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THE ORAL EPIC POEM OF DUBROVNIK AND THE DUBROVNIK REGION

SUMMARY

The subject matter of epic poems from the Dubrovnik region shows certain constant characteristics. Since the poems were usually recited by women, it is unusual that the heroic type is found less, while what is referred to as the novelistic predominates, in other words poems about weddings, betrayal, waiting for a husband or loved one and so forth. Of the characters which appear with the greatest frequency we find Sekul Banović, Ivo Senjanin, Cmiljanić (Smiljanić) Ilija, somewhat less frequently Kraljević Marko. Some of the narrators have their favorite heroes: for example Kata Murat has the King of Budim. Stylistically the poems also have certain features in common. The most evident aspect is that of language: those features which Andro Murat speaks of in the introduction to his collection can be noted among almost all the singers or narrators. Certain typical themes or motives appear, for example the topos "denudatio pectorum" in the explicitly erotic poems, or the cruel forms of punishing unfaithful women (sisters, cousins) which are familiar from the Vuk collections (though they are not found in Moslem poems!). The particular traditions of this region are expressed in specific oral stylistic details such as Italianisms, decorative epithets, formulas (for example the introduction of direct speech, and so forth) and others. The Dubrovnik regional material (particularly that of Luka Šipanska) has enough common features that its special place within the South Slavic traditions cannot be denied. But it also demonstrates extensive connection with the other South Slavic regions, particularly the Moslem areas.

(Translated by E. Elias-Bursac̆)