

Editor's Column

With this issue *Oral Tradition* comes to the end of its first year of existence, and it thus seems an appropriate time to thank all those concerned with producing the first volume: the authors, reviewers, editorial board, editorial assistants, and not least the readership. The staff at Slavica Publishers, especially Erica Townsend and Tonya Spears, deserve special gratitude for their heroic efforts.

Our next year will see the publication of two special issues as part of a policy that calls for at least one such special collection annually. The January number will be a Festschrift for Walter J. Ong, and will consist of papers in a number of the areas he has influenced; authors include Albert Lord, Eric Havelock, Robert Kellogg, Werner Kelber, and others, with a closing essay by Father Ong himself. The May issue, under the editorship of Ruth H. Webber, will be devoted to Hispanic balladry and will feature articles by Diego Catalán, Antonio Sánchez Romeralo, and Samuel G. Armistead and Joseph H. Silverman, to name only a few. The third number for 1987 will return to the usual format of a potpourri, containing essays on Persian and South Indian oral traditions, as well as the second parts of the Old English and Homeric Greek surveys and the annotated bibliography.

Once again we encourage all readers to send us their publications for inclusion in the bibliography. Many people have been extremely helpful in this regard, and we hope that all who work in the consortium of fields that bear on "oral tradition" will form the habit of contributing one copy of their books or monographs and two copies of their articles to this worthy cause. The annual bibliography, the first edition of which may be found later on in this issue of *Oral Tradition*, is only as thorough and as useful as contributors make it.

In connection with the recently established Center for Studies in Oral Tradition at Missouri, we are happy to announce an

upcoming international symposium commemorating the two-hundredth anniversary of the birth of Vuk Stefanović Karadžić, the great Serbian ethnographer, linguist, and collector of oral traditional narrative. To celebrate this occasion, six Yugoslav colleagues will be coming to Columbia to join six Americans for a five-day symposium on the topic “Vuk Karadžić: Oral and Literary Art.” Please send any inquiries to John Foley at the usual editorial address.

The present issue of *Oral Tradition* begins with Albert Lord’s comparative survey of recent developments in oral literature studies; a sequel to his 1974 “Perspectives” essay, it also treats the important questions of formulaic density and the “transitional text.” Other surveys include the first section of a two-part history of oral-formulaic studies of Old English poetry by Alexandra Hennessey Olsen, and Elizabeth and Michael Jeffreys’ thorough examination of similar kinds of scholarship on the Byzantine Greek tradition. Bruce Rosenberg extends his analysis of the American folk-preaching tradition to some historic events, and Eliza Ghil offers us a closely drawn portrait of Vasile Tetin, a Romanian singer of tales, and a sample performance of “The Song of Iancu Jianu” by Tetin. Ward Parks’ survey of oral literature research in Middle English and Joseph Duggan’s 1986 Parry Lectures, on “Social Functions of the Medieval Epic in the Romance Literatures,” round out the issue.

Let me close this brief column with an invitation for all readers to take an active part in formulating the early history of *OT*. We welcome your comments and suggestions for the journal, as well as your bibliographical assistance and responses to previously published articles for the “Symposium” section. Notes of conferences or other events of interest to the readership will also be a regular feature. In short, we welcome whatever contribution you wish to make to the shaping of our collective enterprise.

John Miles Foley, Editor