

## REVIEWS

Inna Golovakha and Larysa Vakhnina, eds. *35th International Ballad Conference SIEF Papers and Materials (2005, July 6-11, Kyiv, Ukraine)*. Kyiv: National Academy of Science of Ukraine, Rylsky Institute for Art Studies, Folklore and Ethnology, 2009. 311 Pp. Introductory notes. Notes. ISBN 978-966-02-5300-1.

In 2005, the International Society for Ethnology and Folklore (SIEF) met for its 35<sup>th</sup> International Ballad Conference. The annual meeting was hosted by the National Academy of Science of Ukraine in conjunction with the Rylsky Institute for Art Studies, Folklore and Ethnology. The present collection is the publication resulting from that conference: 27 papers of various lengths (between 3 and 30 pages) dealing with ballad research in folkloristics.

Some scholars who participated in this collective project propose a historical approach to songs. For example, in “A Country goes to War, Singing: Denmark in 1848,” Hans Kuhn examines the production of songs during the First Schleswig War; in “The Ballad of the Heartless Mother: The Origins of the Ballad and its Variation in Eurasia,” Elod Kovacs shows different international parallels in this song’s motifs. In “Ballads and the Bible: Inquiry,” William McCarthy discusses the Song of Moses (Exodus 15) and the Song of Deborah (Judges 5) as possible sources for preceding prose narratives. Lastly, Alexandre Moroz and Tatyana Moroza (“Mental Characteristics of Belarusian Folk Ballads”) present a historical background of ballad research in relation to nationalistic ideology.

Other researchers refer to the form of the text itself as a mean for analysis. For example in “Crossing Genre Boundaries (Examples from Bulgarian Ballads),” Svetla Petkova examines intergenre relationships by analyzing two ballad types: ‘The Robber’s Wife’ and the ‘Man Harnesses Wife for Ploughing’. “The Orpheus Myth and the Slovenian Folk Ballad ‘*Godec pred peklom*’” [‘The Musician at Hell’s Gate’] by Marjetka Golež-Kaučič discusses the continuation and transformation of the myth of Orpheus and Eurydice through the analysis of thirty-one different Slovenian ballads. In “Some Mythological Elements in

Turkish Folk Songs,” F. Gülay Mirzaoğlu-Sivaci proposes an analysis of the symbolism of the song’s myths; while in “Roland’s Journey to Faroe: The *Chanson de Roland* as a Faroese Ballad,” Frances J. Fisher looks at the diffusion and transformation of the *Chanson de Roland* from France to Denmark. Olysia Britsyna, Inna Golovakha and Lyudmyla Yefremova’s article “The Dead Fiancé Returns: A Traditional Plot in the Ukrainian Oral Prose and Ballad Traditions” deals with the motif of the return of the deceased. According to the authors, this plot is popular in Ukrainian ballads, but is also prominent in prose, beliefs and superstition. Researcher Oksana Mykytenko analyzes the motif of the Sister-the-Poisoner as representative of Serbian foreigners in Ukrainian culture in “The Ethnic Stranger in Ukrainian Ballads of the Sister-the Poisoner Motif.”

Some scholars equally integrate the historical approach and textual study in their research. In “*La ballade Portugaise et ses Prolongements au Brésil*,” Anna Caufriez explores the modifications of form of contemporary Portuguese ballads and their transmission through the *littérature de cordd*; while in “Ukrainian Ballads about the Loss of Virginity and Out-of-Wedlock Pregnancy,” Natalie Kononenko presents Ukrainian ballads about pre-marital lovemaking in regards to historical data of the same period, to understand how the songs functioned in Ukrainian traditional society. In “Peasant and Noble, Peasant and Urban: the Interweaving of Popular and Elite Cultures in the Plot of the Mediterranean Ballad About the Noble Shepherdess,” Simona Delič examines female social status in Mediterranean ballad plots. Bronė Stundžienė (“Folk Songs as Ritual Innovation of the Funeral Ceremony”) analyzes the transformation of Lithuanian song-romance as a new form of contemporary laments, and on a similar topic, Sabina Ispas researches the possible connection between heroic ballads and funerary songs in Romania in “*Trois Soeurs Parties Pour Cueillir des Fleurs et Le prêtre de Piatra*.”

Several articles of this collective treat the role of the researcher, transcriber or translator in relation to folklore studies. In “What did the People All Say? Ballad Editing and the Problem

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of Punctuation,” David Atkinson examines the complex role of editing when transcribing oral texts. Maria Vengrenivska discusses the intricacy of Ukrainian and French ballads when it comes to translating the texts in “*Particularités de la Traductions des Ballades Françaises et Ukrainiennes.*” Lastly, Larry Syndergaard examines certain cultural agendas such as spiritual, nationalism, homophobia and sexual property that are produced when rewriting songs in “From Song, to Print, to Translation and Pictures: Rewritings of Three Scandinavian Traditional Ballads.”

This publication presents a large variety of topics. However, it is difficult to connect the papers since they are not grouped under common themes or chapters; such an organization would certainly have been beneficial for research purposes. Scholars published their articles in English, French or German, which could make reading difficult for some as no translation is provided. Finally, some articles are in need of editing and show numerous typographic errors.

Nevertheless, this book presents rich material for any researcher studying songs and ballads. It demonstrates a strong tendency in Eastern European scholarship in researching ballads form, motifs and plots. From these texts, one can assume Western scholarship is more interested in the social purpose of the songs and the role of the researcher. In both Eastern and Western scholarship, the historical approach seems to be less present or at least to be simply a means of research to support another theory. This collection of conference papers represents an attempt to reconnect different schools of ballad criticism – a long awaited discussion.

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