

## PREFACE

The research of folklore and traditional or popular culture starts from and ends with the collections of field data. For this reason, the endeavours for the recording and protecting the precious material of folk traditions and folk art from oblivion have been undertaken continuously since the time of the romantic discovery of folklore, the period of great importance for the subsequent development of the contemporary ethnology and folkloristics.

In the early 1950's, when the Institute for Folk Arts, now called the Institute of Folklore Research in Zagreb, was established, the major impetus in the work of the newly founded institution was to collect and to preserve the data on folklore. We have already reported about the relationship between the collected field data and the scientific research of these materials in the paper "Thirty-five years of the Institute of Folklore Research" (*Narodna umjetnost* 1984, Vol. 21, pp. 11-33).

It must be stressed again that the Institute of Folklore Research has always taken good care of the data on folklore and its professional archiving, all the way to its scientific analysis, thus opening new views on folklore and popular culture for the sake of their more comprehensive and multifaceted interpretation. This attitude was expressed particularly in the systematically planned and executed regional monographic studies which have been supported by the systematic collection of the relevant data from the sources other than the Institute's own.

In the course of more than thirty-five years of the Institute's functioning, its Archives have grown significantly. While in the 1950's the researchers recorded all their observations using only pen and paper, even making hand-drawings, the development of the electronic media facilitated the application of more sophisticated recording methods. Tape recording was introduced, taking photographs became more frequent and, finally, movies and the video recording of folklore performances and individual phenomena were applied.

With the modernization of recording techniques and the archiving of field data, the organization of the Archives itself has changed. The application of electronics was introduced here also, not as an aim in itself but as the means which will allow better and quicker retrieval of single items within the archived material and will gradually create an information system which would integrate information on the field data gathered in Yugoslavia, and connect with similar international data banks.

The electronic processing of data certainly makes possible better preservation of folklore materials. Modern, critical folkloristics and ethnology have already warned us: the mere recording of the folklore phenomena already transforms them by the very fact that folklore events are taken away from their original context. Such understanding of the recording process demands the organization of an archive which would render the best possible insight into folklore phenomena in their context. With the growing awareness of the elusive character of folklore processes we feel an increasing responsibility to better document, and consequently preserve the testimonies of phases in the development of folklore phenomena, of their changing aspects as well as of the continuing aspects of tradition.

Let the publishing of this, so far the most complete, survey of the folklore data kept in the Archive of documents of the Institute of Folklore Research, and of the bibliographies of its members, as well as of the associates of "*Narodna umjetnost*", be a contribution to the scientific research in our field, but also the first step in the modern preservation of folklore.

**Editorial Board**

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