

Introduction

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Few traditions of folk, or oral, literature can be compared to that of Yugoslavia in variety of genres and number of collected texts.¹ Nevertheless, this rich source has only too often been inaccessible to interested non-Slavist researchers, since a good deal of the scholarly literature on the subject is, naturally, written by Yugoslavs in their own languages. The present volume represents one attempt to remedy that situation. Each major genre—lyric, ballad, epic, and prose narrative—is dealt with from a different perspective by twelve scholars from Yugoslavia's six republics (Slovenia, Croatia, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Montenegro, Serbia, and Macedonia) and two autonomous regions (Vojvodina and Kosovo-Metohija [Kosmet]), providing a cross section of some of the main currents in the study of folk literature appearing in the most widely used languages of Yugoslavia (Serbo-Croatian, Slovenian, and Macedonian). This does not imply, of course, that all major genres in each language or region have been covered evenly. Slovenian lyric and Macedonian narrative poetry, for example, have been treated only in a very general way, the emphasis having been placed on the more important Slovenian ballad and Macedonian lyric traditions. The so-called minor, but important, genres, such as charm, riddle, proverb, and dramatic forms, among many others, do not figure here either. Also absent is a discussion of the folk literature of Yugoslavia's ethnic minorities—Albanians, Bulgarians, Czechs, Gypsies, Hungarians, Italians, Rumanians, Ruthenians, Slovaks, and Turks—which deserves a special collection of its own. Nor is the folk literature of emigrés, more recent and even medieval, taken into account here in a systematic way, although, in the strictest sense it might be argued that it lies beyond the scope of a collection devoted exclusively to Yugoslav literature. On the other hand, it cannot be entirely bypassed, as some of the articles in this collection attest.

The lyric tradition is amply sketched out in the first three articles.

¹ Political-administrative, linguistic, and other changes that have been occasioned by the current climate in Eastern Europe are not reflected in the present volume, which was completed and submitted by the guest editor before such changes occurred.

Vladimir Bovan offers a panoramic view of the collection, classification, and characteristics of Yugoslav folk lyric, providing some fifty examples with emphasis on the Serbo-Croatian-language traditions, both Christian and Moslem. Drawing heavily on Soviet folklore theory, Hatidža Krnjević illustrates the crucial role played by psychological parallelism in various kinds of compositional models in contributing to the aesthetic organization of the folk lyric. Tome Sazdov's contribution is a survey of Macedonian folk poetry, with special attention to its unusually rich lyric tradition, in which such aspects as collecting, classifying, and poetics are covered, and examples of the lyric are provided.

The *bugarštica*, or *bugarščica*, essentially balladic in form, has of late attracted more attention than usual both in Yugoslavia and abroad. The two articles devoted to it in the present issue continue this renewed interest and open up new directions for further consideration. Josip Kekez provides a detailed overview of such aspects as collecting, origins, definition of genre, poetics, and the renaissance of this genre in contemporary Croatian lyric poetry. Maja Bošković-Stulli tackles the thorny question of the nature of ballad and epic genres in a comparison of *bugarštice* with the dominant Serbo-Croatian poetic narrative genre, epic heroic decasyllable song, arguing, in part, that the *bugarštica* generally shows a marked tendency toward ballad form even when its subject matter is epic. Zmaga Kumer introduces us to the rich tradition of Slovenian balladry, discussing such aspects as singers, themes, and poetics, with considerable emphasis on ballad melodies.

Five articles deal with epic poetry in Serbo-Croatian. Jelka Ređep surveys the development of the Kosovo legend, tracing it in learned written sources, but showing to what extent folk tradition was also operative in the process. Marija Kleut assembles, classifies, and cites a good number of the elusive final formulas used to address listeners, which appear to have been mostly suppressed by collectors or printers, thus stressing the need for further exploration of this relatively neglected component of epic poetry. Taking issue with Boris Putilov's notion that Montenegrin oral epic was from its very beginnings informed by myth, Novak Kilibarda provides a series of detailed arguments in favor of its markedly historical character. Đenana Buturović calls for a revision of the notion that Moslem oral epic can be reduced essentially to Alois Schmaus's two basic types, and presents arguments based on extensive analysis of the geography and chronology of the various strata of this rich tradition, advocating that Moslem oral epic is a much more complex phenomenon requiring considerably more attention than it has received to date. In a comparative reconsideration of enjambement as a criterion for distinguishing oral from written style, Zdeslav Dukat suggests on the basis of previous work and his own analysis of Homer and Serbo-Croatian epic (both oral and learned), that "integral"

(including “violent”) enjambement is a useful yardstick for measuring such difference and that the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* are not oral but “oral-derived.”

In the final article, Nada Milošević-Đorđević studies the well-documented folk tales and legends of a particular region, which were collected in the latter half of this century, against the corpus of comparable earlier material, pointing to a number of constants but also to significant changes that are present in the more recent texts and showing how the boundaries of different genres overlap when their structure or content is similar.

Translations of all relevant primary texts and titles of works have been provided. When it was thought necessary, brief background explanations of certain basic notions have also been furnished. Of the twelve contributions to this volume, seven were commissioned for translation by the authors themselves, two were written in English in original form, and those of Maja Bošković-Stulli, Vladimir Bovan, and Đenana Buturović were translated by the guest editor. In items in the reference lists, the names of publishers of works having a publication date prior to 1900 have been omitted and series have been noted only when they appeared to be especially useful in locating works.

I am grateful to Professor James F. Burke of the University of Toronto for providing convenient working space and to the Robarts Library of the same institution for access to their collections. Both have contributed significantly to the realization of this project.

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