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**THE POETICS OF THE DOMESTIC
INTERNATIONALISM
IN THE COMPARATIVE RESEARCH
INTO CROATIAN NARRATIVE POEM.
THE BALKAN BALLAD,
THE MEDITERRANEAN
FOLKLORE HORIZONS**

The paper attempts to question the anthropologically contradictory boundaries of the Mediterranean cultural area as formed in the works by the Croatian and international folklore researchers dealing with the oral narrative poem of the twentieth century. Special attention will be drawn to the interpretations of the ballad genre, and an insight into the historical-literary problems will be presented as well. The hypothesis of this paper is that the narration on the Mediterranean in those works sometimes equated the understanding of the wider context of the Balkan ballad area, leading the term "Mediterranean", as employed in those works, to outgrow its concrete geographical proportions.

Keywords: oral narrative poem, oral ballad, mediterraneanism

The twentieth-century Croatian folkloristic papers on the narrative poem offer a lot of materials that deal with the concept of the Mediterranean to a greater or lesser extent. After all, the Institute of Ethnology and Folklore Research conducted systematic, both ethnological and folkloristic, fieldwork in the Mediterranean area covering a long period of time, and its members authored numerous interpretative studies. The Croatian Mediterranean tradition of the narrative poem was also researched by foreign scholars, the Slavicists as well as those of other professions (Germanists, Romanicists, classical philologists, etc.), who treated it either as the main topic of their studies, or simply because it was impossible not to include it in their research if they wanted to study the narrative poem of the wider Mediterranean area. Everything considered, a scholar interested in questioning the term Mediterranean as discussed in the folkloristic

papers on the narrative poem has enough materials for a long and pleasant ride.

Nevertheless, when taking into consideration the term in which different approaches recognize different chronotops, the "Mediterranean adventure" of the native folkloristic papers on the narrative poem that question the anthropologically contradictory boundary of the Mediterranean cultural area from the local perspective, it would be probably inevitable to discuss the ways in which the Croatian tradition of narrative poem has been focalised in terms of the views from the *inside* as well as the ones from the *outside*, and the manifold and poly-directional influences one group of views has on the others within the context of the applied methodological paradigms.

There are also other reasons for the potential choice for the discussion of the interweaving of the outside with the inside views as the main direction of our ride. According to the Erich Seemann's division of the European areas of the narrative poem, Croatia is placed within the group of the Balkan ballad as one of the South Slavonic traditions, together with the Hungarian, Rumanian, Albanian and Greek traditions. The Balkan area has united typologically similar repertoires of the narrative poem with regard to the linguistic connections and/or cultural and historical contacts; however, we could argue that it remained the area containing the largest amount of ballads, unlike other areas that seem to be singled out because of more nuanced division.¹ The context doubtlessly enters the texts, even the folkloristic ones.

Being in the situation to choose a particular approach to the Mediterranean as a folkloristic topic ourselves, we have decided that the author's viewpoint in comparison with other elements of the structure of folkloristic discourse perhaps need not be the main route of our journey. This choice has been motivated by several reasons. On the one hand, the necessary short overview dictated by the genre of the conference paper could unjustly sharpen the evaluation derived from the different scholarly

¹ The results of the philological "heroic era of comparative research" into the ballad of the second half of the nineteenth century were first systematized by William J. Entwistle, who divided the "European ballad" into four great areas: the Nordic, the Romance, the Balkan, and the Russian (the first edition in 1939; 1951), and emphasized the five so-called "export" ballad centres among them: France, Germany, Denmark, Greece and Serbia (ibid.:78). Erich Seemann has modified and widened Entwistle's division (from four into seven areas). While he has not — just like Entwistle — differentiated individual traditions within so-called "Balkan ballad", the term that encompasses the South Slavonic (Slovenian, Macedonian, "Serbo-Croatian", thus excluding the Moslem), Albanian, Rumanian, Greek and Hungarian traditions, he created separate areas for the Scandinavian, Anglo-Scottish and American, and German ballad, proclaimed to be the "most important ballad traditions", as well as "West Slavonic" (1973:39-44), that are a part of the "Nordic ballad" according to the Entwistle's division. Seemann's division, widened by another area of "Finnish and Estonian ballad" was accepted for the entry "Ballad" in the *Enzyklopädie des Märchens* [Encyclopaedia of the Fairy Tales] (see Brednich 1976/1977:1157-1165).

