

SLOVENE FOLK SONGS II; Narrative songs; Edited by Zmaga Kumer, Milko Matičetov, Valens Vodušek; Published by Slovenska matica, Ljubljana 1981, 671 p; mus. not.; English summary of song texts.

In the beginning of the seventies Slovenska matica published the first book of Slovene folk songs thus announcing the biggest project regarding the publication of all the known folk songs. It plans to publish some fifteen large books. As many as five of them will comprise narrative songs. In ten years two books of narrative songs were published. The first book containing historical, heroic and fairy-tale songs was followed in the fall of 1981 by the second book of narrative songs with legendary motives. Despite its being much more extensive than the first book, it does not contain all of the legendary songs. The rest of them will be published in the third book together with social ballads.

The second book comprises 73 types of songs with legendary motives. The song types are arranged according to international principles: first are the songs dealing with the themes from the Old Testament. These are followed by the songs with the themes from the New Testament, life of Jesus, Virgin Mary and persons around them which are sometimes taken from apocryphic sources. Next are the songs about Virgin Mary which originate in pure fantasia and which – as we can see from the introduction – are a Slovene specialty. The book ends with the songs about life and death of saints originating as far back as the European medieval oral tradition. Despite the fact that this second book does not include all of the legends, we are surprised by the number of titles or song types (73). Each title also considers the written and known variants which are obligatory in professional publications such as this present one. The second part of the Slovene Folk Songs is almost twice as large as the first one. Altogether it comprises 1015 variants and 614 melodies. It is necessary to stress the fact that the melodies to the songs are written as well. The only exception are mainly the older records where the recorders did not write down the melodies. Even our great folklorist Štrekelj was aware of the fact that a folk song is only the one which is also being sung and published all the melodies available to him. Unfortunately only very few recorders wrote down melodies as well because they did not possess the necessary skill for this. This situation improved a little in this century for more of the people who recorded folk songs had some musical education. During the years before the World War II when the Folklore Institute headed by France Marolt started its work a systematical collection of folk songs together with their melodies became a rule. The work of this institute is now carried on by the Section for Ethnomusicology at the Slovene Academy of Arts and Sciences. The Section has been recording folk songs with tape-recorders from roughly 1950 on. Thus all the songs have preserved their local peculiarities and significant and necessary tone. It is necessary to stress the importance of melodies because even today the fact that a folk song is a whole only together with its melody is sometimes overlooked. The great importance of the new edition of Slovene folk songs lies in the fact that it contains melodies as well. The complete song is thus presented to the readers and is preserved in its perfection for ever. This is the objective of the collection.

Since this book is a professional work, it is equipped with all the necessary professional supplements. Together with all the known variants and the addition with the Serbo-Croatian variants on the themes known in Slovenia, the songs are supplemented by shorter or longer commentaries about the songs themselves, their thematical parallels among other nations or independent Slovene origin. These commentaries also try to date individual songs and thus establish the time in which they originated and place them into their life context. They also mention various particularities of individual songs and deal with their transition, fertilization and origin. They also try to discover the main motive or source for the origin of these songs. Individual variants or song types are followed by the commentaries about different characteristics concerning melody, possible regional differences or musical characteristics. Since this is a professional book, each variant is equipped with data concerning time and place of individual recording, name of the person having recorded the song and of the singer and the fact if the song has already been published or not. The additional remarks also denote the origin of individual songs and are numbered according to the classification of the Section for Ethnomusicology where all songs are kept. Every song has a graphical presentation of its extension around Slovenia.

Since this new edition takes into account the songs published by Štrekelj as well, those songs have the same number they had in Štrekelj's book. At the end the book lists the songs published by Štrekelj and their placing in the Slovene Folk Songs II. This is followed by a song index according to the first verse and according to different regions. People who recorded individual songs and the singers are indexed as well. Melodical indexes classify melodies according to their tonal range and series of tones, then according to cadences and thirdly according to metric and rhythmic types and to

strophic structure of the text. These are followed by a detailed index of song types and variants according to succession in the book. The book also has an English summary of individual songs. The material is lucidly arranged and the book fulfills all professional demands. As far as the arrangement of material, indexes, abbreviations, sources and records are concerned, the editors followed the same principles which were adopted and explained in the first book.

Whenever a publication of a book is being discussed – even if it is a book of folk songs – we must take into account concrete people who helped to prepare it. I would like to mention them now, although they would deserve to be mentioned at the very beginning. The editorial board – collaborators, commentators and researchers – consisted of dr. Zmaga Kumer, dr Milko Matičetov and dr. Valens Vodusek, all three working at the Institute for Ethnomusicology at the Slovene Academy of Arts and Sciences. The three collaborators and editors of the second book were: dr. Zmaga Kumer who wrote the introduction and prepared and commented the majority of the song types, that is 64. 9 were prepared and commented by dr. Milko Matičetov. Dr. Zmaga Kumer also prepared all the indexes with the exception of the musical ones which were prepared by dr. Valens Vodusek. Dr. Kumer transcribed most of the texts as well. Milko Matičetov contributed some remarks and supplements to the conclusion and prepared the songs from Resia for publication. The whole musical edition is the work of Valens Vodusek who also wrote commentary to melodies and helped with supplementing the material and with the formation of the material concerning most of the song types.

The book was published by Slovenska Matica, musical examples notated by Marina Polanc, designed by Miša Bernik and printed by Časopisno podjetje Delo.

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