restore the pattern established at the beginning of the narrative. The Samovila first entered the song suddenly, interrupting Jovan Popov's journey without explanation. She leaves in the same manner. The concluding lines describe departure with remarkable brevity:

“Дваш ми е трепнала,
треки пжт летнала,
И си оставила то'а мжшко дете,
И си е отишла, отъ ке е та дошла.”⁷⁷
“*Twice she fluttered,
on the third time she flew away.
She left behind the little boy,
and went back to the place from which she had come.”*

The first two lines slow the action through repetition. The phrase “Дваш ми е трепнала” (*Twice she fluttered*) delays the decisive movement that follows. Only in the next line does the verb change to “летнала” (*flew away*). The sequence records successive actions rather than a single event. The singer does not write that she “suddenly flew away.” Instead, departure unfolds in stages.

The closing phrase, “отъ ке е та дошла” (*from where she had come*), recalls the beginning of the narrative without naming the place. The destination remains indefinite. Unlike the heading, which identifies the locality of collection as “Отъ Струга” (*From Struga*), the conclusion identifies no geographical location within the story itself. The narrative closes with movement rather than destination. The text records return without describing what lies beyond it.⁷⁸

One feature of the conclusion deserves particular attention. The child remains behind after the Samovila's departure. The song records this in a single line:

“И си оставила то'а мжшко дете.”⁷⁹
“*She left behind the little boy.”*

The sentence contains no expression of grief, regret, or surprise. The narrator neither praises nor condemns the action. The line is presented with the same economy that characterizes the rest

of the narrative. The event is recorded rather than interpreted. Readers encounter the fact before any judgment.

The final line concludes the narrative immediately after the Samovila's departure. No account is given of Jovan Popov's response, the mother's reaction, or the future of the child. The song simply ends. Modern prose often extends beyond the principal action to provide resolution or reflection, but the closing verses do neither. The performance reaches its final event and stops. The editors preserve that ending exactly as they received it, allowing the narrative to conclude without explanatory commentary.⁸⁰

The absence of editorial intervention is particularly noticeable here. A nineteenth-century literary editor might have supplied a brief note explaining the Samovila tradition or commenting upon the unusual conclusion. The Miladinov brothers refrain from doing so. The final page of the song contains only the collected text. Once the narrative ends, the collection proceeds directly to the next item in the repertory. The transition belongs to the editorial arrangement of the volume rather than to the story itself.

Read as a printed document, the first song therefore preserves several distinct layers of evidence simultaneously. It preserves a narrative concerning Jovan Popov and the Samovila. It preserves linguistic forms characteristic of the dialect in which the song was recorded. It preserves patterns of repetition, dialogue, and formulaic expression associated with oral composition. Finally, it preserves nineteenth-century editorial practice through what it omits as much as through what it includes. The page contains no performer, no date of collection, no musical notation, and no explanatory notes. Those absences are visible features of the document itself.⁸¹

Only after the first song has been read from beginning to end can the reader appreciate the editorial consistency of the collection. The Miladinov brothers do not interrupt the narrative with historical explanation, linguistic glosses, or ethnographic commentary. They present the text, identify its locality, and allow the song to stand on its own. That editorial discipline, established in the opening pages of the volume, governs the remainder of the collection and forms one of its most enduring documentary characteristics.⁸²

From One Song to the Collection

Only after the first song has been read in its entirety does its position within the volume become fully apparent. Nothing on the page announces that “Јованъ Поповъ и Самовила. Отъ Струга.” (*Jovan Popov and the Samovila. From Struga.*) should be regarded as exceptional. The heading does not describe it as ancient, representative, or especially important. The editors simply placed it first. The significance of that decision lies in the document itself. Every reader of the collection encounters this narrative before any other. The opening experience of the repertory has therefore been determined editorially rather than narratively.⁸³

The first song also establishes conventions that recur throughout the volume. The heading identifies the narrative and, where appropriate, the locality. The text begins immediately. Dialogue advances the action with little narrative explanation. Formulaic repetition structures the verse. The conclusion arrives without editorial reflection, and the next song begins almost at once. These

characteristics are already visible in the opening pages of the collection. They do not require comparison with later songs to be observed. They are present in the first document the reader encounters.⁸⁴

One omission becomes increasingly conspicuous after the completion of the narrative. The song preserves neither the identity of the performer nor the circumstances of performance. The locality “ОТЪ Струга” (*From Struga*) records geographical provenance, but nothing on the page identifies the individual from whom the song was collected. Whether the editors heard the performance directly, copied it from an intermediary, or compared multiple versions cannot be determined from the printed text alone. The document preserves the song with remarkable care while remaining almost entirely silent concerning its transmission from performer to manuscript.⁸⁵

This silence should not be mistaken for negligence. Throughout the preface the editors describe the practical work of collecting songs across numerous regions, acknowledging the assistance of correspondents and collaborators. Once the repertory begins, however, those collecting practices largely disappear from view. The printed collection separates the history of gathering the songs from the songs themselves. The preface documents the process; the repertory preserves the results. Read together, the two sections complement one another. Read independently, each leaves questions that the other partially answers.⁸⁶

The first song likewise illustrates the documentary possibilities and limitations of nineteenth-century print. Every line of text, every repeated phrase, and every dialogue exchange survives in fixed form. The melody does not. Neither rhythm, vocal inflection, tempo, nor ornamentation can be reconstructed from the page alone. The printed document therefore records the verbal dimension of performance with considerable precision while preserving the musical dimension only indirectly through poetic structure and repetition. The distinction is visible in the document itself. No comparison with later recording technology is necessary to recognize it.⁸⁷

The relationship between preservation and omission becomes one of the defining features of the collection. The Miladinov brothers preserved what nineteenth-century typography could reliably transmit: words, sequence, dialogue, headings, and editorial organization. Other elements remained beyond the capacity of the printed page. The absence of notation, performer identification, and contextual description should therefore be read first as documentary evidence before being interpreted as editorial deficiency. The book records exactly what it was capable of preserving.⁸⁸

Seen in this light, the opening song functions as more than the beginning of a repertory. It introduces the documentary principles that govern the entire volume. The editors identify the song, record its locality, reproduce its language, and withdraw from further explanation. The result is neither a literary anthology nor an ethnographic report in the modern sense. It is a documentary edition of oral texts prepared for print at a moment when the technologies and scholarly conventions of ethnomusicology had not yet developed. Every subsequent page of the collection proceeds under those same conditions.⁸⁹

For that reason, the importance of "Јованъ Поповъ и Самовила" extends beyond its narrative. As the first document in the repertory, it teaches the reader how the remainder of the volume should be approached. The songs are presented with editorial restraint, linguistic fidelity, and minimal commentary. Their order belongs to the editors; their language belongs to the tradition from which they were collected. That balance between editorial organization and textual preservation remains one of the most enduring characteristics of Български народни пѣсни (*Bulgarian Folk Songs*).⁹⁰

Ordering the Repertory

Before the reader encounters the majority of the songs preserved in Български народни пѣсни (*Bulgarian Folk Songs*), the editors have already imposed an order upon them. The sequence appears in the table of contents without explanation. No introductory remarks accompany the arrangement, and no theoretical discussion explains why one category precedes another. The headings simply appear one after another, establishing the architecture of the volume before the first page of the repertory has been read.⁹¹

The headings themselves deserve examination as documentary evidence. They occupy little space, usually consisting of only a few words, yet they determine how hundreds of songs will be encountered. Their brevity is striking. The editors define neither terminology nor criteria of inclusion. They do not explain why a particular text belongs within one section rather than another. Classification is presented as an editorial fact rather than an editorial argument. The printed page records the results of organization while remaining silent concerning the process through which that organization was achieved.⁹²

The opening section is devoted to songs concerning the Samovila. The decision immediately distinguishes the collection from a simple chronological anthology. The editors did not begin with seasonal customs, religious festivals, or domestic songs. They chose narratives centered upon one of the most recognizable supernatural figures within the South Slavic oral tradition. The heading identifies the category, but it does not define the figure. Readers are expected to recognize the term "Самовила" (*Samovila*) without explanatory notes. The collection therefore assumes a considerable degree of shared cultural knowledge between editor and audience.⁹³

The heading performs another function that becomes apparent only after reading several songs within the section. Individual narratives differ substantially from one another, yet their placement beneath a common heading encourages comparison before interpretation. Similar figures recur, but the narratives themselves remain distinct. The classification groups related material while preserving the individuality of each text. The editors do not smooth those differences or attempt to harmonize conflicting details. The category provides organization without demanding uniformity.⁹⁴

One feature of the headings deserves particular attention. They identify subjects rather than analytical genres. The editors do not distinguish between mythological narrative, ballad, lyric, or epic according to modern scholarly terminology. Instead, they adopt names that emerge naturally from the repertory itself. The vocabulary of classification remains close to the vocabulary of the

collected material. The editorial language therefore preserves continuity with the tradition rather than replacing it with an external analytical system.⁹⁵

This restraint becomes increasingly significant when viewed alongside later folklore scholarship. Twentieth-century editors frequently introduced elaborate systems of genre classification, assigning numerical categories, typological descriptions, or comparative references to individual texts. The Miladinov volume contains nothing comparable. Its headings guide the reader through the repertory but rarely attempt to define it theoretically. The organization remains practical rather than systematic. The document records an editorial arrangement instead of an academic taxonomy.⁹⁶

The physical appearance of the contents page reinforces this impression. Each heading occupies the same typographical position within the list. No category receives visual emphasis beyond its place in the sequence. The arrangement encourages continuous movement through the repertory rather than directing attention toward particular sections. Even before the first song is read, the editors establish a rhythm of classification that will continue throughout the volume. The structure belongs to the printed book itself.⁹⁷

The absence of explanatory commentary also has important consequences for interpretation. Modern readers may wish to know why the Samovila section precedes heroic songs or why ritual materials occupy another position within the volume. The table of contents does not answer those questions. It records the editorial order but not the reasoning behind it. Distinguishing between those two kinds of evidence is essential. The document preserves arrangement. Editorial intention remains largely beyond the reach of the surviving text.⁹⁸

Only after recognizing that distinction can the contents page be read historically. It is neither a transparent reflection of oral tradition nor an arbitrary list of materials. It is an editorial document prepared for publication in Zagreb in 1861. Every heading, every sequence, and every division belongs to that act of publication. The songs originated in oral performance; their arrangement originated on the printed page. That difference governs the remainder of the collection and provides one of the principal themes of this study.⁹⁹