viewpoints and when both the topic and the ways of integration of the scholarly paper would impose more demanding strategies (such as detailed explanation, descriptions, examples, etc.). On the other hand, the division into the ballad areas, even the Balkan one itself, has not cantonised international study of the different areas of narrative poems, so that ballads were researched into with no regard to the boundaries of the ballad areas. There are some other reasons that have led us into giving up the emphasis on the author's view of other elements of the Mediterranean discourse: first, the turning towards the Mediterranean is in the Croatian circumstances a "long-lasting topic" whose evaluation resisted different twentieth-century geopolitical structuring. Second, the Croatian tradition of the Mediterranean poem was often an illustration of the discussion of general folkloristic issues. The survey of the Croatian and foreign works — even when written "through the Mediterranean glasses" — convinced us that their primary intention was the discussion of the Croatian oral tradition of Mediterranean poem as a universal or pan-European folklore inheritance. Author's identical — not bigger and not lesser — intentions were also to discuss some other segments of the Croatian oral tradition derived from different criteria (such as the Balkan, the Pannonian, the Slavonic). Even if cultural stereotypes have emerged in the course of the development of comparative studies on narrative poem within the interpretations of the Balkan or the Mediterranean ballad, we would rather ascribe them to the absence of the historical perspective or the lack of the internationalization, to the relatively young scholar discipline applied in folklore research and even to the deepening of the "interpretative cuts" during the development of methodological paradigms. A *Zeitgeist* of the sentimental approach to the folklore is sometimes visible in the studies by the native folklore researchers, in which we can also feel certain "longing for the South". The eternal sea inspiration, so mightily present in the folklore itself, did not miss the folkloristic papers either.

After these introductory remarks — and our giving up the principal position of the author's viewpoint at the conference on the "Mediterranean from the local perspectives" may be interpreted as Mediterranean in the sense in which Jorge Luis Borges speaks of Koran as a book that does not feature camels — let us take the ride on our "delicate galley". Our itinerary is going to have stops at two harbours: one of them will be a stop with the interpretations of the *genre* of the ballad and other narrative poems; the other will discuss the *historical-literary issues*, and travelling both directions we shall pass through the oral poetical tradition of the areas of the Croatian coast, islands and hinterland. Our destination is to approach the term Mediterranean the way it was formed in the papers by native scholars on the Mediterranean narrative poem.

If we are to approach here the term Mediterranean in the genealogical papers on the narrative poem of the Croatian Mediterranean area, it should be stated that folklore researchers have always tried to interpret the Croatian Mediterranean poem within the context of the genre distinction of the Croatian tradition in general as well as of the European tradition of narrative poem as such.

The Croatian oral tradition can be recognized as a part of the European tradition of narrative poem according both to its typological repertoire and its genre features. At the same time, the domestic tradition reveals its own *specialties*. This notability, that differs the Croatian genre profile of the narrative poem from other European traditions, is often used in order to stress the existence of the epic also in the modern tradition, and even as a sort of dictate of the so-called epic traditional dominant. And while the epic is the Mediaeval genre that had been pushed out by the ballad in the most of the European traditions — except for the Russian and the Balkan ones — the Croatian tradition with its Mediterranean part is characterized by the complex interweaving of the ballad, canticle and long epic in the modern tradition as well. This has been unanimously agreed upon by both Croatian and foreign authors.

The importance of the epic traditional dominant in the Croatian Mediterranean area means that the epic versions documented in the vicinity of Split and Makarska would give us more detail about the prevented incest between a brother and a sister from the poem known under its pan-European name *Meererin* than other European ballad traditions, that contain short and dense narrative parts. The traditional epic impulse will make the Croatian mothers-in-law from the versions of the Mediterranean narrative poem *Porcheronne*, documented mostly on Šolta, Čiovo and in Sinjska krajina, send their daughters-in-law even three times to look after the sheep and do similar hard work, while the dense Sephardic-Moroccan, Catalan or North Italian versions of the ballad will treat the daughter-in-law a little better. The Odyssey-like subject-matter about a husband attending his wife's wedding is of a wide pan-European distribution and the Croatian Mediterranean, as well as the hinterland versions will present it with the inserted digressions and spice up its end with the real heroic battle between the suitor and the native Odyssey, etc.

