

Editor's Column

This column marks an unwelcome first for *Oral Tradition*, unwelcome though inevitable. John Miles Foley founded the journal in 1986 and edited it for 26 years. The last two of these John mounted a heroic resistance keeping disease at bay long beyond the initial prognosis; that struggle ended May 3, 2012. His absence has left those who knew John or engaged him through his writing deeply saddened. Though death has taken a reliable guide whose vision swept far along the horizon, solace may yet be taken in the example John set and the certain knowledge that his life's work has bequeathed an enduring legacy and a compelling incentive for future advances. John's soft-spoken manner, unfailing kindness, and genuine collegiality—my own debt to him remains outstanding—cloaked an indomitable spirit unvanquished by adversity, no matter its form. Homeric tradition epitomizes this aspect of John's courage with Hector's vow to confront Achilles, ἀλλὰ μάλ' ἄντην στήσομαι (“but face to face will I stand against him;” *Iliad* XVIII.306-07), while the diction of South-Slavic tradition confirms the ironic truth, *Ni od puške, ni od noža, no od Boga, staroga krvnika* (“Not by rifle, nor by knife, but by God, the old executioner;”) (Ranković, *infra*, p. 50).

For more than a quarter of a century, *Oral Tradition* has hosted an ongoing conversation sustained by you, its authors and readers. This journal draws its strength from the collective effort of your participation in that discussion. Let me therefore extend an invitation to continue this time-honored collaboration. As always, the journal seeks articles that challenge conventional thinking and received wisdom, provoke new questions or essay novel responses to old questions, and offer insights into the multifaceted forms, operations, and meanings conveyed by traditional verbal arts in human societies. Entrusting your work to this journal ensures that it enjoys a full hearing from specialist and generalist readers, receives meticulous attention from the editorial staff, and is distributed internationally in electronic form without cost.

The present issue begins with Slavica Ranković's stimulating exploration of the performative aspect of twelve days of recorded conversations between Milman Parry, Nikola Vujnović, and Salih Ugljanin (and to a far lesser extent Albert Lord). This fine work of discourse analysis details a clash of cognitive systems while underlining how the unstable balance of discursive power shifted repeatedly between the interlocutors along and against linguistic, cultural, and economic fault lines.

The next five articles form a cluster, representative of work presented at the November 5-7, 2010, Colloquium “Oral Culture—The Difference it Makes,” which was organized by Katherine Campbell and Emily Lyle of the Department of Celtic and Scottish Studies at the University of Edinburgh. John Foley gave the Sir Everard im Thurn lecture, the colloquium's opening address.

In the first essay of the cluster, Ingrid Åkesson casts an ethnomusicologist's eye on the transformation of traditional Swedish singing. She looks at how the revival and institutionalization of a diminished living tradition effect changes in vectors of transmission,

singing techniques, aesthetic ideals, performance locales, and singing itself as an identity marker.

Katherine Campbell considers the historical role of Masonic songs in Scotland, the communal and ritual context of song circles, and the songs' cohesive capacity to imprint shared identity on the singers, or in Campbell's phrase "to pledge allegiance to the group." An account of songs' ritual significance for Masonic processions and concomitant appeal to the wider community closes this study.

William Lamb addresses the curious case of Duncan MacDonald and his brother Neil McDonald, Scots tradition bearers, as well as Donald John MacDonald, Duncan's son. The curiosity resides in the nearly identical wording of tales told first by Duncan then ostensibly told twenty years later by Neil, with versions taken from the latter being nearly identical to those taken from the former twenty years earlier! The near identical wording was long considered the hallmark of a highly conservative tradition, but Lamb's analyses uncover seemingly irrefutable statistical evidence of plagiarism as well as of visual copying on the part of Donald John MacDonald, one of twentieth-century Scotland's finest poets.

Emily Lyle delivers a new perspective on the hybrid nature of Indo-European prehistoric cosmology, linking conceptions of generational memory with kingship rules. Generational kingship rules prescribe that each king marry the daughter of his predecessor, alternating between white and red lineages in a 24 year cycle. The model proposes a four-generation memorable human time span, a "memory-capsule," that shifts forward one move with each new generation, the most remote ancestors being undifferentiated by the newest generation.