Reading the Table of Contents

The sequence of headings also establishes a rhythm that continues throughout the volume. Each section is introduced in the same typographical manner. No heading is ornamented beyond the others, and no visual distinction marks one category as more important than another. The uniform appearance of the contents page encourages the reader to regard every section as part of a single repertory rather than as independent collections bound together for convenience. The physical presentation of the page therefore contributes to the unity of the volume as much as the songs themselves.¹⁰⁰

The contents page also records the editors' preference for concise descriptive titles. Categories are generally identified by the subject or occasion associated with the songs rather than by abstract terminology. The headings function as navigational devices. They allow readers to locate portions of the repertory quickly while avoiding lengthy explanation. Their practical character

becomes evident when the contents are read independently of the songs. The page resembles an index prepared for consultation as much as an introduction prepared for continuous reading.¹⁰¹

Another characteristic becomes visible through the order of the headings. The collection does not alternate systematically between narrative and lyric materials, nor does it arrange songs according to length or presumed antiquity. Instead, related texts remain together for extended portions of the volume. Once a category begins, the reader remains within that portion of the repertory until the editors introduce the next heading. The contents page therefore establishes continuity within categories before continuity across the collection as a whole.¹⁰²

The consistency of this arrangement suggests careful editorial planning, although the surviving document does not describe how that planning took place. The table of contents records the completed organization but not the deliberations that produced it. Whether alternative arrangements were considered, whether categories changed during preparation of the manuscript, or whether the order reflects earlier notebooks cannot be determined from the printed volume alone. Those questions remain outside the evidence presently available. The contents page documents the final editorial decision without preserving the history of its formation.¹⁰³

This distinction between documentary evidence and editorial intention deserves emphasis because it recurs throughout the collection. The historian can observe that the Samovila songs occupy the opening section. The historian cannot conclude from the contents page alone why the editors made that decision. Similar caution applies to every subsequent heading. The document records placement. It does not record motive. Recognizing the boundary between those two forms of evidence is essential to a documentary reading of the volume.¹⁰⁴

The contents page also reveals that the editors understood the collection to encompass more than songs. As the reader proceeds through the headings, the repertory gradually expands to include customs, beliefs, games, proverbs, riddles, and personal names. These materials appear within the same volume and under the same editorial authority as the songs themselves. The transition occurs quietly. No new introduction announces the change, and no explanation distinguishes one kind of material from another. The table of contents simply broadens the scope of the collection.¹⁰⁵

That expansion is significant because it reveals the documentary ambitions of the publication. The Miladinov brothers did not limit themselves to preserving sung texts. The contents page shows an effort to record multiple forms of vernacular knowledge within a single printed volume. Songs occupy the largest portion of the collection, but they do not define its entirety. The arrangement presented in the contents anticipates a broader documentary enterprise concerned with language, custom, and everyday practice alongside oral poetry.¹⁰⁶

Read in this manner, the table of contents functions as more than a navigational aid. It records how the editors understood the material they had assembled and how they wished future readers to encounter it. Every heading represents an editorial decision fixed in print. The songs themselves originated in oral performance, but the order in which they have been preserved belongs to the documentary history of the 1861 edition.¹⁰⁷

Classification Without Definition

One feature of the contents page becomes increasingly noticeable the longer it is examined. The editors consistently identify sections without attempting to define the terms they employ. Headings appear as though their meaning were already understood by the intended readership. No glossary accompanies the opening pages of the volume, nor does the preface pause to distinguish one category from another. The printed document assumes familiarity instead of providing instruction. That assumption forms part of the documentary character of the collection itself.¹⁰⁸

The heading introducing the *Самовилски* (*Samovila Songs*) section illustrates this editorial practice particularly well. The word appears without qualification. Nothing on the page identifies the Samovila as a supernatural being, explains her place within South Slavic oral tradition, or distinguishes her from related figures found elsewhere in the Balkans. The heading performs only one task: it gathers a number of texts beneath a common name. Everything beyond that remains outside the document. Readers who required explanation had to bring that knowledge with them.¹⁰⁹

The same economy governs the headings that follow. Wedding songs are identified as wedding songs. Harvest songs are identified as harvest songs. Heroic songs are identified through equally concise language. Throughout the contents page the editors consistently resist elaboration. The categories function as labels rather than definitions. Their brevity should not be mistaken for incompleteness. They perform precisely the task required of them within the architecture of the volume. They organize the repertory without interrupting it.¹¹⁰

The absence of explanation also preserves a degree of flexibility within the collection. Modern systems of genre classification often require individual texts to satisfy precise definitions before being assigned to a category. The Miladinov volume does not reveal such criteria. Readers encounter the repertory first and may gradually infer the characteristics shared by the songs within each section. Classification therefore emerges inductively through reading rather than deductively through editorial instruction. The printed page records categories without prescribing how those categories should be understood.¹¹¹

This approach becomes particularly evident when individual songs resist modern expectations of genre. A narrative placed within one section may contain motifs that later scholars would associate with another. Ritual, domestic life, supernatural encounter, and historical memory frequently coexist within a single text. The headings do not eliminate that complexity. They simply provide an organizational framework within which it may be observed. The editors do not attempt to resolve overlapping themes before publication. They preserve them as they appear in the repertory.¹¹²

For that reason, the contents page should not be read as an early theoretical system of folklore classification. Nothing within the document suggests that the editors intended to construct a comprehensive taxonomy of oral literature. The evidence supports a more modest conclusion. The headings organize a large manuscript for publication and consultation. They transform

hundreds of collected texts into a volume that readers can navigate without requiring continuous editorial guidance. The practical function of the page remains visible throughout its design.¹¹³

The documentary importance of this arrangement becomes clearer when considered alongside the physical construction of the book. Without the contents page, locating a particular group of songs within more than five hundred pages would require extensive searching. The editors therefore provided an organizational map before the repertory began. The contents page functions simultaneously as a guide for the reader and as a record of the editorial decisions that shaped the published volume. Those two functions cannot be separated. The page exists because the collection had already acquired a documentary scale that demanded organization.¹¹⁴

Read carefully, the contents page reveals almost nothing about the songs individually and a great deal about the book that contains them. It records the order of presentation, the vocabulary of classification, the sequence of categories, and the practical concerns of publication. The document is therefore less a description of Bulgarian oral tradition than a description of how that tradition was arranged for print in Zagreb in 1861. That distinction remains fundamental throughout the remainder of the collection.¹¹⁵

An Editorial Vocabulary

The language of the contents page remains remarkably consistent throughout the volume. The headings identify recognizable bodies of material without attempting to impose an abstract critical vocabulary upon them. Readers encounter Самовилски (*Samovila Songs*), Юнашки (*Heroic Songs*), Женитбени (*Wedding Songs*), Жътварски (*Harvest Songs*), and numerous additional categories presented in the same typographical form.¹¹⁶ The visual equality of these headings is significant. No category receives a longer explanation than another, and no section is introduced by an editorial essay. The page records a sequence of names rather than a hierarchy of values.

The vocabulary employed in these headings is equally restrained. The editors do not classify the songs according to poetic form, metrical structure, or presumed historical age. Nor do they distinguish between myth, legend, ballad, lyric, or epic according to terminology that would become common in later folkloristic scholarship. Their language remains close to the repertory itself. Categories emerge from the subjects and occasions represented within the songs rather than from an external analytical system. The terminology belongs to the collection before it belongs to scholarship.¹¹⁷

This distinction is easier to observe than to explain. A heading such as Женитбени (*Wedding Songs*) immediately identifies the social setting associated with the texts that follow. It does not explain whether those songs were sung before, during, or after the ceremony, whether they accompanied particular rituals, or whether they belonged exclusively to marriage celebrations. The heading simply provides enough information for the reader to recognize the portion of the repertory that has begun. Additional distinctions remain outside the documentary scope of the contents page.

The same principle governs headings associated with agricultural labor and the annual cycle. Terms referring to harvest, seasonal customs, and communal observances appear without

commentary. The editors neither define these practices nor attempt to separate ritual from everyday activity. The categories identify bodies of material already familiar within the communities from which the songs were collected. The printed page preserves that familiarity instead of translating it into scholarly terminology.¹¹⁸

Another feature deserves attention. The headings are almost entirely nouns or adjectival forms derived from nouns. They identify people, occasions, or activities rather than ideas. Abstract language is largely absent. The contents page therefore reflects a documentary vocabulary grounded in the lived contexts from which the songs originated. Even before the first text is read, the reader encounters a lexicon shaped by persons, customs, labor, celebration, and belief rather than by critical theory.¹¹⁹

This preference for ordinary language extends beyond the headings themselves. Throughout the collection the editors consistently avoid technical expressions that might have distinguished literary scholarship from oral tradition. The contents page does not present a scientific taxonomy. It presents an organized repertory. Readers move through categories that would have been intelligible to the communities whose songs filled the volume, even if the exact boundaries between those categories remained fluid.

The resulting organization possesses an understated flexibility. Individual songs may contain heroic action alongside ritual practice or domestic dialogue alongside supernatural encounter, yet the headings do not insist upon exclusive definitions. They guide the reader toward a portion of the repertory without claiming to exhaust the meaning of every text within it. The editorial vocabulary therefore organizes the collection while leaving the songs themselves free to exceed the categories under which they appear.¹²⁰

This characteristic distinguishes the contents page from many later systems of classification. Modern catalogues frequently begin by defining genres and then assigning individual texts according to those definitions. The Miladinov collection proceeds in the opposite direction. The headings appear first, definitions never follow, and readers discover the character of each category only through sustained engagement with the songs themselves. The document encourages observation before theory. That sequence is one of the most revealing features of the volume's editorial design.¹²¹

The Limits of Classification

The contents page organizes the repertory with considerable care, yet its organization remains deliberately restrained. The editors identify bodies of material without attempting to establish rigid boundaries between them. Nothing on the page suggests that every song belongs exclusively to a single category or that the headings should be understood as exhaustive descriptions of the texts that follow. The contents page records an editorial arrangement rather than a comprehensive system of classification.¹²²

This restraint becomes increasingly apparent as one compares the headings with the songs themselves. A narrative placed beneath one heading may contain themes that reappear elsewhere in the volume. Supernatural beings appear outside the **Самовилски** (*Samovila Songs*) section.

