

ZAGREB ORAL TRADITION BETWEEN LOVE AND POLITICS

SUMMARY

Dunja Rihtman-Auguštin has very often discussed the "usage of folklore" outside of its original context, and its usage for explicitly political purposes.

The manifestations of folklore are more often associated with folk dance and music and national costumes or the performance of custom, which is understandable, because these folklore forms enable, or even demand, public presentation. Oral literature seems to remain aside and untouched by the processes of folklorization. Two examples from Zagreb -- oral traditions about Manduševac well and legend about the Holy Virgin Kamenita -- which are starting points for discussing the manifestation of folklore research, partly disprove this statement.

Historical testimonies describing Manduševac well, which are also connected with the name of the city and its founding, as well as oral traditions, are cited and discussed -- from the earliest to recent records, together with the literary usage of oral tradition in works of Croatian writers. The re-opening of the well after almost a hundred years and all the events that were influenced by the re-opening, especially the media coverage, are being researched as folklore phenomena. The feelings of belonging to the city and love for the city, city symbols and the tradition that have been systematically eradicated during the past fifty years are publicly expressed through those events.

The second part analyzes the usage of the local legend about the miraculous saving of the painting of Holy Virgin Kamenita, the patroness and advocate of Zagreb and its citizens, in the context of two celebrations: the two-hundred-years anniversary of the miraculous saving of the painting, held in 1931, and the 900th anniversary of the first mention of the city of Zagreb, held in 1994. The royal family was present at the first, and Holy Father at the second celebration. One can recognize the forms of folklorism, but also its different perspectives -- religious, sentimental, local, and political in the aspiration to represent, but at the same time to use Zagreb's oral tradition for political purposes. They intermingle, overlap, grow one from another, conflict one another, but cannot exist without each other. In revival and presentation of one part of one's own legendary history in honour of Holy Father's arrival, there is also love of Zagreb's citizens for tradition, the city, and, most important, the guest. The Serbian royal family's stay in Zagreb and their gift -- a pearl necklace -- to the Holy Virgin Kamenita were done only for reasons of their political propaganda.

(Translated by Sanja Kalapoš)