

Kumer, Zmaga, Milko Matičetov, Boris Merhar and Valens Vodušek, eds. *Slovenske ljudske pesmi* Vol.I: *Pripovedne pesmi*, Vol.II: *Pripovedne pesmi*. Ljubljana: Slovenska matica, 1970, 1981. xxviii, 439 p.; xiii, 670 p. 4 Intros., music, glossary, indexes in both, notes in English for non-Slovene readers (Vol. I), English abstracts of song texts (Vol. II).

These volumes begin the long-awaited critical edition of the corpus of Slovene folk songs. Organized by textual content, the melodies receive full attention too, and there are analytic essays on texts and melodies with the individual song numbers, also exhaustive indexes and even some guidance in English. With each song, date and place of collection, name of collector and informant (if known), and (often) location of source, are indicated.

The Slovenes are the westernmost Slavs, cut off from the other Slavs both by their location in the eastern Alps, and by centuries of western rule, the longest as part of the Habsburg Empire. They neighbor Austria to the north, Italy to the west, Hungary to the northeast, and in each, Slovene enclaves remain. These volumes include songs collected within Slovenia, from all these enclaves outside, and from North America.

Most Slovene folk music differs from archaic non-western musical styles found elsewhere in Yugoslavia. Valens Vodušek, music editor of these volumes<sup>1</sup>, writes that characteristics of Alpine folk music predominate in most of Slovenia, the major mode also predominates, and all singing is basically part-singing (in western harmony and harmonic intervals). Three areas differ from these patterns: Prekmurje in the northeast, Rezija, a tiny enclave in the Julian Alps in Italy, and Bela krajina, the southeastern edge of Slovenia (Vodušek 1980). Especially Rezija retains archaic features, e.g., all music, vocal or instrumental, has a drone, and some 40% of the song melodies lie within a trichord G-A-B, with G as the drone (ibid.).

The new collection was preceded by a classic Slovene folk song text collection (Štrekelj 1895-1923), praised in its day as the finest scholarly collection of all the Slavs. These new volumes append checklists by the Štrekelj song numbers, and indicate the "Š" number prominently with each relevant text. However, in the 75 years between Štrekelj's first volume and the new one, the material at hand increased four or fivefold. The Glasbeno-narodopisni inštitut (Ethnomusicological Institute) in Ljubljana, with which all the editors are affiliated, has added some 13,000 songs recorded in the field, since 1955.

The collection begins with narrative songs. Volume I contains two sub-divisions: Heroic and Historical Songs (Nos. 1-19) and Mythical and Fairytale Themes (Nos. 20-67). Volume II is wholly devoted to the sub-division of Religious Legendary Songs (Nos. 68-140). A rich field in Slovene tradition, it will overflow into volume three. In the first volume, I counted (with variants) 507 texts and 211 tunes, in volume two, 1004 texts and 421 tunes.

The foreword of the opening volume discusses the history of Slovene folk song collection, how this new corpus differs from the Štrekelj, presents the definition of the Slovene folk song (Vodušek's) and the criteria for inclusion here. The indexes relating to texts include a glossary, the Štrekelj checklist, a first line index, and indices by



places where collected, song collectors, and informants. Several melodic indexes follow, a short English summary of the foreword, and the table of contents in English. Some errors crept in here, in page numbers, and a song title was omitted.

Volume II contains a one-page foreword, and a brief introduction, arguing persuasively that the legendary songs are basically folk, not composed by the clergy. At the end of this volume, the same types of indexes appear, also plot summaries of each song, in Slovene, then in English (pp. 663-671), and a map (p. 607) identifying all the Slovene regions.

Both volumes contain, following the Slovene song section, a few examples of relevant narrative Serbo-Croatian songs collected in Slovene territory.

Serbs and Croats tend to scorn the absence of heroic songs in the Slovene tradition. Indeed the latter is richer in ballads. So we should note the first song, Pegam in Lambergar, which describes the combat in arms of a knight and a giant. Lamberg was a historical figure, and this famous song can be traced to the 17th century (Kumer 1959). The theme was a favorite in Slovene folk paintings on beehives. Two are reproduced on the jacket covers of the two volumes.

Zmaga Kumer, internationally known ballad specialist and indefatigable folklorist<sup>2</sup>, has contributed much to the editing of these volumes, and the essays on individual songs. Vodušek and Kumer have published numerous studies relevant to these volumes.<sup>3</sup>

This new joint work takes its place among the finest European national folk song collections, noteworthy for its high scholarly standards, and thorough coverage, providing solid documentation characterizing one tradition. It is already indispensable for international ballad research.<sup>4</sup>

## REFERENCES

1. The foremost Slovene ethnomusicologist, former Director of the Ethnomusicological Institute in Ljubljana, whose not very numerous writings are fundamental analyses of Slovene folk song and versification. See references, below.
2. She edits the annual bibliography of folk ballad research (Kumer 1970-), was the first in a European ballad study group to produce a national ballad type index (1974), and has published inter alia a large collection of Slovene folk songs of all genres (1975).
3. See the bibliography in Vodušek 1980, and references below.
4. Important for comparison with the Slovene corpus is another collection: *Gottscheer Volkslieder* (Brednich 1969-), completed in 1912 but previously unpublished. The songs are from the Gottschee area (Slovene Kočevje) in southeastern Slovenia on the Croatian border, where a German peasant colony settled in the 14th century. This settlement ceased to exist in 1945. (Some emigrants are said to live in Cleveland and Brooklyn). Some Gottschee ballads are archaic, unique in German tradition (cf. *Deutsche Volkslieder*, 1935-, e.g., Nos. 3 [Hildesage], 4



[Kudrun], 9 [Tristan and Isolde], 11 [The Return of the Bridegroom (Odysseus)]). Many religious legendary songs were preserved. Clearly Slavs and Germans influenced each other. To mention one example: No. 80 in *Deutsche Volkslieder*, The Three Witches (examples only from Gottschee) is No. 23 in the new Slovene collection, where the commentary shows that the song was known quite widely in Yugoslav tradition, and spread to Slovaks, and Gottschee Germans (kočevski nemci in Slovene). A distribution map shows where the song has been found. See further, Seemann 1960 and Brednich 1966.

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