

This issue of *Narodna umjetnost - The Croatian Journal of Ethnology and Folklore Research* contains the papers presented at the conference "Where Does the Mediterranean Begin? Mediterranean Anthropology from Local Perspectives", held in October 1998 and organized by the publisher, the Institute of Ethnology and Folklore Research, on the occasion of its fiftieth anniversary.

The conference proposed to evaluate the state of art in Mediterranean ethnological, anthropological, folkloristic and ethnomusicological research in Croatia. The Mediterranean as a distinct cultural area within Croatia has been subject to quite an extensive scholarly treatment by local reseachers. The discourse on the Mediterranean did not remain strictly part of academic circles, but became part of political struggles and representations of national identity in various time periods. That development has especially been noticeable in the 1990s, when the Mediterranean has been used as a political and cultural demarcation vis-à-vis the Balkan *other*.

Another aim of the conference was to initiate a dialogue between researchers from the region along with the foreign ones who have so far led parallel inquiries into the Mediterranean that rarely (or never) met or interwove with each other. The works by Croatian researchers have not at all played a role in the constitution of the general Mediterranean subject matter. By cultivating an out-dated research paradigm, a variant of the diffusionist research model, the majority of Croatian researchers have remained outside or on the margins of Anglo-American, French or other research into the Mediterranean until the 1990s.

On the other hand, foreign anthropologists seem to have avoided the research into Croatian Adriatic coast. If it was at all present on an European ethnological/anthropological map, Croatia was an undifferentiated part of the Balkanological research in the context of former Yugoslavia, that was itself considered part of the wider circum-Mediterranean area by some. From the Croatian perspective, however, research in the Balkans, mainly pertaining to the territories of Serbia, Montenegro and Macedonia, was not treated under the heading "anthropology of the Mediterranean".

This raises the question of the disparity of the borders of the Mediterranean as viewed from inside and outside locations. Therefore the conference was also meant to be a forum for discussing emic and etic

perspectives regarding the imagined borders of the Mediterranean: the emic boundaries constituted by the Mediterranean peoples themselves as well as the etic categories constructed by the scholars be they from the Mediterranean or not. The papers thus refer to discourses on the Mediterranean presented by people, political elites and scholars, mapping local uses of the Mediterranean, most of them in the present, while some also in the past. Some contributions reveal the use of the Mediterranean in regional and national identity constructions, linking them sometimes to the history of ethno/anthropological research into the Mediterranean. Others have taken up the task of presenting folkloristic and ethnomusicological studies in Croatia and their interweavings with Spanish, Slovenian or Italian research or have offered surveys of Mediterranean characteristics in Croatian oral literature and popular music.

The conference was organized in four sessions with a discussant assigned in advance to each session. Two discussants (Vjera Bonifačić and Jonas Frykman) have contributed a written statement for this volume. We thank the other two discussants (Marko Terseglav and Stanislav Tuksar) for their valuable comments and for initiating the discussions at the conference.

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