Domestic scenes emerge within heroic narratives. Agricultural labor appears alongside religious observance. These overlaps are not concealed by the editors, nor are they resolved through explanatory notes. The classification remains practical, allowing individual texts to retain their complexity without forcing them into narrowly defined categories.¹²³

The absence of explicit definitions also prevents the reader from assuming that the headings describe immutable genres. The contents page never states that a song belongs to one section because it possesses a particular metrical form, narrative structure, or performance context. Those criteria are absent from the document. Instead, the headings identify recognizable groups whose exact boundaries are left unstated. The reader encounters the categories first and gradually discovers their characteristics through the repertory itself. Observation precedes definition.

This method of organization places unusual responsibility upon the reader. Without introductory essays or descriptive summaries, the contents page functions primarily as an invitation to comparison. Readers must determine for themselves why one narrative appears beneath a particular heading and another beneath a different one. The editors provide the structure; the repertory supplies the evidence. Interpretation remains largely outside the printed apparatus of the book.¹²⁴

The economy of the contents page is equally visible in its typography. Headings appear in the same typeface, at the same visual scale, and with the same degree of emphasis. The page avoids ornament that might distinguish one category from another. Its visual regularity reflects its editorial purpose. The contents are intended to guide readers through a substantial collection, not to argue for the superiority of one portion of the repertory over another. Every section enters the volume with equal documentary authority.

The sequence established by the contents page also encourages prolonged reading within individual categories. Once the reader enters a section, the songs continue without interruption until the next heading appears. Editors rarely fragment categories by alternating between unrelated groups of material. This continuity permits recurring formulas, themes, and vocabulary to emerge gradually across many pages. Similarities become visible through proximity rather than editorial explanation. The architecture of the volume therefore contributes directly to the reader's experience of the repertory.¹²⁵

One consequence of this arrangement deserves particular attention. Because songs remain together within extended sections, the reader begins to recognize recurring expressions long before they become objects of conscious analysis. Formulaic openings, repeated imperatives, kinship terms, references to seasonal labor, and supernatural encounters accumulate naturally through successive readings. The editors seldom draw attention to these recurrences. The document allows patterns to emerge through repetition rather than annotation. The contents page prepares the conditions under which those patterns become perceptible.

The headings therefore perform a function extending beyond simple navigation. They establish documentary neighborhoods within the larger collection. Songs placed together acquire relationships through adjacency even when no explicit editorial commentary connects them. The

printed order encourages comparison while preserving the individuality of each text. That balance between organization and restraint remains one of the defining editorial characteristics of *Български народни пѣсни* (*Bulgarian Folk Songs*).¹²⁶

Only after spending time with the contents page does another feature become apparent. The editors never explain why the collection ends where it does. The sequence of headings gives the impression of completeness, yet neither the preface nor the contents claims that every category of oral tradition has been preserved. The table records the contents of one publication, not the entirety of Bulgarian oral culture. The distinction is subtle but significant. The document defines the limits of the printed volume, not the limits of the tradition itself.¹²⁷

Arrangement and Editorial Sequence

The sequence of headings also raises a question that the contents page itself cannot answer directly. The editors clearly decided that certain groups of texts should remain together, yet they nowhere describe the process by which those decisions were reached. No manuscript plan survives within the printed volume, no discarded table of contents is reproduced, and no editorial note explains whether the order changed during preparation for the press. The reader therefore encounters the arrangement only in its completed form. The document records the result of editorial labor rather than the labor itself.¹²⁸

That distinction deserves emphasis because it illustrates a recurring characteristic of the entire publication. Throughout the volume, the Miladinov brothers preserve the products of collection more frequently than the process of collection. The preface briefly acknowledges years of travel, correspondence, transcription, and revision, yet the repertory itself rarely reveals those activities. Likewise, the contents page preserves the finished organization without preserving the discussions or practical decisions that produced it. The documentary record repeatedly favors completed forms over the work that preceded them.

The absence of visible revision should not be interpreted as evidence that revision never occurred. Preparing a manuscript containing several hundred songs for publication necessarily required selection, ordering, transcription, and correction. Those activities are implied by the existence of the printed volume itself. The contents page, however, does not document them individually. It presents only the arrangement that ultimately reached the printer. The historian therefore encounters a finished editorial structure whose earlier stages remain largely inaccessible within the surviving document.¹²⁹

This limitation becomes methodologically significant. It is tempting to explain the sequence of headings by appealing to literary preference, regional identity, or historical importance. The contents page itself does not provide such explanations. It records placement but not justification. Any attempt to reconstruct the editors' intentions requires evidence beyond the printed volume. The document permits observation of the order; it does not permit certainty concerning the motives that produced it.¹³⁰

For that reason, the sequence should first be described before it is interpreted. The opening categories establish the reader's initial encounter with the repertory. Subsequent sections extend

that encounter into additional forms of oral tradition. Toward the latter portions of the volume the contents broaden to include proverbs, riddles, games, customs, beliefs, and personal names. The movement is gradual. The editors do not announce that the scope of the collection has expanded. The contents page simply records that expansion through the appearance of new headings.¹³¹

Read consecutively, these headings suggest that the editors regarded songs as only one part of a broader documentary undertaking. Oral tradition appears not as an isolated literary phenomenon but as one element within a wider body of vernacular knowledge. The placement of proverbs, riddles, customs, and games within the same volume indicates that the editors did not sharply separate sung tradition from other forms of everyday expression. The printed book preserves them together, inviting readers to encounter them within a common documentary framework.¹³²

This observation rests upon the arrangement of the volume rather than upon statements made in the preface. The editors never declare that songs, customs, and proverbs belong to a single cultural system. They simply publish them together. The relationship is established typographically before it is articulated theoretically. Readers encounter that relationship through the physical order of the book itself. The document therefore records an editorial conception of vernacular culture without explicitly defining one.¹³³

The contents page concludes as quietly as it begins. No summary follows the final heading, and no closing remarks explain the architecture of the collection. Once the organizational map has been presented, the editors withdraw from view and allow the repertory to speak through its own sequence. This restraint characterizes not only the contents page but the volume as a whole. The editorial voice is strongest where organization is required and weakest where the collected texts themselves begin.¹³⁴

Vernacular Language and Editorial Restraint

One of the most striking characteristics of the contents page is the language through which the repertory is organized. The headings belong to the same linguistic world as the songs that follow them. The editors do not replace vernacular terminology with learned classifications, nor do they introduce a separate vocabulary intended only for scholarly readers. The language of organization remains continuous with the language of the collected texts.¹³⁵

This continuity deserves careful attention because it reveals an editorial decision visible throughout the volume. The headings identify familiar persons, occasions, occupations, and practices rather than literary forms. Readers encounter *Самовилски* (*Samovila Songs*), *Юнашки* (*Heroic Songs*), *Женитбени* (*Wedding Songs*), and *Жътварски* (*Harvest Songs*) before they encounter terms such as *genre*, *myth*, *epic*, or *lyric*. Those latter categories never appear on the contents page. The editors organize the repertory through the vocabulary of everyday life instead of the vocabulary of literary criticism.¹³⁶

The distinction becomes clearer when one compares the headings with the songs themselves. The opening narrative concerns a *Самовила* (*Samovila*), and the heading introducing that section employs exactly the same word. The editors do not substitute another designation or

provide an explanatory equivalent. The vocabulary of classification is drawn directly from the repertory. Readers move from the heading to the song without crossing a linguistic boundary between editorial language and traditional language.¹³⁷

A similar relationship governs the remaining sections of the volume. Wedding songs are introduced by the same vocabulary through which marriage is described within the songs themselves. Harvest songs are identified through the language of agricultural labor rather than through abstract seasonal terminology. Heroic narratives appear beneath a heading derived from the same word that recurs within many of the texts. The editors repeatedly preserve vernacular usage instead of replacing it with an external descriptive system.¹³⁸

The documentary value of this decision extends beyond questions of classification. By preserving familiar terminology, the contents page allows later readers to observe how nineteenth-century editors understood the material before later academic disciplines developed standardized systems of folklore analysis. The headings belong to a period in which oral tradition was entering print but had not yet acquired the extensive theoretical vocabulary that would characterize twentieth-century folkloristics and ethnomusicology. The language therefore records an earlier stage in the history of the discipline as well as the history of the repertory itself.¹³⁹

This restraint is equally apparent in what the headings omit. They contain no references to chronology, authorship, or historical origin. No distinction is made between older and newer songs. No attempt is made to separate local from regional traditions. Questions that later editors frequently treated as essential remain absent from the contents page. The organization depends upon recognizable subjects rather than historical explanation. The headings identify what readers are about to encounter, not how they should understand it.¹⁴⁰

The resulting vocabulary possesses an unusual transparency. Readers are not required to master an editorial terminology before entering the collection. The same words that organize the repertory also appear within it. The contents page therefore functions less as an interpretive guide than as an extension of the language preserved in the songs themselves. Editorial organization and oral tradition remain closely aligned throughout the opening pages of the volume.¹⁴¹

Seen in this light, the contents page performs an important mediating role. It stands between the preface, where the editors describe the practical work of collecting, and the repertory, where editorial intervention largely disappears. The headings provide just enough structure to orient the reader while allowing the collected texts to retain their own vocabulary and internal organization. That balance between guidance and restraint remains one of the defining editorial achievements of *Български народни пѣсни* (*Bulgarian Folk Songs*).¹⁴²

The Implied Reader

The contents page presumes a reader capable of navigating the collection without continuous editorial assistance. Its headings are sufficiently brief that they function only if the reader already possesses a general familiarity with the vocabulary employed throughout the volume. The document therefore reveals something not only about the repertory but also about the audience for whom the book was prepared. The editors organize the material without attempting to introduce

the reader to the cultural world represented by the songs. Orientation is provided through arrangement rather than explanation.¹⁴³

This assumption is evident from the opening heading. The term *Самовилски* (*Samovila Songs*) appears without qualification. The editors neither define the word nor distinguish it from related supernatural figures known elsewhere in the South Slavic world. Nothing on the contents page suggests that the intended audience requires such clarification. Recognition is assumed. The heading therefore functions effectively only for readers already familiar with the vocabulary of the tradition or willing to acquire that familiarity through the songs themselves.¹⁴⁴

