

BOOK REVIEWS

Marko Terseglav, *Ljudsko pesništvo* [*Literarni leksikon. Študije* 32]. Ljubljana: Državna založba Slovenije, 1987. Pp. 171.

Marko Terseglav has performed an admirable task in presenting such a compact, yet thoroughly informative, treatment of folk poetry. He begins by discussing the concept of folk verse itself (as opposed to literary productions), and its history from the earliest recorded examples, not only of Slovene but of European folk poetry in general. Following examination of the relationship between the people's folklore and folkloristics (the study of the genres), the second chapter treats formal features such as linguistic formulae and devices (parallelism, simile, antithesis, epithets, gradation, and personification). The third chapter is devoted to epic poetry (with an excursus on the Serbo-Croatian tradition), ballads and romances, and purely lyric poetry (love songs, ritual chants to accompany dances, religious lyrics, and humorous verse). The final chapter gives a historical overview of the origins, collection, and study of folk poetry in Slovenia.

The work may be intended for the general public, but it is one which can be profitably used by university students, and by others who need a succinct presentation of the various phenomena of "folk poetry." Terseglav does not limit his horizon to specifically Slovene folk songs, but includes reference to other European traditions from the Middle Ages on. He refers to English, French, German, Russian and other folk verse as well. Of course, he does not slight either early or very recent Slovene collectors and theorists; there are frequent references to historical trends and recently established theories in Slovene treatments of folk poetry. That he was able to do so in such a slim volume is commendable.

The text is very readable, and if there is a criticism to be made, it would be the relative paucity of folk poems/songs themselves as examples; this reader, at least, would like more, especially to illustrate the formal poetics of folk verse.

The bibliography (pp. 151-55) reflects the professional scope of this study; it includes, in addition to the standard Slovene sources, works by Bausinger, Ben-Amos, Bošković-Stulli, Bowra, Čistov, Herder, Isačenko, Jakobson, Lord, Lotman, Putilov, Schmaus, Archer Taylor, and several score others. There are indices for subjects and for names, plus a two-page (and readable) summary in English. In short, this is a volume which is not only informative and useful, but of considerable scholarly value; given its succinctness, it is a good candidate for translation into English, where it would find a much wider audience (e.g., students of European literatures) who would benefit not only by exposure to the folk poetry of Slovenia, but from the literate discussion of the origin and development of folk verse in general.

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Pesmi in šege moje dežele. Zamisel in osnutek: Dušica Kunaver. Priprava pesmi in strokovni uvodi: Zmaga Kumer. Prikaz šeg: Helena Ložar-Podlogar. Ljubljana: Državna založba Slovenije, 1987. Pp. 292.

This collection of songs and commentary is most welcome. Although it is intended as a popular treatment, the authors' scholarly but not overwhelming commentaries have made it a valuable addition to the library of anyone interested in Slovene folk traditions and culture. It began as a replacement for Kunaver's earlier collection (*Slovenska pesem v*

besedi in glasbi), which as sold out shortly after its publication in 1985; but, once begun, the authors compiled a broader collection and one with ample information about the customs which accompanied the various categories of songs.

What distinguishes this collection is that the sources used were not previous publications, but field transcriptions (now housed in the archives of the Inštitut za slovensko narodopisje pri Znanstvenoraziskovalnem centru [SAZU] in Ljubljana). Thus, while the melodies and to some extent the texts may be familiar, their exact form is taken directly from the “folk“, not simply reprinted from earlier collections. This fact gives the subject an immediacy and is sure to stimulate interest in Slovene traditions among the younger generation. One of the goals of the book is to call attention to aspects of Slovene culture which are today remembered only by “stari ljudje.” The authors stress, however, that no sentimental attempt was made to return to “the good old days.” Rather, they intended to make these traditional songs available to the present generation—most of whom live in cities and are losing touch with the once prevalent village culture—so that they remain conscious of their heritage.

After a short introduction (15-19) to the most common metrical features of Slovene folksongs (rhyme, number of syllables, verse length, singing style, etc.) the 150 songs are arranged in groups representing various cultural activities: (1) songs for social interaction, e.g., children’s ditties, bachelor songs (*fantovske pesmi*), love and wedding songs, and those to accompany dances; (2) songs for work, e.g., during the winegrowing and harvest seasons; (3) “calendar” songs for special times of year, e.g., New Year’s and St. George’s Day carols (*koleda*); (4) melancholy songs for particularly tragic situations, e.g., soldiers’ and widows’ laments; and (5) songs in praise of local regions. The examples in the various categories are taken from: Bela Krajina; Dolenjsko; Gorenjsko; Koroško; Notranjsko; Prekmurje s Porabjem; Primorsko z Režijo in Benečijo; Štajersko; and others. All are identified by their archive numbers, which will facilitate the research of any scholar wishing to examine the songs and analyze them further. There are also indices for identification by first lines and by region; and a short bibliography is appended.

There are three major strengths to this collection which are unusual in ordinary song-books. First, each song is accompanied by musical notation for the first two lines; thus the user can begin to play or sing them immediately without having to find sheet music. Second, each line of text is marked for stress (stresses in folk compositions often deviate from the literary norm), and uncommon or dialectal words are footnoted with their standard equivalents. And third, each section has a short (1-3 page) introduction to its subject matter, with commentary from the point of view of folk traditions, i.e., which ritual actions accompanied a given type of song. Consider, for example, the divination to determine a girl’s future husband which was conducted along with maidens’ songs; the special preparation of a bride as she laments an unwanted marriage to a groom chosen by her parents; precautionary actions taken at the time of birth to placate or ward off supposed harmful spirits; and ritual begging (similar to “trick-or-treating“) by children as they made their rounds in the village, all the while singing Zelenij Jurij songs on the eve of St. George’s Day (April 14) to transfer the power of the vegetation spirit to the householders’ fields.

Finally, *Pesmi in šege moje dežele* is not only an admirable contribution to the preservation of Slovene folk culture, one fitting for both the general public and specialists in Slovene (even South Slavic)folklore, but it is printed on good paper, bound firmly, and provided with an additional, attractive and sturdy paper cover.

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