

Editor's Column

In this second issue of *Oral Tradition* we have some happy news to convey. As of July 1 of the present year, the University of Missouri at Columbia will be the home of a Center for Studies in Oral Tradition, a place and a modest facility which we hope will serve as a focus for studies in this emerging field.

The Center will, of course, assume responsibility for the editing of *Oral Tradition*, and in addition will serve as the editorial base for two other publishing ventures. One of these will be a monograph series on oral traditions, to be issued by Peter Lang of Berne and New York City; the series will include between one and four volumes each year and has been named in honor of Albert Bates Lord. The Center will also assume the editorship of *Southeastern Europe*, the only English-language periodical devoted exclusively to the Balkans. It is published by Charles Schlacks of Irvine, California and will appear twice annually.

The readership of *Oral Tradition* is cordially invited to submit manuscripts to all three serial publications. For further information, please write to John Foley at the editorial address given at the front of this issue.

In addition, the Center for Studies in Oral Tradition is in the process of creating an archive of primary and secondary materials, with special emphasis on fieldwork collections. We shall be pleased to serve as a deposit facility, so that scholars with taped and manuscript records can store a safety copy in our library. All such materials will be fully protected on an individual basis, with right of consultation given only by the owner(s). We shall be happy to discuss deposit arrangements at any time.

We continue to urge you to send *OT*, and now the Center, copies of publications for review and annotation in the Year's Work bibliography for the October issue. Since the bibliography will cover as many aspects of studies in oral tradition as possible (and since its compilers are only quite human), its inclusiveness is in

part dependent on your cooperation in making us aware of your own and others' contributions.

The first annual bibliography will appear in the next issue of *OT*, along with a wide selection of survey and analytical essays. Fittingly, Albert Lord has provided the lead article, a sequel to his "Comparative Perspectives" essay of 1974 that comments on recent work on oral traditions, for the very issue that houses the first annual Milman Parry Lectures on Oral Tradition, delivered in April 1985 by Joseph J. Duggan. In this same number Alexandra Olsen offers the first of two installments on oral studies and Anglo-Saxon poetry, Elizabeth and Michael Jeffreys give a summary of relevant research in Byzantine Greek, Bruce Rosenberg continues his discussion of the American folk preacher and oral tradition, Ward Parks surveys scholarship on Middle English literature and its oral roots and ambience, and Eliza Miruna Ghil shares the results of her fieldwork with an oral singer, Vasile Tetin, in Romania. This issue will also contain the text and English translation of a narrative by Vasile Tetin, this primary oral material being an example of what we hope to make a regular feature in volumes to come.

In 1987 *OT* will publish a *Festschrift* for Walter J. Ong (January) and a special issue on Hispanic balladry, edited by Ruth House Webber (May), as well as the more usual potpourri of survey and analytical articles in the third number (October). Papers on Chinese storytelling, formulaic structure in Persian narrative, and South Indian oral tradition are also forthcoming, as are special issues devoted to Native American, Arabic, Yugoslav, and South Pacific traditions.

The present issue begins with the first of three essays on "Homer and Oral Tradition" by Mark Edwards; in this important series Edwards tracks the evolution of research on Homer as an oral poet from its inception with Milman Parry to the present. Margaret Clunies Ross of the University of Sydney follows with an account of relevant scholarship on the Australian Aboriginal oral culture, with special reference to her own fieldwork in the area. She has graciously provided us with samples of texts collected in the field in order to give a taste of the tradition itself. Centuries of medieval Irish storytelling and the implications of orality at its root are the major concerns of Joseph Falaky Nagy's contribution on the *fili* and his fellows. David Bynum begins his essay with an overview of collecting and collectors in the South Slavic area, and

then continues the study with a reinterpretation of the oldest recorded oral text from this region.

Ruth House Webber carries on our series of survey or “state-of-the-art” essays with a magisterial summary of scholarship on Hispanic oral traditions. Following her article is a discussion of Alexander Pope’s translation of the *Iliad*; in this piece Elizabeth Hoffman contends that the great Augustan poet conceived of Homer as an oral bard and proceeded accordingly. This issue closes with Franz H. Bäuml’s survey of the application of oral theory to the study of Middle High German poetry, with special attention to the *Nibelungenlied*.

Once more, we invite submissions for *Oral Tradition*, as well as for the new monograph series (the Albert Bates Lord Studies in Oral Tradition) and for *Southeastern Europe*. We also look forward to detailed and cogent responses to articles as they appear, to be published in the Symposium section of *OT* as soon as possible after they are received. In addition, notices of pertinent upcoming events and reports on conferences and symposia are always welcome.

John Miles Foley, Editor