These very specialties of the domestic traditions, that play significant roles of the epic dominant also in the modern tradition of the narrative poem, have motivated the folklore researchers to judge the other genre features of the Croatian traditions.

Thus Erich Seemann sees the *fluidity of borders* between the ballad and the epic poem as a feature of the Croatian and other Balkan traditions. And while the more or less stable form of ballad can be established in the

most of the European traditions of narrative poem, in the environments with the modern epic tradition and the improvisation skills as the mode of oral poetical re-creation, the ballad genre is highly unstable and difficult to be genealogically described.

Seemann's thesis, dating from the early 1950s, claiming that the same narrator "performs one poem once in a short and the second time in a longer version, depending on the circumstances, with the inserted episodes, detailed descriptions of the main character and his actions, almost like a small epos itself" (Seemann 1955; cited after Bošković-Stulli 1960:105-106), managed to describe well the largest part of the synchronic as well as the diachronic condition of the Croatian tradition of the narrative poem.

Besides the concrete performative situation in which the context can influence the poem's structure, the theory of improvisation by Albert B. Lord (1960), on which Seeman also bases his thesis — managed to describe the simultaneous traditional existence of the lyric, "real" and the longer epic ballads, features that were also discussed by Tanja Perić-Polonijo in her paper "Balada i lirska pjesma" [Ballad and Lyric Poem] (1988). This kind of description of the re-creation of oral poem has described well both ballads that have been formed by the fragmentation of the epic poems, and the poems — although being of different times of origin, including the old *bugarštica*² — that can be placed within a group of recognizable subject-matters.

However, if the insights into the fluid borders between the ballad and the epic were accurate when describing the number of phenomena of the Croatian oral literature tradition, the native folklore researchers, especially the ones from the 1950s and the 1960s, warn that those insights still fail to comprehend the domestic tradition as a whole. Olinko Delorko and Maja Bošković-Stulli show that the well documented nineteenth-century materials from the Mediterranean part of Croatia, supplemented with the twentieth-century field research, offer us the abundance of examples of the forms that in their variant-paradigms reveal a more stable structure and persistence of the means of integration of narrative materials, density and even the intensity of the plot. Croatian authors have also in mind poems of the most heterogeneous meter, although they oppose the fluidity of the genre boundaries between the ballad and the epic to the poems with shorter verse. The poems with eight or six-syllables verse, most of which have been documented in the chakavian area (although some have been found in other dialectical zones of the Mediterranean area of Croatia) repeat themselves even literally in their different variants, and thus form the recognizable ballad types with the established pan-European distribution.

² The Croatian folk narrative poem in fifteen or sixteen-syllables.

Such a "discovery" of stable ballad structures in our surroundings has even led to the "ballad turning-point". Alois Schmaus thus emphasized that some poems that have longer narrative quality in other parts of Croatia are being narrated more densely and summarized in particular micro localities of the Mediterranean area (Schmaus 1971).

At this point we shall not start discussing the problem of the relationship between the ballad and the epic dominant that the micro-regional approaches attempt to solve, noting a general observation about the impossibility of making a sharp distinction between the "epic" and the so-called "lyric" areas. We shall also not thoroughly discuss whether the stability of the ballad structure (especially in poems with shorter verse) is the consequence of the culturally determined re-creation of oral narrative poem in comparison with the looser structure of the epic poem, as Ramon Menéndez Pidal emphasizes. He opposes the improvisation to the so-called *memorization* of the Western ballad (1980). This stability, as Lord emphasizes, could also be a mere outcome of the narrower geographical distribution of a poem, even a result of the interweaving of the oral and the written (1995). Or could perhaps the Mediterranean area of the Croatian narrative poem be viewed as the *space of the encounter of the most heterogeneous genres* of the narrative poem as well as the interweaving of the shorter and longer narrative forms and an example of the co-existence of different genres and culturological means of re-creation of oral tradition (and both improvisation and memorization)!

Nevertheless, if we were to draw conclusions about the immanent term *Mediterranean* on basis of the previously discussed genealogical works that among others deal with the Croatian Mediterranean tradition, we would have to broaden the borders of the Mediterranean over the wide area of the transitional forms between so-called Eastern and Western ballad, that is according to Florette M. Rechnitz, spread all the way from Dalmatia to Lithuania (...) (1978:6).

