

ON THE MULTIDISCIPLINARY FOOTHOLDS OF CROATIAN FOLKLORISTICS AT THE TURN OF THE 19TH TO THE 20TH CENTURY

SUMMARY

The marking of significant dates of Croatian folkloristics prompted the author to reevaluate the role of multifarious disciplinary traditions and research practices that characterised its scholarly beginnings. A retrospective approach such as this cannot avoid the recent theoretical and methodological dilemmas, but it keeps away from nostalgic laments for the age of the first folkloristic endeavours as the age of "metadiscursive innocence". Hence this article recognizes the first formulations of some "postmodern" dilemmas in the body of work of the nineteenth century Croatian researchers, but it also points to the recent presence of philological categories and modernist dichotomies in the form of the pervasive rhetoric of the collecting of *folk treasure*, authenticity, traditional qualities, and the variability and aesthetic nature of folklore that were at work in the last century. Instead of being involved in fashionable debates on the (un)suitability of the name of their discipline and its epistemological inconsistency, Croatian folklorists used their legacy to concentrate, in an unpretentious but theoretically convincing way, on the politics of folkloristic and broader cultural representation of national, historical, and gender identity which, determined by textual and contextual elements, once again discovers polyvalent folklore phenomena.

Keywords: folkloristics, theory, Croatia