The same editorial confidence appears throughout the remainder of the volume. Headings referring to weddings, harvest, shepherds, saints' days, customs, riddles, and proverbs are presented with the same economy. Each identifies a body of material while leaving its boundaries undefined. Readers are expected to recognize these terms as points of orientation rather than as subjects requiring definition. The document consistently privileges recognition over instruction.¹⁴⁵

The preface prepares the reader for this experience. There the editors devote their attention to the practical history of collecting, acknowledging the difficulties of travel, transcription, and publication. They do not use those pages to establish a theoretical vocabulary through which the repertory must be interpreted. By the time the reader reaches the contents page, the editorial voice has already begun to withdraw. Organization replaces explanation, and the songs soon replace both.¹⁴⁶

The transition from preface to contents and from contents to repertory is therefore remarkably gradual. The preface explains how the collection came into existence. The contents explain how it has been arranged. The songs require no further introduction. Each document performs a distinct function within the architecture of the volume, and each relinquishes the page to the next with minimal interruption. The reader moves almost imperceptibly from editorial discourse to oral tradition preserved in print.¹⁴⁷

One consequence of this editorial sequence deserves attention. The reader is never instructed how to interpret the songs before encountering them. There is no introductory essay explaining symbolism, mythology, poetic structure, or regional variation. Such questions remain suspended while the repertory unfolds. The editors appear content to let repeated reading produce familiarity. Knowledge accumulates through sustained contact with the texts rather than through preliminary exposition.¹⁴⁸

This method differs from many later documentary collections in which extensive editorial introductions precede the primary material. The Miladinov volume reverses that balance. Commentary occupies comparatively little space, while the collected texts dominate the publication. The contents page marks the point at which editorial guidance becomes increasingly restrained and the documentary record assumes primary importance.¹⁴⁹

Read in this context, the brevity of the contents page is no longer surprising. Its purpose is not to summarize the collection but to prepare readers for it. The page identifies the sequence in which the repertory will be encountered, establishes the vocabulary through which that sequence

is organized, and then quietly withdraws. The editors ask remarkably little of themselves and remarkably much of the reader. The result is a volume in which documentary evidence consistently occupies more space than editorial interpretation. That proportion, established before the first song begins, remains one of the defining characteristics of Български народни пѣсни (*Bulgarian Folk Songs*).¹⁵⁰

Learning to Read the Collection

The reader's first encounter with Български народни пѣсни (*Bulgarian Folk Songs*) follows a carefully ordered sequence. The title page establishes the publication. The preface explains the circumstances of collection. The contents organize the repertory. Only then does the first song appear. This progression is so straightforward that it is easily overlooked, yet it governs every subsequent reading of the volume. Before encountering oral tradition, the reader has already encountered publication, collection, and organization. The book introduces its documentary framework before introducing its documentary contents.¹⁵¹

The sequence also regulates the pace at which information is presented. The title page identifies the work without explanation. The preface supplies historical circumstances but refrains from extended literary discussion. The contents page arranges the material without defining it. The first song then begins immediately, without another editorial interruption. Each document contributes only what is necessary for the next stage of reading. The architecture of the volume is cumulative rather than repetitive. Information is added gradually, and editorial commentary diminishes as the reader approaches the repertory itself.¹⁵²

This gradual withdrawal of the editorial voice deserves attention because it continues throughout the collection. Once the songs begin, the editors seldom reappear except to identify new sections of the repertory. Their presence remains visible through headings, numbering, and arrangement, yet their interpretive voice is largely absent. Readers therefore experience the collection primarily through the documents preserved within it rather than through explanations supplied around them. The printed book consistently privileges documentary evidence over editorial exposition.¹⁵³

The physical construction of the volume reinforces this experience. Headings identify sections, numbers distinguish individual songs, and the typography remains remarkably consistent from one page to the next. Variations in layout are comparatively rare. The visual regularity of the printed page encourages uninterrupted reading while simultaneously allowing individual texts to retain their documentary independence. Every song occupies its own place within the sequence without becoming isolated from the larger collection.¹⁵⁴

The contents page performs an especially important role within this structure because it introduces a habit that continues throughout the volume: readers are expected to move repeatedly between individual documents and the larger organization of the collection. A single song acquires additional significance through its position within a section, while each section acquires additional significance through its position within the entire volume. The architecture of the book therefore encourages movement between part and whole without requiring editorial explanation.¹⁵⁵

This relationship between individual text and editorial sequence remains visible even after the first song has been completed. The conclusion of “Јованъ Поповъ и Самовила” (*Jovan Popov and the Samovila*) is followed immediately by another song. No concluding remarks separate the two narratives. The transition belongs entirely to the arrangement established by the contents page. Individual performances begin and end, but the documentary sequence continues without interruption. The collection advances through accumulation rather than through commentary.¹⁵⁶

One consequence of this editorial method deserves emphasis. The Miladinov brothers rarely direct the reader's attention toward particular interpretations. Instead, they preserve conditions under which interpretation may occur. Repeated vocabulary, recurring narrative patterns, formulaic expressions, and shared themes become visible because the editors have assembled hundreds of texts within a single documentary framework. The printed book teaches readers to observe before it encourages them to explain.¹⁵⁷

That principle extends beyond the songs themselves. The same restraint governs the title page, the preface, and the contents. Each document contributes evidence while avoiding extensive interpretation. The cumulative result is a publication in which editorial intervention is most visible through organization and least visible through commentary. The Miladinov brothers shape the reader's experience primarily by deciding *what* appears on the page and *where* it appears, not by explaining *what* it means.¹⁵⁸

Read as a whole, the opening pages of Български народни пѣсни do more than introduce a collection of oral texts. They establish a documentary method. Publication precedes interpretation. Arrangement precedes analysis. The repertory is encountered first as evidence. Only after the reader has spent time within the documents themselves does broader interpretation become possible. That sequence, embedded in the architecture of the 1861 edition, continues to shape modern readings of the collection whether or not readers consciously recognize it.¹⁵⁹

Preservation Before Interpretation

The opening pages of Български народни пѣсни (*Bulgarian Folk Songs*) reveal a remarkably consistent editorial principle. At each stage of the volume, preservation takes precedence over explanation. The title page identifies the publication without describing its significance. The preface records the circumstances of collecting without attempting a theory of oral tradition. The contents arrange the repertory without defining its categories. The songs begin without introductory essays or explanatory notes. The same editorial restraint governs each document in succession.¹⁶⁰

This consistency is particularly evident in the relationship between organization and commentary. The editors devote considerable attention to arranging the material, yet comparatively little space to explaining that arrangement. Hundreds of texts are placed within a carefully ordered sequence, but almost no effort is made to justify the sequence itself. Readers encounter the completed editorial structure while remaining largely unaware of the decisions that produced it. The organization is therefore highly visible; the reasoning behind it remains largely invisible.¹⁶¹

The documentary consequences of this approach extend throughout the collection. Because explanation is limited, the printed page preserves a degree of openness that later editions often

diminish through annotation. Readers are free to observe recurring vocabulary, repeated formulas, and shared narrative patterns without immediately encountering an editorial interpretation of those features. The collection invites prolonged reading before encouraging analysis. Its architecture rewards patience rather than immediate synthesis.¹⁶²

The restraint visible in the opening pages also shapes the relationship between editor and reader. The Miladinov brothers rarely position themselves as authoritative interpreters of the repertory they publish. Their presence is unmistakable in the selection, transcription, and arrangement of the material, yet their interpretive voice remains comparatively subdued. The documentary record occupies the foreground while editorial explanation recedes into the background. The collection derives much of its authority from this deliberate imbalance. Readers spend far more time with the songs than with the editors.¹⁶³

The physical organization of the volume reinforces this impression. Once the repertory begins, pages are dominated by the collected texts themselves. Headings identify new sections, numbering maintains continuity, and typography remains remarkably uniform across hundreds of pages. Visual interruption is minimal. The cumulative effect is one of sustained documentary presentation. The reader moves through the repertory with relatively few reminders of the editorial labor that made such movement possible.¹⁶⁴

This pattern should not be mistaken for editorial absence. On the contrary, the volume is the product of continuous editorial activity. Every heading, every transcription, every sequence, and every page of the collection reflects decisions made before the manuscript reached the printer. The distinguishing feature of the Miladinov edition is not the absence of editing but the decision to allow the results of that editing to appear with comparatively little explanation. Editorial judgment is embodied in the structure of the book rather than in sustained commentary upon it.¹⁶⁵

One consequence of this approach is that the collection remains unusually transparent as a historical document. Readers can observe the editorial framework without constantly being directed toward particular conclusions. The book preserves evidence while leaving many interpretive questions unresolved. It records the repertory with extraordinary care but rarely instructs readers how they ought to understand it. This balance between preservation and restraint contributes significantly to the enduring scholarly value of the volume.¹⁶⁶

For the historian, the opening documents of *Български народни пѣсни* therefore provide more than contextual information preceding the songs. They establish an editorial philosophy that governs the entire publication. Collection precedes classification. Classification precedes reading. Reading precedes interpretation. The sequence is embedded within the physical construction of the book itself. Long before modern ethnomusicology developed formal methods of documentary analysis, the Miladinov brothers had already produced a volume in which the primary evidence consistently occupies the center of attention.¹⁶⁷

Entering the Heroic Songs

The transition from the *Самовилски* (*Samovila Songs*) section to the *Юнашки* (*Heroic Songs*) section occurs with little editorial ceremony. The reader encounters a new heading, and beneath it

the repertory simply continues. No introductory essay distinguishes heroic narrative from the material that precedes it. No explanation accompanies the change in subject matter. The heading alone signals that a new portion of the collection has begun.¹⁶⁸

This editorial restraint deserves immediate attention. Modern editions frequently introduce major divisions with historical summaries, definitions of genre, or discussions of performance practice. The Miladinov collection does none of these things. The heading “Юнашки” (*Heroic Songs*) appears in the same typographical form as every preceding heading. It neither elevates nor diminishes the material that follows. The visual continuity of the page reinforces the editorial continuity of the volume.¹⁶⁹

The word “юнак” (*junak*, hero) itself receives no explanation. The editors do not define the term, identify historical figures associated with it, or distinguish legendary heroes from historical persons. Readers are expected to recognize the vocabulary without assistance. As in the Самовилски (*Samovila Songs*) section, the heading functions as an editorial label rather than a scholarly definition.¹⁷⁰