It is also difficult to single out the historical-literary studies on the Mediterranean area of the Croatian narrative poem from the whole comparative context of the Croatian oral tradition. The history of the Slavonic, the Central European or the Balkan tradition are the most frequent framework of the study of the Croatian tradition of narrative poems by both Croatian and foreign authors, and it is indeed impossible to avoid a manifold contextualisation like this one when discussing the historical-literary issues of the Mediterranean area of the Croatian narrative poem.

However, when talking about the Mediterranean area, both Croatian and foreign folklorists pay special attention to the studying of the influences of the *Mediterranean* traditions on the domestic narrative poem,

bearing also in mind the significance of the geographic vicinity for the mutual cultural encounters. Even if we cannot talk about the direct influences, the comparisons with the Mediterranean traditions of the narrative poem try to grasp culturological analogies.

The emphasis of the connection of the whole Mediterranean space, its Eastern and Western parts, has perhaps been most stressed in discussions of the secondary reception of the Byzantine romances. Those romances were also known to the local public through their Italian-French adaptations, and according to Matija Murko, the presence of some distinguished romance topics in the Croatian oral tradition of the narrative poem can be explained exactly with the geographical and cultural vicinity of the Mediterranean shores of the Adriatic (Murko 1951 I:446). That way, according to Murko, the chest box with the romances about *Bovo d' Antona* could be found in the pre-Renaissance Dubrovnik because they were ordered. Some parts of the romances' plot, whose topography of the complex romantic encounters of the characters of different confessional affiliations was placed in the area of Dalmatia and Slavonia, have inspired the popular poets as well (Murko *ibid.*:448 and on). According to Nikola Banašević, the local oral tradition that has adopted the romance-like plots has been used as a catalyst for the further migrations of the subject-matter towards the hinterland, and then again towards the East (Banašević 1935). Those romances have often travelled from the one Mediterranean coast to the other, creating "the full Mediterranean circle", and the Croatian oral tradition took part in this round trips.

The Croatian folklore researchers often have in mind not only the emphasis of interweaving of the influences between the Mediterranean West and East but the West-Romance traditions as well.

Especially Olinko Delorko develops the idea of "a number of plots that had to be imported... directly from Italy" but also "from Italy, as well as from France and Spain" (1969:XVII). He presented this idea in his numerous commentaries in the collections of oral poetry, that resulted from materials collected during the author's own fieldwork research or during his philological studies of the neglected nineteenth-century publications, periodicals, and the manuscript collections from the Matica hrvatska that were difficult to obtain.

The comparative studies discussing Romance influences pay special attention to the poems that mention the sea. The folklorists note the parallel co-existence of the littoral and the continental adaptations of certain subject-matters in the deeper hinterland. Unlike the usual reception of the Croatian tradition as the continental one, Olinko Delorko emphasizes the fact that "not only love longings and thrills are connected with the notion of the sea; the battles also take place along its shores" (1963:15).

Various Croatian genres of the narrative poem are being compared with the Mediterranean traditions either because of their typological

connection or because of the presence of some common Mediterranean themes and motifs. Croatian authors thus did not consider the wide-spread Italian ballad about "fishing" a husband *La pesca dell'anello* (in which "three little sisters" "wanted to sail" also in the Istrian versions, similarly to the Slovenian, Eastern-Sephardic or Greek ones) to be the only Mediterranean heritage. There is also a poem about an Amazon-girl, adapted to "our circumstances in which one always had to serve in someone's army, even when there was no-one who could serve" (1971:110), as stressed out by Maja Bošković-Stulli. Such a poem described as "talkative in a novel-like manner, in the Mediterranean way" could witness the existence of various norms, beside the norm of the honour and shame in the "real Mediterranean" of the domestic, but also of the Hispanic tradition of *La doncella guerrera* (Slater 1979).

The novel-like poems are full of regional metonyms, such as the one of the "Turks-Catalans" that encircle different historical events within the panoptic history of the Adriatic islands. All the genres of the Croatian narrative poem become real maps of the both local and macro-Mediterranean real and imaginery topography: the names of the cities such as Croatian Rab and Dubrovnik, or Venice and "beautiful and rich Spain" where from "all sorts of trades" are being brought, and even the imagined India as the country of the evil and the sin can be encountered in the novel-like poems, ballads, and even in the "real" heroic poems. "The magic boat" of the epic novel-like poems is perhaps not a ballad-like "small boat made of silver nad gold", similarly as in the Eastern Sephardic or Franch traditions, but it is still a suitable frame for tempting a girl to come aboard. This use is also seen in North Italian, Eastern Sephardic and the Catalan traditions, although the Castilian tradition features the tempting taking place on the river shore in the romance known as *El rey marinero* (Graves 1986:82-84).

