

Editor's Column

With the present issue we are pleased to observe that the typographical format of *Oral Tradition* has changed. Typesetting will from this point on be done at the Center for Studies in Oral Tradition at the University of Missouri-Columbia. Advances in technology and lowering of equipment costs have combined to make it feasible to assemble text in the various alphabets used by the journal without leaving the editorial offices, and without making concessions in the form of either deleting original-language quotation or depending solely on transliteration. We are grateful to Slavica Publishers for honoring this policy in past issues, and are happy to be able to assume the burden now.

The new format has been the brainchild of Ed Tyler, my main editorial assistant since the birth of the journal. He has brought together the computer equipment provided by Milton Glick, past Dean of the College of Arts and Science, with state-of-the-art software and font programs to produce the pages you hold in your hands. Russ Meyer of the English Department, computer advisor extraordinaire, has been a guiding light during the changeover, and deserves the thanks of all concerned.

For this first effort at on-site generation of typography we have returned to the miscellany model which will serve as the organizing principle for approximately two of every three triannual issues. The dialogue opens with Walter Ong's lead essay, "Before Textuality: Orality and Interpretation," in which this eminent scholar considers the origin of hermeneutics in relation to orality-literacy contrasts. Next in order is Luisa Del Giudice's thought-provoking discussion of traditional patterning and psychological function in the Italian lullaby, or *ninna nanna*. From the lullaby we move to the Romanian epic, with Margaret Hiebert Beissinger tackling the important but little-studied problem of the relationship between textual and musical structure.

Jill Brody's contribution, "Incipient Literacy: From Involvement to Integration in Tojolabal Maya," includes both a linguistic analysis and a dual-language presentation of two collected texts on the cusp between orality and literacy. The fifth essay, "Lord of the Singers" by Jeff Opland, reports a series of Xhosa sequels to the 1934 "Song of Milman Parry" by the Yugoslav *guslar* Salih Ugljanin; he looks at spontaneously composed South African praise-poems in honor of Albert Lord as an example of oral poetry in that milieu. The issue concludes with Joseph Falaky Nagy's 1988 Milman Parry Lecture, delivered at the University of Missouri-Columbia in April 1988. Entitled "Oral Life and Literary Death in Medieval Irish Tradition," it provides

a suggestive portrait of conventional images of orality and literacy that illustrates how these two modes of composition and transmission were symbolized in various medieval sources. As Professor Nagy points out, his lecture was to be paired with one by the late Kevin O’Nolan of University College, Dublin; we all regret Professor O’Nolan’s passing but shall remember his enormous and unique contribution to studies in ancient Greek and Irish oral traditions.

As for future numbers of *Oral Tradition*, we look forward to the special issues on Arabic (a double issue: 4, i-ii), Oceania, and Yugoslavia, as well as to miscellanies like the present one. We encourage all readers to send the journal manuscripts for possible publication, responses for the Symposium section, news of conferences and other professional activities, and books and articles for review and annotation. All materials and correspondence should be sent to our new address: Center for Studies in Oral Tradition, 301 Read Hall, University of Missouri, Columbia, MO 65211.

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