The relationship between the heading and the songs beneath it also remains remarkably direct. The editors do not summarize the narratives that follow or explain their historical significance before the reader encounters them. Instead, they preserve the same documentary method established earlier in the volume. The heading identifies the section; the songs provide the evidence. Interpretation remains largely the responsibility of the reader.¹⁷¹

This continuity is significant because it demonstrates that the editorial method observed in the opening pages of the collection is not confined to a single category of material. The same principles governing the Самовилски (*Samovila Songs*) section govern the Юнашки (*Heroic Songs*) section as well. Organization precedes explanation, headings precede texts, and editorial commentary remains comparatively limited. The consistency of this approach across multiple portions of the volume suggests that it belongs to the publication as a whole rather than to any individual section.¹⁷²

The physical appearance of the page reinforces that conclusion. Numbering continues without interruption. Typography remains unchanged. Margins, spacing, and layout follow the same pattern established at the beginning of the repertory. Readers experience continuity not only through editorial sequence but also through the visual stability of the printed page. Every section enters the collection under the same documentary conditions.¹⁷³

The absence of visual hierarchy is equally revealing. Nothing in the typography suggests that heroic songs possess greater historical importance than supernatural narratives or domestic songs. The headings occupy comparable positions, and the texts receive comparable treatment. The editors avoid typographical devices that might encourage readers to privilege one category over another. The organization of the collection therefore reflects breadth of documentation rather than hierarchy of value.¹⁷⁴

One consequence of this editorial consistency becomes apparent only after several sections have been examined together. The reader gradually ceases to notice the headings themselves and

instead begins to move through the repertory according to the rhythm established by the collection. Each new category interrupts the sequence only briefly before the documentary pattern resumes. Headings orient the reader without dominating the reading experience. Their function is structural rather than interpretive.¹⁷⁵

The beginning of the Юнашки (*Heroic Songs*) section therefore confirms a principle already visible in the opening pages of the volume. The Miladinov brothers consistently present documentary material before explanatory commentary. Their editorial presence remains strongest where organization is required and weakest where the collected texts themselves begin. This balance between arrangement and restraint persists across the collection, providing one of the clearest indications of the documentary philosophy underlying the 1861 edition.¹⁷⁶

From Printed Text to Musical Document

The publication of Български народни пѣсни (*Bulgarian Folk Songs*) established an enduring documentary foundation for the study of Bulgarian oral tradition. By the time the volume appeared in Zagreb in 1861, hundreds of songs had been transferred from oral performance to print, preserving a substantial body of poetic language that might otherwise have remained inaccessible to later readers. The achievement was considerable. At the same time, the physical form of the printed book defined the limits of what could be preserved. Those limits are visible throughout the collection itself.¹⁶⁸

The Miladinov brothers consistently recorded the verbal dimension of performance. Narrative sequence, dialogue, formulaic repetition, dialect forms, and sectional organization all survive with remarkable fidelity. The opening song, “Јованъ Поповъ и Самовила” (*Jovan Popov and the Samovila*), illustrates this documentary strength clearly. Readers encounter the language of the performance almost line by line, following the exchange between Jovan and the *Samovila* through carefully transcribed dialogue. The printed page preserves the words that were spoken and sung.¹⁶⁹

Other dimensions of performance remain absent. The volume contains no musical notation accompanying the songs. No indication of melodic contour appears above the text. Rhythm is not transcribed independently of the poetic line. Tempo, vocal ornamentation, tuning, and timbre likewise remain beyond the reach of the printed document. These absences do not require comparison with later collections to be recognized. They are immediately apparent from the pages of the 1861 edition itself.¹⁷⁰

The identity of individual performers is similarly difficult to recover. Localities are occasionally recorded, but singers rarely appear as documentary subjects in their own right. Readers know where many songs were collected, yet often cannot determine from whom they were learned or under what circumstances they were performed. The repertory survives with extraordinary textual richness while preserving comparatively little information concerning the individuals who carried that repertory within living communities.¹⁷¹

The same observation applies to performance itself. Nothing in the printed text records the interaction between singer and audience, the duration of a performance, the circumstances in

which a song might be chosen, or the relationship between spoken introduction and sung narrative. Such questions belong to musical practice rather than to typography. The Miladinov volume records the text of performance without preserving performance as an event. The distinction is embedded within the documentary form of the publication.¹⁷²

These limitations should not be understood as shortcomings peculiar to the editors. They reflect the documentary possibilities available to collectors working in the middle of the nineteenth century. Printing technology could preserve words with remarkable stability. Sound could not yet accompany the printed page. The documentary record produced by the Miladinov brothers therefore corresponds closely to the technical conditions under which the collection was assembled and published.¹⁷³

The importance of this observation becomes clearer when viewed historically. Later generations of Bulgarian folklorists, musicologists, and ethnographers repeatedly returned to repertoires first preserved in textual form while attempting to document dimensions of musical life that nineteenth-century printing could not capture. Musical notation, phonograph recordings, performer biographies, contextual observation, and eventually audiovisual documentation expanded the documentary record beyond the textual foundation established by the Miladinov collection. The development of Bulgarian ethnomusicology may therefore be understood not as a rejection of the 1861 edition but as an extension of the documentary project that it began.¹⁷⁴

The opening chapters of Български народни пѣсни thus acquire a significance extending beyond the preservation of individual songs. They establish the documentary conditions from which later scholarship would proceed. By recording texts with remarkable consistency while leaving melody, performance, and context largely outside the printed page, the Miladinov brothers created a collection whose greatest strengths and most obvious limitations remained inseparable. Later scholars inherited both.¹⁷⁵

Recovering the Musical Dimension

The documentary limitations of Български народни пѣсни (*Bulgarian Folk Songs*) became increasingly apparent as Bulgarian scholarship developed during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Readers possessed hundreds of carefully preserved texts, yet the melodies through which those texts had been performed remained largely beyond recovery. The printed page preserved language with remarkable stability, but it remained largely silent concerning pitch, rhythm, vocal inflection, and performance practice. Those silences did not diminish the importance of the Miladinov collection. They defined the documentary problems that later collectors attempted to address.¹⁷⁶

Among the first Bulgarian scholars to confront those problems systematically was Добри Христов (*Dobri Hristov*). His publications differ noticeably from the Miladinov volume in both appearance and documentary purpose. Songs continue to occupy the center of the page, but musical notation now accompanies the texts. Staff lines, rhythmic values, bar lines, key signatures, and phrase structures enter the documentary record alongside the words themselves. The printed page no longer preserves language alone. It begins to preserve sound in symbolic form.¹⁷⁷

The significance of this change becomes apparent before a single melody is analyzed. Readers opening one of Hristov's collections immediately encounter notation as part of the document itself. The visual balance of the page has changed. In the Miladinov volume, uninterrupted columns of text dominate the printed surface. In Hristov's publications, notation occupies equal documentary authority. The eye alternates naturally between staff and verse. Music and language become parallel forms of evidence rather than separate subjects of study.¹⁷⁸

This transformation should not be understood simply as a technical improvement. Musical notation alters the kinds of historical questions that may be asked. Once melodies have been recorded, readers can compare modal organization, phrase length, cadence, intervallic movement, and rhythmic construction across different repertoires. None of these observations could be drawn directly from the Miladinov volume because the necessary evidence was absent from the page. Hristov's publications therefore expand the documentary record rather than replacing it.¹⁷⁹

The relationship between the two documentary traditions is complementary. The Miladinov brothers preserved an extensive textual repertory whose linguistic richness continues to reward close reading. Hristov preserved dimensions of musical organization that typography alone could not transmit. The two collections answer different documentary questions because they preserve different kinds of evidence. One records words with exceptional care. The other records words and melodies together. Neither diminishes the importance of the other.¹⁸⁰

Even with the addition of notation, however, the documentary record remained incomplete. Staff notation records pitch and rhythm with considerable precision, but it cannot fully preserve vocal timbre, ornamental nuance, tempo fluctuation, or the interaction between performer and audience. Many expressive dimensions of oral performance remain resistant to notation alone. Hristov expanded the documentary possibilities available to Bulgarian scholarship, yet he did not eliminate the fundamental distinction between performance and its representation.¹⁸¹

The continuity between the Miladinov brothers and Hristov therefore deserves emphasis. Both sought to preserve traditions that existed primarily through performance. Both relied upon the documentary technologies available during their own periods. The difference lies not in their commitment to preservation but in the forms of evidence that each generation could record. Printing had preserved language with remarkable fidelity in 1861. By the early twentieth century, notation allowed melody to accompany language on the printed page. The documentary archive had become richer, but it had not become complete.¹⁸²

Seen from this perspective, the history of Bulgarian ethnomusicology appears less as a sequence of competing methodologies than as a gradual enlargement of the documentary record. Each generation preserved forms of evidence that earlier generations could not easily record. The Miladinov brothers established the textual archive. Hristov expanded that archive into musical notation. Later collectors would extend it further through sound recording, photography, film, and ethnographic observation. The documentary object changed because the documentary technologies changed.¹⁸³

Expanding the Documentary Archive

The work begun by the Miladinov brothers and extended through the musical transcriptions of Dobri Hristov did not conclude with the addition of notation. Throughout the twentieth century, Bulgarian scholars continued to enlarge the documentary record by preserving forms of evidence that earlier collectors had been unable to include. The history of Bulgarian ethnomusicology may therefore be read as a gradual expansion of documentation rather than a succession of unrelated scholarly movements.¹⁸⁴

The publications of Васил Стоин (*Vasil Stoin*) illustrate this development clearly. Musical notation remained central to his collections, yet increasing attention was also given to the circumstances under which songs were performed. Information concerning local traditions, regional repertoires, and individual communities began to accompany the musical texts with greater consistency. The documentary focus gradually widened. Songs were no longer treated solely as independent compositions but as elements within identifiable musical environments.¹⁸⁵

Later collectors expanded the archive still further through systematic field recording. The introduction of sound recording altered the documentary possibilities available to ethnomusicologists in much the same way that musical notation had transformed earlier textual collections. Performances could now be preserved directly rather than reconstructed symbolically through transcription alone. Vocal timbre, tempo, ornamentation, ensemble interaction, and spontaneous variation entered the documentary record in ways impossible within nineteenth-century print.¹⁸⁶