Were we to add the poem about the evil mother-in-law that makes her daughter-in-law look after the sheep, goats or pigs, spreading from Morocco, Catalonia, Castilla, North Italy, through Dalmatia, to Albania and Greece [Helga Stein (1979) proved its structure to be common to the Mediterranean traditions], to the above mentioned examples, we shall merely get a superficial insight into the rich menu of the typological repertoire of the Croatian narrative poem that was used as a tool by both Croatian and international scholars who wanted to point to the presence of the motifs and topics characteristic also of other Mediterranean traditions or some of its branches, that would help establish the so-called Mediterranean ecotypification. We should note that the scholars have indeed dissociated themselves from the simplified ecological approach to the poetical folklore (by emphasizing, for example, that the environment with dominant shepherd economy can indeed lack the shepherd poems) (Delorko 1960:21-22).

Among all the Mediterranean traditions, the Croatian authors have emphasized the relatively distant Hispanic tradition. The history of the

typological, genealogical and cultural-historical comparisons between the South Slavonic and different pan-Hispanic traditions, started by Jakob Grimm (who recognized the same "oriental touch" in both of them) is a long-lasting phenomenon that deserves special consideration (see Miletich 1981).

The whole genre of the Croatian *romanca* is frequently being compared with the Hispanic one. The Croatian folklorists differentiate them from the Northern ballads through their happy-endings and the elements of humour they contain. Although we are at this point not able to go deeper into the issue of the relationship between the domestic genre of *romanca* and the Romanticist reception of the Spanish traditional poetry, in which the Croatian Romanticists also take active part, we can note that the context in which the term is being adopted is interpreted by the fact that "in other parts of Europe — since the Romanticism onwards — a firm belief that the narrative poems of the South, especially of the Pyrenean Peninsula, are merrier than their counterparts in the North" was argued by Josip Kovačić (1980:93). However, the Croatian folkloristic usage employs the term *romanca* also for a special form of the narrative poem with the casuistic teleogenetic plot.

The Croatian authors refer to *Romancero* even when trying to show the existence of the "sunk cultural goods" in the native tradition. The recognition of the fact that the "ancient-old urbanized Mediterranean culture of the Adriatic coasts... did not influence only the high patrician strata, but also had an impact on the wide population to a high degree" is to be acknowledged to Maja Bošković-Stulli (1975:11). According to Olinko Delorko, the Dalmatian poems, "although mostly cultivated by the illiterate peasant world", contain "very refined imagery" as well as "very sophisticatedly felt emotional states of particular characters" (Delorko 1968:XXIX), exactly because of the analogical interweaving of the Mediterranean rural and urban settings with the rich tradition of contacts between the folklore and the written literature. Nevertheless, these similarities are also to be explained by the similarities of the environment, climate and the way of life. Olinko Delorko's opinion thus agrees with Ivan Slamnig when it comes to recognizing the geophysics and the climatic connections of Croatia with the "furthest Mediterranean West" (1997:126). By doing so, Maja Bošković-Stulli, Olinko Delorko and Ivan Slamnig do not exclude the co-existence of different relationships between the oral and the written in the coastal and the island part of Croatia as well as in the hinterland, the co-existence that again finds its paradigmatic cause in the old Hispanic tradition of entwining of so-called *romances tradicionales*, *vulgares* and *eruditos*.

Numerous analogies with the Hispanic narrative poem are also being started out by the fact that the definition of modern and especially old romances that contain the "encounter with the Islam" also encompasses another "sources" besides the mediaeval chivalrous and Byzantine romances, such as historical chronicles.

The fact that the space of *romances viejos* from "harsh *España*" was peopled by "Spanish Turks", as the seventeenth-century Croatian author Jakov Armolušić called the Mediaeval Moors, made the Hispanic tradition suitable for the comparison with love ballads and even heroic poems of the later, the Balkanic "Oriental" layer.

