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FOLK POETRY FROM THE SURROUNDINGS OF DONJA STUBICA IN
HRVATSKO ZAGORJE

S u m m a r y

The folk poetry on which this study is based, including the parts published here in the Appendix, was recorded by the author during his three visits (in 1969, 1970, and 1971) to those parts of the Hrvatsko Zagorje region in northwestern Croatia which were the scene of the 1573 Peasant Rebellion. All of the material collected in the region consists of two manuscript collections kept in the Archives of the Institute of Folk Art (call nos. 793 and 832).

The author notes that none of the poems in these collections refer directly to the rebellion or its leaders. In his analysis he therefore deals in the first place with those poems which describe the hardships of feudal serfs. The next group includes harvest songs and it is here that one finds some particularly effective ones. Among the popular ballads and romances, the author concentrates on some of them: the ballad about the mother who killed her newborn baby; the romance of a girl who was seized by a young man and taken into the mountain; the fragment of the romance describing St. George's struggle with the dragon (the description is charmingly naive); and the ballad which describes how a bridegroom died of drowning in a stream which was normally quite shallow but which suddenly swelled with water as he was crossing it to reach the bride. This last ballad has also been preserved only in fragmentary form.

The drinking songs from Hrvatsko Zagorje, particularly those expressing toasts or honouring members of the drinking company, are fairly widespread and include some very successful ones. Of the 56 poems given in the Appendix, nos. 15, 37, 47, and 50 are, in the present author's opinion, artistically most accomplished.

It is interesting to note the absence of epic poems in the collected material. When called upon to describe certain events at greater length, the folk poet of Hrvatsko Zagorje resorted to shorter narrative poems, such as ballads and romances. These two forms forced him to be concise and very precise in expression — and precision and conciseness are certainly among the greatest qualities of this poetry.

(Translated by *Vlado Ivir*)