This technological development did not render earlier collections obsolete. On the contrary, recorded performances frequently gained additional value when read alongside the textual repertoires assembled by the Miladinov brothers and the musical transcriptions prepared by Hristov and his contemporaries. Each form of documentation preserved evidence unavailable to the others. Text, notation, and recording gradually became complementary rather than competing sources for the study of Bulgarian musical tradition.¹⁸⁷

The same cumulative pattern appears in the organization of archives. Twentieth-century institutions increasingly preserved correspondence, notebooks, photographs, catalogues, performer biographies, and recording logs together with musical materials. Documentation expanded beyond songs themselves to include the circumstances of collection and the identities of those who participated in the preservation of oral tradition. The archive gradually approached the performance event from multiple directions rather than through a single documentary medium.¹⁸⁸

By the closing decades of the twentieth century, ethnomusicological research had become increasingly attentive to performance as a social activity. Scholars documented not only melodies and texts but also occasions of performance, relationships between performers and audiences, regional variation, and the changing functions of repertoires within contemporary communities. These developments broadened the documentary horizon established during the nineteenth century without displacing the textual foundations upon which that scholarship continued to depend.¹⁸⁹

Viewed across more than a century of scholarship, a clear documentary progression becomes visible. The Miladinov brothers preserved words. Hristov preserved words and melodies. Later ethnomusicologists preserved performances, performers, communities, and the social contexts within which music acquired meaning. Each generation enlarged the archive inherited from its predecessors. None began from nothing.¹⁹⁰

This continuity provides the central historical thread connecting the documents examined throughout the present study. The 1861 edition of *Български народни пѣсни* did not preserve every dimension of musical life, nor could it. It preserved what nineteenth-century documentary practice made possible. The subsequent history of Bulgarian ethnomusicology can be understood as a sustained effort to preserve what that remarkable volume necessarily left beyond the printed page.¹⁹¹

A Documentary Legacy

The title page of *Български народни пѣсни* (*Bulgarian Folk Songs*) presents itself with remarkable simplicity. It records the names of the Miladinov brothers, the place of publication, and the year in which the volume entered print. Nothing on that opening page suggests that the book would become one of the foundational documentary sources for the study of Bulgarian oral tradition. Its significance emerges only after the volume has been read as a whole.¹⁹²

The preceding chapters have approached the collection through its own documents. The preface records the practical labor of gathering songs from numerous localities. The table of contents reveals the editorial organization imposed upon the repertory before publication. The opening song, “*Јованъ Поповъ и Самовила*” (*Jovan Popov and the Samovila*), demonstrates how the editors preserved oral narrative with remarkably little interpretive intervention. Throughout the volume, the printed page consistently favors documentation over explanation. The songs occupy the foreground. Editorial commentary remains comparatively restrained.¹⁹³

That restraint should not be mistaken for neutrality. Every stage of the collection reflects editorial judgment. Decisions concerning selection, transcription, orthography, ordering, and publication shaped the documentary record preserved in the 1861 edition. The importance of the Miladinov brothers lies not in the absence of editorial intervention but in the manner through which that intervention was exercised. Their influence appears most clearly in the organization of the collection rather than in extensive commentary upon it. The architecture of the book reveals the editors more consistently than their voice does.

The close reading of “*Јованъ Поповъ и Самовила*” illustrates this balance with particular clarity. The song survives as a carefully transcribed text accompanied only by a concise heading identifying its locality. Dialogue, repetition, and narrative sequence remain intact. Melody, vocal inflection, tempo, and performance context do not. The document preserves one dimension of oral tradition with extraordinary fidelity while leaving other dimensions beyond the limits of nineteenth-century print. Those omissions are not defects discovered by modern scholarship. They are visible characteristics of the document itself.

Later generations of Bulgarian folklorists and ethnomusicologists inherited precisely this documentary foundation. Musical notation expanded the archive beyond language alone. Sound recording preserved performances that notation could only approximate. Field documentation introduced singers, audiences, ritual settings, and regional context into the historical record. Each development enlarged the documentary archive established by the Miladinov brothers without displacing it. The textual collection remained indispensable because every subsequent layer of documentation depended upon the existence of the repertory first assembled in print.¹⁹⁴

Seen across more than a century and a half of scholarship, *Български народни пѣсни* occupies a distinctive position. It is neither a modern ethnography nor a comprehensive musical archive. It belongs to an earlier stage in the documentary history of folklore, when the preservation of oral texts represented the most reliable means of recording traditions that otherwise existed through memory and performance. The collection therefore preserves both the richness of nineteenth-century oral culture and the technological limits within which that preservation occurred.

Reading the volume document by document reveals an editorial philosophy grounded in patience rather than explanation. The Miladinov brothers repeatedly allow headings, songs, and organizational structures to stand without extensive interpretation. Readers are asked to encounter the evidence before drawing conclusions from it. That documentary discipline remains one of the most remarkable features of the collection. More than a century before ethnomusicologists routinely distinguished observation from interpretation, the architecture of *Български народни пѣсни* encouraged precisely that sequence.

The enduring importance of the Miladinov collection therefore extends beyond the repertory it preserves. It offers a record of how oral tradition first entered print in one of the most influential documentary enterprises of the nineteenth-century Balkans. Every subsequent study of Bulgarian traditional music has, in one way or another, inherited that achievement. Scholars have added melodies, recordings, archival description, ethnography, and digital preservation, yet the documentary foundation established in 1861 remains unmistakable.

The Miladinov brothers did not preserve everything. No nineteenth-century publication could. They preserved what the printed page could faithfully transmit: language, narrative, sequence, and editorial order. The history of Bulgarian ethnomusicology that followed may be understood as a gradual effort to preserve what lay beyond those pages. The archive expanded, the methods changed, and new technologies transformed documentary practice, but the first substantial foundation remained the volume that appeared in Zagreb in 1861. The book continues to reward careful reading not because it answers every historical question, but because it preserves the evidence from which those questions may still be asked.¹⁹⁵

Notes

1. Dimitar Miladinov and Konstantin Miladinov, *Български народни песни* (Zagreb: Knigopečatnica A. Jakića, 1861), title page.
2. Ibid.
3. Ibid., table of contents.
4. Ibid., preface, iii–iv.
5. Ibid., iv.
6. Ibid., iv–v.
7. *Дунавски лебед* (*Dunavski Lebed*), subscription announcement for *Български народни песни*, 1860; Dimitar Miladinov and Konstantin Miladinov, *Български народни песни* (Zagreb: Knigopečatnica A. Jakića, 1861), preface.
8. Miladinov and Miladinov, *Български народни песни*, iii.
9. Ibid., iii–iv.
10. Ibid., iv–v.
11. *Дунавски лебед* (*Dunavski Lebed*), subscription announcement for *Български народни песни*, 1860.
12. Miladinov and Miladinov, *Български народни песни*, preface.
13. *Дунавски лебед* (*Dunavski Lebed*), subscription announcement for *Български народни песни*, 1860; Miladinov and Miladinov, *Български народни песни*, preface.
14. Miladinov and Miladinov, *Български народни песни*, preface, vi–vii.
15. Ibid., table of contents; 1.
16. Ibid., 1–10.
17. Ibid., 1–10.
18. Ibid., 1–10.
19. Ibid., 1–10.
20. Ibid., 1–10.
21. Dimitar Miladinov and Konstantin Miladinov, *Български народни песни* (Zagreb: Knigopečatnica A. Jakića, 1861), 1–10.
22. Ibid., 1–10.
23. Ibid., 1–2.
24. Ibid., 1–10.
25. Ibid., 1–10.
26. Ibid., 1–10.
27. Ibid., iii–v; 1–10.
28. Ibid., 1–10.
29. Ibid., 1–10.
30. Ibid., 1–10.
31. Dimitar Miladinov and Konstantin Miladinov, *Български народни песни* (Zagreb: Knigopečatnica A. Jakića, 1861), 1.

32. Ibid., 1.
33. Ibid., 1.
34. Ibid., 1–2.
35. Ibid., 1–2.
36. Ibid., 1–2.
37. Ibid., 2.
38. Ibid., 2.
39. Ibid., 2.
40. Ibid., 1–2.
41. Ibid., 1. The heading “Јованъ Поповъ и Самовила. Отъ Струга.” identifies both the protagonists and the locality from which the song was collected.
42. Ibid., 1. The song begins immediately with Jovan Popov's departure for Easter plowing, without editorial introduction or explanatory framing.
43. Ibid., 1. The recurring reference to Велигден (Easter) situates the action within the ritual calendar while simultaneously framing ordinary agricultural labor.
44. Ibid., 1. The Samovila enters the narrative without descriptive explanation, indicating that the figure belonged to a shared body of traditional knowledge rather than requiring editorial gloss.
45. Ibid., 1.
46. Ibid., 1.
47. Ibid., 1–2.
48. Ibid., 2.
49. Ibid., 2.
50. Ibid., 2.
51. Dimitar Miladinov and Konstantin Miladinov, *Български народни песни* (Zagreb: Knigopečatnica A. Jakića, 1861), 2–3.
52. Ibid., 2–3.
53. Ibid., 2–3.
54. Ibid., 2–3.
55. Ibid., 3.
56. Ibid., 3–4.
57. Ibid., 3–4.
58. Ibid., 3–4.
59. Ibid., 4.
60. Ibid., 4–5.
61. Ibid., 5. The heading “Руса Стана и Самовила. Отъ Струга.” identifies both the principal figure and the place of collection before the text begins.
62. Ibid., 5. The narrative opens on Easter morning, linking the encounter with the Samovila to the ritual calendar established at the beginning of the song.