Cathlin Macaulay completes the cluster with an essay that rehearses the history of collecting, archiving, and disseminating Scots oral traditions from the mid-eighteenth century up to and including establishment of the School of Scottish Studies in 1951. Dedicated initially to "rescue ethnology," preserving the last vestiges of age-old traditions disappearing under the relentless pressure of modernization, the School's collecting, conservation, and archiving activities amassed thousands of sound files as well as films, videos, photographs, and other materials. These sound materials, as well as those of two more important archives, are now available online in digitized form through the *Toba an Dualchais/Kist o Riches* project. Macaulay explores the difficulties archivists face classifying materials, transferring between media, and then closes by offering a tale told by Norman MacQueen of St Kilda in 1961, *Dùgan is Fearchar Mòr* ("Dugan and Big Farquhar").

Sabine Dedenbach-Salazar Sáenz offers an analysis of cosmogonic and cosmological tales told by the Chipaya people, a minority isolated on the Bolivian Altiplano among the Quechua and Aymara majorities. The historical complexity of Andean societies emerges from analysis of myth-history and surnames that lays bare questions of identity, legitimacy, and land rights. The Chipayas' stories depict moves from conciliation to confrontation, and reveal the protean nature of oral traditions as it attends to current concerns and requirements, revealing myths as flexible and practical narratives.

Mark Bender delivered the twenty-fifth annual Albert Lord and Milman Parry Lecture on February 10, 2011, at the University of Missouri-Columbia, and it is presented here in a revised version. This study documents the vicissitudes lived by guardians of the Miao ethnic group's oral traditions and considers closely one of their myth-epics, "Butterfly Mother." Together with the description of a Nuoso *bimo* priest performing the creation myth, "Dragon-Eagles," Bender's presentation of a portion of his field notes underscores the essential role local researchers play contextualizing and explicating their culture, and contributing to the larger project of preserving intangible culture.

Finally, the Editorial Staff presents excerpts from 29 of John Miles Foley's editorial columns. This compilation highlights major goals, accomplishments, and shifts in the journal's development and proffers a concise and eloquent narrative account of the intellectual pathways on which the founding editor and the journal's multiple contributors travelled together.

This issue sees the light of day thanks to the unstinting efforts of the editorial staff, chiefly and principally those of the Associate Editors, Lori Garner and Scott Garner. Lori and Scott have undertaken to maintain day-to-day operation of the journal while attending to their full-time academic and administrative duties at Rhodes College. They have shouldered the burden of keeping everything moving forward on schedule, and the machinery is in good working order. Their knowledge, professionalism, and unselfishness merits much kudos and many thanks. Mark Jarvis, the Centers' Information Technology specialist, helps to lighten the load, delivering sage advice with unflappable good sense. Justin Arft deftly coordinates the efforts of our current editorial assistants, Morgan Grey, Rebecca Richardson, and Ruth Knezevich, and maintains communications along the production line. Besides overseeing several Center undertakings that in their proper season should bear fruit, Darcy Holtgrave makes plain sense out of what is otherwise garbled and misshapen. Finally, the indispensable Hannah Lenon ably administers all of the Centers' affairs. I thank them all for their good cheer and patience as well as forbearance with my own shortcomings.

An expression of my gratitude is owed to Michael O'Brien, Dean of the School of Arts and Science of the University of Missouri-Columbia, who provides the necessary support for the Center for Studies in Oral Tradition to do its work. I am similarly indebted to all of the readers who have evaluated manuscripts, taking time from their own duties to share their expertise with the staff and our contributors. Guidance received from the Editorial Board has been crucial to decisions regarding submissions. It is a great pleasure to take advantage of these good colleagues' wisdom. Over the last six months, I have received many words of encouragement and support from John's friends and they have greatly eased carrying out my new duties. John Miles Foley's legacy may be most profitably advanced by further explorations into the universe of traditional verbal arts. We welcome your submissions to *Oral Tradition* and look forward to learning from you.

John Zemke
Editor, *Oral Tradition*

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