Although of different ethos and historical interferences, the recognized analogy "the Moors there and the Turks here" has its reflection in the discussion of the "influence of Turkish conquests over the Balkan epic tradition", that is, according to Albert B. Lord, "difficult to imagine before the Turkish arrival" (1974). Having in mind old Hispanic border romances that tell the stories of battles between the Christian and the Moorish knights, as well as the Croatian tradition of the heroic poem, Delorko emphasizes the differences, stressing out the existence of double — Christian and Moslem — focalization within the domestic tradition, that is being positively valued.

The interweaving and mixing of the common typological repertoire of the narrators of different religious backgrounds — the Christian and Jewish even in the modern Hispanic tradition, that does not necessarily have to influence the interpretation of particular ballad subject-matters (Armistead & Silverman 1965) — also motivate the comparisons with the domestic tradition in which, for example, Primorčica [a young woman from the Croatian Mediterranean region of Primorje] secretly wishes to be kidnapped by the Mustaj-beg from the city of Mostar, when the plot of this wide-spread Croatian Mediterranean ballad must have had emerged in the Moslem strata of the Bosnian Balkanic hinterland.

If we at this point look back at the above illustrated context of folkloristic works that immanently include the concept of the Mediterranean, we hope that we have at least partially managed to show how the image of the Mediterranean offered by the Croatian folkloristic works is an image of culturally open, diverse Mediterranean that, besides the influences from the Romance West, also includes contributions from the East. The Croatian folkloristic works have formulated the term *Mediterranean* in two ways; on the one hand, it was the study of the features of Croatian Mediterranean tradition of narrative poem that differ the Mediterranean from other Croatian macro-regional areas, while on the other, the discussion of the Mediterranean sometimes equaled the study of the wider context of the Balkan ballad area.

Although the Mediterranean was studied through the prism of various folkloristic theoretical or historical-literary issues, we tend to believe that the evaluation and frequency of evoking the Mediterranean narrative poem is also a result of the fact that the Croatian authors recognized an especially grateful target for discussing local and regional

features of Croatian oral tradition exactly in those, earlier mentioned traditions.

Intercultural analogies with Mediterranean traditions have emphasized the universality of non-existence of a uniform system of ethnic norms in various traditional value systems, transmitted also by oral poems. The "Mediterranean view" has enabled a wider contextualization and observation of similarities with other traditions of cultural diversity of domestic tradition and at the same time the existence of various contradictory norms within the value systems of traditional community, the topic which was discussed apart in the Croatian ethnological discourse as well, especially in the works of Dunja Rihtman-Auguštin and Ines Prica (1984:178; 1997:16).

The comparisons with the Hispanic traditions have enabled a different insight into those segments of the Croatian tradition that were sometimes, as a part of the "Balkan inheritance", evaluated as being negative. Those analogies could add the attractive adventure note of the knight tournaments even to the "manly attraction" of the heroic poems, marked by the "shade of the Orient", an image which the historian Maria Todorova uses to describe the Balkanic version of *orientalism* that she names *balkanism* (Todorova 1996:31). It happened that the balkanism in the works of Croatian authors was transformed in the mediterraneanist discourse (Herzfeld 1993) even when the domestic *romanca* has been compared with the Hispanic romances by stressing the same scenarios of the "unrestrained love passion" in the love ballads, the ballads which discussed the female infidelity, the sibling incest ballads etc. Such a passionate family ballad space was implicitly opposed to the interpretations which have dominated the folklorist discourse on the Croatian balladry for a long time viewing it as "socially condoned outlet for hostility within a patriarchal family" (Coote 1977:338).

"The insecure (sea and coastal) ways and voyages, ambushes, heroic resistance, too early death, burnings, leaving without ever coming back, difficult achievement of a love relationship" (Delorko 1951:183), and the interconfessional Christian-Muslim love *mésalliance* have not only resisted the South Slavonic stereotype of the epic space but also contrasted with the usual Romanticist reception of the Croatian "Morlachian" family ballads. Again, the attractiveness of an adventure and the sensual touch replaced the exclusive rules of heroic *gesta* and the stereotypes about Balkan patriarchal family presented in previous studied on Croatian traditional poetry.