63. Ibid., 5. Dialogue between Stana and the Samovila structures the narrative, with alternating speeches preserved without editorial commentary.
64. Ibid., 5. The repeated requests for gifts emphasize exchange rather than immediate violence, distinguishing this encounter from the preceding song.
65. Ibid., 5. The Samovila's demands progressively shift from clothing to bodily beauty, increasing the symbolic stakes of the encounter.
66. Ibid., 5. Stana's replies preserve the repetitive parallelism characteristic of oral performance, with nearly identical formulae introducing successive exchanges.
67. Ibid., 5. The conclusion transforms the encounter into bodily affliction, ending with the explanation for Stana's condition rather than with reconciliation.
68. Ibid., 6. The following song, "Неда и Самовила," begins immediately without editorial transition, continuing the organizational pattern of the anthology.
69. Ibid., 6. Once again the place of collection is supplied beneath the title before the opening verse, maintaining the documentary format used throughout the section.
70. Ibid., 6. The opening verses introduce another encounter between a human protagonist and a Samovila, reinforcing the thematic coherence of the opening Самовилски cycle.
71. Dimitar Miladinov and Konstantin Miladinov, *Български народни песни* (Zagreb: Knigopečatnica A. Jakića, 1861), 1–10. This note supports the discussion of the uninterrupted transition from the editorial apparatus to the opening repertory and the absence of explanatory commentary between songs.
72. Ibid., 1–10. Cited for the continuous numbering, concise titles, and editorial sequence established at the beginning of the anthology.
73. Ibid., 1–10. Cited for the presentation of songs without dates of collection, named singers, village-by-village commentary, or descriptions of performance.
74. Ibid., 1–10. Cited for the editorial restraint that privileges preservation of the collected texts over explanatory interpretation.
75. Ibid., 1–10. Cited for the absence of musical notation despite numerous references within the texts to singing, dancing, and performance.
76. Ibid., 1–10. Cited for the arrangement of songs by category while allowing recurring images and formulas to emerge through reading rather than editorial explanation.
77. Ibid., 1–10. Cited for the collection's cumulative documentary structure, in which successive songs gradually reveal the breadth of the repertory without synthetic editorial conclusions.
78. Ibid., 1–10. Cited for the argument that the editorial record itself—including numbering, orthography, spacing, and sequence—constitutes historical evidence alongside the songs.
79. Ibid., 1–10. Cited for the editors' decision to allow documentary evidence to stand without extensive annotation or interpretive commentary, making comparison the responsibility of the reader.

80. Ibid., 1–10. Cited for the opening section of the anthology as evidence of nineteenth-century documentary practice, preserving oral tradition through editorial selection and transcription rather than analytical interpretation.

81. Dimitar Miladinov and Konstantin Miladinov, *Български народни песни* (Zagreb: Knigopečatnica A. Jakića, 1861), 1. The first song in the collection is "Јованъ Поповъ и Самовила. Отъ Струга." The title identifies both the principal figures and the place of collection before the narrative begins.

82. Ibid., 1. The opening verses immediately place Jovan Popov on the road to Easter plowing, establishing agricultural labor and the liturgical calendar before the supernatural encounter occurs.

83. Ibid., 1. The Samovila interrupts the journey without narrative explanation, entering the poem as a figure already familiar within the traditional worldview assumed by the text.

84. Ibid., 1. The repeated references to Велигден (Easter) bind sacred time to ordinary rural labor, an association established in the opening lines of the song.

85. Ibid., 1. Dialogue rather than authorial narration drives the action, preserving the conversational form characteristic of oral performance.

86. Ibid., 1. Jovan answers the Samovila directly, and the exchange proceeds through alternating speeches without editorial interruption or explanation.

87. Ibid., 1. The Samovila seizes Jovan by his golden hair and binds him to his horse, imagery preserved exactly as transmitted in the printed text.

88. Ibid., 1. The narrative continues through formulaic repetition and parallel phrasing, preserving stylistic features associated with oral recitation rather than literary revision.

89. Ibid., 1. Jovan's mother's lament introduces a second voice into the narrative, expanding the dramatic structure while maintaining the poem's dialogic organization.

90. Ibid., 1–2. The conclusion preserves the narrative without explanatory commentary, allowing the song to function simultaneously as a literary text and as a documentary record of oral tradition.

91. Dimitar Miladinov and Konstantin Miladinov, *Български народни песни* (Zagreb: Knigopečatnica A. Jakića, 1861), table of contents. Cited for the editorial classification of the repertory into thematic categories before the reader encounters the first song.

92. Ibid., table of contents. Cited for the ordered sequence of heroic songs, church songs, wedding songs, seasonal songs, pastoral songs, laments, customs, beliefs, riddles, proverbs, games, and personal names.

93. Ibid., table of contents; preface. Cited for the editors' decision to classify the repertory before presenting individual texts.

94. Ibid., table of contents. Cited for the argument that the arrangement of categories constitutes documentary evidence rather than merely editorial convenience.

95. Ibid., table of contents; 1–10. Cited for the continuity between the published contents page and the opening sequence of songs.

96. Ibid., table of contents. Cited for the observation that classification precedes interpretation throughout the published volume.

97. Ibid., preface; table of contents. Cited for the distinction between documentary organization and literary interpretation established before the repertory begins.

98. Ibid., table of contents. Cited for the editors' presentation of thematic groupings without explanatory discussion of their rationale.

99. Ibid., table of contents; preface. Cited for the relationship between editorial structure and the documentary aims of the collection.

100. Ibid., table of contents; preface. Cited for the proposition that the organization of *Български народни песни* forms part of the historical evidence examined in this study rather than serving solely as a navigational aid.

101. Dimitar Miladinov and Konstantin Miladinov, *Български народни песни* (Zagreb: Knigopečatnica A. Jakića, 1861), table of contents. The contents page functions as a practical index for consultation rather than an extended editorial introduction.

102. Ibid., table of contents. The arrangement groups related materials into continuous sections rather than alternating among different genres, establishing continuity within categories before continuity across the volume.

103. Ibid., table of contents. The surviving printed volume preserves the final editorial organization but does not document earlier drafts, revisions, or the process by which the sequence of categories was determined.

104. Ibid., table of contents. The placement of the *Самовилски* (Samovila Songs) section is observable within the document itself, whereas the editors' motives for beginning the collection with that category remain outside the surviving evidence.

105. Ibid., table of contents. The contents page broadens the scope of the volume beyond songs to include customs, beliefs, games, riddles, proverbs, and personal names, indicating the wider documentary ambitions of the publication.

106. Ibid., table of contents. The arrangement demonstrates that the editors sought to preserve multiple forms of vernacular knowledge within a single printed volume rather than limiting themselves to song texts alone.

107. Ibid., table of contents. The order of headings records the editors' understanding of the repertory and constitutes part of the documentary history of the 1861 edition.

108. Ibid., table of contents. The headings identify categories without defining them, assuming familiarity on the part of the intended readership rather than providing explanatory glosses.

109. Ibid., table of contents. The heading *Самовилски* appears without explanation or definition, functioning only as an editorial label that groups related texts together.

110. Ibid., table of contents. Throughout the contents page the editors employ concise descriptive labels that organize the repertory without interrupting it through theoretical discussion or extended commentary

111. Dimitar Miladinov and Konstantin Miladinov, *Български народни песни* (Zagreb: Knigopečatnica A. Jakića, 1861), table of contents. The editors present categories without prescribing the criteria by which individual songs should be assigned to them, allowing readers to infer common characteristics through the repertory itself.

112. Ibid., table of contents. Individual texts frequently contain overlapping ritual, domestic, supernatural, and historical elements, yet the contents page preserves these complexities without attempting to resolve them through editorial definition.

113. Ibid., table of contents. The organization of the volume should be understood as a practical editorial arrangement designed to make a large collection navigable rather than as a comprehensive theory of folklore classification.

114. Ibid., table of contents. The contents page functions simultaneously as a guide for readers and as documentary evidence of the editorial decisions that shaped the published volume.

115. Ibid., table of contents. Read closely, the contents page reveals more about the organization of the printed book than about the individual songs themselves, documenting editorial arrangement rather than oral tradition in isolation.

116. Ibid., table of contents. Headings such as *Самовилски*, *Женитбени*, *Жътварски*, and *Юнашки* are presented in uniform typographical form without hierarchical distinction.

117. Ibid., table of contents. The vocabulary of classification derives from the repertory itself rather than from later folkloristic terminology, identifying songs by subject and social context rather than by abstract literary categories.

118. Ibid., table of contents. Headings associated with harvest, seasonal customs, and communal observances preserve vernacular terminology instead of replacing it with scholarly description.

119. Ibid., table of contents. The contents page relies primarily upon nouns and adjectival forms referring to persons, customs, occupations, and activities, reflecting a documentary vocabulary grounded in everyday life rather than abstract theory.

120. Ibid., table of contents. The editorial vocabulary organizes the repertory while allowing individual songs to exceed the categories beneath which they appear, preserving flexibility rather than imposing rigid generic boundaries.

121. Dimitar Miladinov and Konstantin Miladinov, *Български народни песни* (Zagreb: Knigopečatnica A. Jakića, 1861), table of contents. The headings organize the repertory without establishing rigid boundaries between categories, preserving an editorial arrangement rather than a comprehensive classificatory system.

122. Ibid. Individual songs frequently contain themes that extend beyond the categories under which they appear, and the editors preserve these overlaps without explanatory annotation.

123. Ibid. The contents page does not define immutable genres or provide formal criteria for classification; readers discover the characteristics of each category through sustained engagement with the repertory itself.

124. Ibid. The visual regularity of the contents page and the uninterrupted presentation of categories encourage readers to compare songs through proximity rather than through editorial commentary.

125. Ibid. By preserving extended sequences of related texts, the editorial arrangement allows recurring formulas, themes, and vocabulary to emerge gradually through repeated reading.

126. Ibid. The contents page records the limits of the printed volume rather than claiming to define the limits of Bulgarian oral tradition itself.

127. Ibid. The surviving table of contents preserves the completed editorial sequence but not the process through which that sequence was established during preparation for publication.

128. Ibid. The absence of evidence concerning editorial revision should not be interpreted as evidence that no revision occurred; the printed volume records the finished arrangement rather than the editorial labor behind it.

129. Ibid. The order of headings may be described directly from the document, but explanations of the editors' motives require evidence beyond the printed volume itself.

130. Ibid. The gradual expansion of the contents from songs to proverbs, riddles, customs, games, and personal names demonstrates an increasingly comprehensive documentary conception of vernacular culture.

131. Dimitar Miladinov and Konstantin Miladinov, *Български народни песни* (Zagreb: Knigopečatnica A. Jakića, 1861), table of contents. The editors present songs, proverbs, riddles, customs, and games within a single documentary framework without explicitly defining their relationship.

132. Ibid. The relationship between these materials is established through editorial arrangement rather than theoretical explanation, allowing the physical order of the volume to convey its documentary conception of vernacular culture.

133. Ibid. The contents page concludes without summary or interpretive commentary, withdrawing the editorial voice as the repertory begins.

134. Ibid. The language of the headings remains continuous with the language of the songs themselves, preserving vernacular terminology instead of replacing it with scholarly classification.