And finally, were we to look back at the term Mediterranean the way it was formulated in the Croatian folkloristic works on the narrative poem, we should believe that the Mediterranean, as well as other areas of the Croatian narrative poem, in the course of the study of general folkloristic theoretical or historical-literary issues, has even grown out of its geographic proportions. The Croatian authors pointed out to the exclusive

features of the narrow region of the Croatian Mediterranean oral poetry, but they also named Mediterranean some characteristic of the oral traditional poetry that are common to the wider context of the Balkan Peninsula. In such a way the domestic authors proved that the same "fact" could be sometimes seen as the Balkanic as well as Mediterranean.

One could argue that it was more noble to name some features as Mediterranean instead of Balkan. But, in the process of the domestic reevaluation of the domestic traditional poetry the figurative value of the Mediterranean strongly influenced the positive evaluation of the domestic narrative poem. The width of the space of the Mediterranean narrative poem — that can also encircle the Greek epic romances about Digenis Akritas, the Hispanic *Romancero* spread across the other Atlantic coast, the North Italian shorter ballads, the long narrative *cantastorie* from Central and South Italy, as well as the Croatian ballads, but also epic heroic and novel-like poems common to other Balkan traditions — as well as pacific coexistence of various norms present in them, has accelerated turning of the Mediterranean oral poetry into a metaphor of the universality of poetical folklore and a synonym of the coexistence of various normative systems.

The open-mindedness of the domestic study of the Mediterranean traditional poetry even allow us to make a remark that the features recognized as specific for the Mediterranean region of Croatia as the littoral adaptations of certain motifs and subject-matters, mixture of various confessional repertoires, oralization of written literature of classical or Romance origin, various relationships between the oral and the written, interweaving of shorter ballads and long epic, the common Mediterranean ballad types can be seen in the places far from the Mediterranean as well. As Maja Bošković-Stulli had put it, the maritime traditions are international, "just as the maritime life itself; they are widely open towards every wind, unbound by the narrow frame of the domestic narrations, they are being taken over through the centuries-long journeys across far seas and spaces, in order to be harmonized and melted with the older domestic tradition" (Bošković-Stulli 1962:506). It is known that the Mediterranean heritage has become largely a pan-European one. The ballad about the Hero and Leander has been documented in the continental Croatian region of Podravina, where it came from the Central European ballad traditions.

Finally, the folkloristic works on the narrative poem of the Croatian Mediterranean area have not merely enabled the recognition of the Mediterranean poetic heritage in Croatia. They also allowed us to comprehend the complex entwining of different ballad traditions which may not respect the language, historical cultural, and geopolitical boundaries of the ballad national or transnational areas. The Croatian authors have also shown that the Mediterranean chronotop and the Mediterranean point of view could be a matter of choice. One could only hope that it is not necessary to wet one's finger in the sea to chose it!

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POETIKA DOMAĆEGA INTERNACIONALIZMA
U KOMPARATIVNOM PROUČAVANJU HRVATSKE
PRIPOVJEDNE PJESME. BALKANSKA BALADA,
MEDITERANSKI FOLKLORISTIČKI VIDICI

SAŽETAK

Članak nastoji propitati antropološki kontradiktorne granice kulturnog prostora Mediterana onako kako su se one u radovima domaćih i stranih folklorista o usmenoj pripovjednoj pjesmi oblikovale u ovome stoljeću. Posebnu pozornost posvećuje tumačenjima žanra balade, a osvrće se i na povijesnoknjiževnu problematiku. Pretpostavka je ovoga članka da je govor o Mediteranu u tim radovima ponekad odgovarao promišljanju širega konteksta balkanskog baladnog areala. "Mediteranski pogled" kulturološkoj je raznovrsnosti domaće tradicije, pa i istodobnu postojanju različitih proturječnih normi u vrijednosnom sustavu tradicijske zajednice, omogućio i širu kontekstualizaciju i uočavanje sličnosti s drugim tradicijama. Posebno su usporedbe s hispanskom tradicijom omogućavale drukčiji pogled i na one segmente hrvatske tradicije koje su kao dio "balkanskoga naslijeđa" ponekad bile i negativno vrednovane. Zato vjerujemo da je pojam Mediterana, onako kako se oblikovao u domaćim pa i u stranim folklorističkim radovima o pripovjednoj pjesmi, čak i prerastao svoje zemljopisne međe.

Ključne riječi: usmena pripovjedna pjesma, usmena balada, mediteranizam