135. Ibid. Terms such as *Самовилски*, *Женитбени*, *Жътварски*, and *Юнашки* organize the repertory through the vocabulary of everyday life rather than through literary or folkloristic theory.

136. Ibid. The heading introducing the *Самовилски* section employs the same vernacular terminology that appears within the songs themselves, preserving continuity between editorial language and traditional language.

137. Ibid. Throughout the volume, wedding, harvest, and heroic songs are identified through familiar vernacular expressions rather than abstract analytical categories.

138. Ibid. By preserving the language of the repertory itself, the contents page documents nineteenth-century editorial practice before the emergence of standardized folkloristic and ethnomusicological terminology.

139. Ibid. The headings omit chronology, authorship, regional hierarchy, and historical explanation, identifying only the subjects readers are about to encounter.

140. Ibid. The contents page mediates between the practical discussion of collecting in the preface and the repertory itself, providing orientation while minimizing editorial intervention.

141. Dimitar Miladinov and Konstantin Miladinov, *Български народни песни* (Zagreb: Knigopečatnica A. Jakića, 1861), preface; table of contents. The editors assume a readership capable of navigating the repertory through familiar terminology rather than extensive editorial explanation.

142. Ibid., preface; table of contents. The preface explains the circumstances of collection, while the contents page shifts from explanation to organization before yielding to the songs themselves.

143. Ibid., preface; table of contents. Readers are introduced to the repertory without preliminary essays on symbolism, mythology, poetic form, or regional variation, allowing familiarity to emerge through repeated reading.

144. Ibid. Editorial commentary occupies comparatively little space in relation to the collected texts, reinforcing the documentary priority of the repertory itself.

145. Ibid. The brevity of the contents page prepares readers for the sequence of the repertory rather than attempting to summarize or interpret it.

146. Ibid., title page, preface, and table of contents. The opening documents establish a deliberate progression from publication to collection, organization, and finally the repertory itself.

147. Ibid. Editorial commentary gradually diminishes as the reader approaches the songs, leaving headings, numbering, and arrangement to provide the principal documentary framework.

148. Ibid. The architecture of the volume encourages readers to relate individual songs to their surrounding sections and to the collection as a whole without explicit editorial guidance.

149. Ibid. The transition from one song to the next occurs without concluding commentary, allowing the documentary sequence to continue through accumulation rather than interpretation.

150. Ibid. Throughout the opening documents, the editors privilege observation before explanation, shaping readers' understanding primarily through arrangement rather than sustained interpretive discussion

151. Dimitar Miladinov and Konstantin Miladinov, *Български народни песни* (Zagreb: Knigopečatnica A. Jakića, 1861), title page, preface, and table of contents. The reader encounters publication, collection, and editorial organization before reaching the first song, establishing the documentary framework prior to the repertory itself.

152. Ibid. Information is presented cumulatively: the title page identifies the publication, the preface explains collection, the contents organize the material, and the repertory begins without additional editorial interruption.

153. Ibid. Once the songs begin, the editors largely withdraw from interpretive commentary, remaining visible primarily through headings, numbering, and editorial arrangement.

154. Ibid. The physical regularity of headings, typography, and numbering encourages uninterrupted reading while preserving the documentary independence of each individual song.

155. Ibid. The editorial architecture encourages readers to move repeatedly between individual texts and the broader structure of the collection, relating part to whole through sequence rather than commentary.

156. Ibid., 1–2. The conclusion of “Јованъ Поповъ и Самовила” is followed immediately by the next song without editorial transition, allowing the documentary sequence to continue uninterrupted.

157. Ibid. Recurring vocabulary, narrative formulas, and thematic patterns emerge through the accumulation of texts within a shared documentary framework rather than through explicit editorial interpretation.

158. Ibid. Across the title page, preface, contents, and repertory, editorial intervention is expressed primarily through organization rather than explanatory commentary, establishing a documentary method before interpretation.

159. Ibid. The opening documents consistently place preservation before interpretation, asking readers to encounter documentary evidence before constructing broader historical conclusions.

160. Ibid., title page, preface, table of contents, and opening songs. The editorial principle of preserving evidence before explaining it governs each stage of the opening documents, from publication through the beginning of the repertory.

161. Dimitar Miladinov and Konstantin Miladinov, *Български народни песни* (Zagreb: Knigopečatnica A. Jakića, 1861). The editors devote considerable care to the arrangement of the repertory while offering comparatively little explanation of the principles governing that arrangement.

162. Ibid. The limited editorial commentary preserves an unusual degree of openness, allowing readers to observe recurring vocabulary, formulas, and narrative structures before encountering interpretive conclusions.

163. Ibid. Editorial authority resides primarily in the selection, transcription, and organization of the repertory rather than in sustained interpretive commentary, leaving the documentary record in the foreground.

164. Ibid. The physical organization of the printed volume—its headings, numbering, typography, and continuous layout—reinforces the sustained documentary presentation of the collected texts.

165. Ibid. The apparent absence of commentary should not be mistaken for an absence of editorial labor; editorial judgment is embodied in the structure and organization of the collection rather than in explicit explanation.

166. Ibid. The collection preserves documentary evidence while leaving many interpretive questions unresolved, contributing significantly to its enduring scholarly value.

167. Ibid. The opening documents establish a sequential editorial philosophy in which collection precedes classification, classification precedes reading, and reading precedes interpretation.

168. Ibid., *Юнашки* (Heroic Songs) heading. The transition from the *Самовилски* section to the *Юнашки* section occurs through the appearance of a new heading alone, without introductory commentary or explanation.

169. Ibid. The *Юнашки* heading is presented in the same typographical form as every preceding heading, maintaining the visual and editorial continuity established throughout the volume.

170. Ibid. The term *юнак* (*junak*, hero) appears without definition, continuing the editors' practice of employing familiar vernacular vocabulary rather than scholarly explanation.

171. Dimitar Miladinov and Konstantin Miladinov, *Български народни песни* (Zagreb: Knigopečatnica A. Jakića, 1861). The heading identifies the section, while the songs themselves provide the documentary evidence; interpretation remains largely the responsibility of the reader.

172. Ibid. The editorial principles observed in the *Самовилски* section continue unchanged in the *Юнашки* section, demonstrating that the documentary method governs the volume as a whole rather than a single category.

173. Ibid. Numbering, typography, margins, spacing, and page layout remain consistent across sections, reinforcing the visual continuity of the collection.

174. Ibid. The editors avoid typographical hierarchy, presenting heroic songs with the same visual authority as every other section of the repertory.

175. Ibid. As successive sections unfold, headings become structural points of orientation rather than interpretive commentary, allowing the documentary rhythm of the volume to dominate the reading experience.

176. Ibid. The opening of the *Юнашки* section confirms the editorial principle established earlier in the volume: documentary material consistently precedes explanatory discussion.

177. Ibid., 1–2. The publication preserves the verbal dimension of performance with remarkable fidelity, as illustrated by the dialogue of “*Јованъ Поповъ и Самовила*.”

178. Ibid. The printed volume contains no musical notation, melodic transcription, rhythmic notation, or indications of tempo, ornamentation, tuning, or vocal timbre.

179. Ibid. Although localities are frequently identified, individual singers and the specific circumstances of performance are rarely preserved within the documentary record.

180. Ibid. These limitations reflect the documentary possibilities available to collectors working in the mid-nineteenth century rather than shortcomings unique to the Miladinov brothers themselves.

181. Dimitar Miladinov and Konstantin Miladinov, *Български народни песни* (Zagreb: Knigopečatnica A. Jakića, 1861). Later generations of Bulgarian folklorists and musicologists returned to the repertory preserved in the 1861 edition in order to document musical dimensions that nineteenth-century printing could not record.

182. Ibid. The documentary significance of the opening chapters lies not only in the preservation of individual texts but also in establishing the textual foundation upon which later scholarship expanded through notation, contextual description, and performance documentation.

183. Dobri Hristov, *Български народни песни* (selected folk-song collections with musical notation). Hristov's publications introduced staff notation, rhythmic transcription, and phrase structure alongside the preserved song texts, extending the documentary record beyond language alone.

184. Hristov, *Български народни песни* (selected collections). The addition of musical notation expanded the kinds of historical and analytical questions that could be asked by preserving melodic organization, phrase structure, cadence, and rhythm.

185. Ibid. The relationship between the Miladinov collection and Hristov's publications is complementary: one preserves an extensive textual repertory, while the other documents words and melodies together.

186. Ibid. Even with musical notation, important aspects of performance—including timbre, ornamentation, tempo fluctuation, and performer–audience interaction—remain beyond complete documentary preservation.

187. Ibid. The continuity between the Miladinov brothers and Hristov reflects differing documentary technologies rather than differing commitments to preservation.

188. Vasil Stoin, selected folk-song collections. Stoin expanded documentary practice by pairing musical notation with greater attention to local traditions, regional repertoires, and the circumstances of performance.

189. Ibid. Twentieth-century field recording, archival documentation, and ethnomusicological observation progressively broadened the documentary archive beyond text and notation to include performances, performers, and social context.

190. Ibid. Across more than a century of scholarship, Bulgarian ethnomusicology developed cumulatively: the Miladinov brothers preserved texts, Hristov preserved texts and melodies, and later ethnomusicologists documented performance, community, and social practice.

191. Dimitar Miladinov and Konstantin Miladinov, *Български народни песни* (Zagreb: Knigopečatnica A. Jakića, 1861). The documentary limitations of the 1861 edition defined the problems later Bulgarian ethnomusicologists sought to address rather than diminishing the value of the original collection itself.

192. Ibid., title page. The title page records only the names of the editors, the place of publication, and the year of publication, leaving the broader significance of the volume to emerge through the collection as a whole.

193. Ibid., preface; table of contents; “Юванъ Поповъ и Самовила.” Read together, the preface, contents page, and opening song demonstrate an editorial method that consistently privileges documentary preservation over extensive interpretive commentary.

194. Ibid. Editorial judgment is expressed primarily through selection, transcription, orthography, arrangement, and publication rather than through sustained analytical discussion within the printed text.

195. Ibid.; Dobri Hristov; Vasil Stoin. Later generations expanded the documentary archive through musical notation, sound recording, field documentation, and ethnographic observation, yet the textual foundation established by the Miladinov brothers in 1861 remained indispensable for the study of Bulgarian traditional music.

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