

## BOOK REVIEWS

### GENERAL

HONKO, LAURI, editor. *The Kalevala and the World's Traditional Epics*. Studia Fennica Folkloristica 12. Helsinki: Suomalainen Kirjallisuuden Seura, 2002. 487 pages. Paper €32.00; ISBN 951-746-422-3; ISSN 1235-1946.

Themes prominent in scholarly work of a specific branch of knowledge at any given time will develop on the basis of the history of the discipline, the current philosophical trends in the humanities in general, and the current intellectual trends in society at large, and depend on the interests of prominent scholars. Those who “call the tune” train the next generation of scholars and distribute the resources. Taking all these circumstances together, the current interest in epic studies received its stimulus from the celebrations in Finland of the 150th anniversary of the Kalevala (1835–1985/1849–1999), which turned into an international scholarly event. As a result, two decades ago folkloristics turned its attention to the genre of oral epic and its ancient, medieval, and modern written derivatives. As in the case of the geographic-historic method with both its theory and organization (archives, societies), here too Finnish scholars took the lead. The late Lauri Honko, editor of the reviewed volume, added to his theoretical work the practice of textualization (recording, transcription, translation, publication), the description of previous work (HONKO 1998, HONKO 1998 et al.; see JASON 2002 for review), and the organization of scholarly meetings devoted to various aspects of the epic genre: in Turku in 1985 (see publication of papers by HONKO 1990, ed.); in Mysore in 1995 (HONKO, HANDOO, and FOLEY 1998); again in Turku in 1996 (HONKO 2000, ed.); and in 1999 (the volume presently under review).

The rallying point of this last meeting was the Kalevala, the “grand national epic,” composed from single oral works (of the “episodic tradition,” see JASON, n.d., vol. I, Part A, chpts. 6 and 6.1.1). Eleven of the twenty-eight conference papers discussed various aspects of the Kalevala and its antecedent and contemporaneous oral tradition. Included are papers discussing a possible history of the Kalevala’s oral tradition (A-L. Siikala, 26–43); the history of the Kalevala’s making (L. Honko, 13–25; N. Hämäläinen, 364–87; S. Timonen, 342–63); the social aspects of the Kalevala’s reception outside Finland by Fins (S.E. Walima, 64–83) and by others (D.E. Gay, 54–63); the influence of the Kalevala and its idea of “national” epic in Baltic countries (M. Arukask, 420–32; D. Bula, 476–81; P. Hagu, 433–63; L. Honko, 317–41; S. Suhonen, 464–75; Ü. Valk, 407–69); and an essay on the aesthetic-semantic aspect (J. B. A. Karkala, 44–53).

On the basis of the written nature of the Kalevala, ancient and medieval written works are discussed. For Homeric epics an attempt is made to reconstruct the oral performance (M.S. Jensen, 87–105). The underlying assumptions for an oral antecedent of ancient written texts are discussed using old Norse texts as examples (C. Tolley, 128–35). Three papers deal with the completely written *Shāh-nāme*: discussed are the relations of literary work and history (J. Puhvel, 267–70), semantic patterns (M. Bagheri, 271–75), and the “world view,” that is, ideology underlying the work (U. Marzolph, 276–93).

Many of the papers discuss purely oral works, with little or no relation to the Kalevala. Close literary analyses of oral texts (with new translations) from cultures of American Indians (Mohave nation) (D. Hymes, 163–83), of Finnish Kalevala oral texts (E. Rahimova, 388–406), of Southern Slavic works (western branch) (J. M. Foley, 106–27), of Somali (J.W. Johnson, 184–242), and Balochi oral literature (S. Badalkhan, 301–23) represent newer trends and approaches in folkloristics. Somewhat older ways of looking at materials represent descriptions of Faroese ballad tradition (M. Mellberg, 136–48), production processes and socio-political uses of Baltic and Fino-Baltic oral poetry and its written imitations (M. Arukask, 420–32; D. Bula, 476–80; P. Hagu, 433–63; S. Suhonen, 464–75), uses of oral poetry in Southern Slavic lands (eastern branch) in building national identity (E. Agoston-Nikolova, 155–60), and descriptions of the role of the singers among Turkic people of Central Asia as preservers of ethnic tradition and social relations of leaders by producing genealogies (R. Reichl, 245–66).

This multitude of approaches, theories, topics, and themes of research is not unique to investigations of the epic genre. Oral literature in general is being investigated in the same manner. In the reviewer's understanding, the most interesting phenomenon that can be perceived from the papers, which has hitherto not received attention, is the existence of imitation-epic works (or "fake-epic," following DORSON's 1969 "Fakelore"). This subgenre started with Virgil's *Aeneid*, which was composed in order to invest upon the Roman nation the same respectability with which Homer's epics invested the Greek nation. The production of imitation epics flourished in the national movements of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, when long "national" epics, which are basically imitations, were composed. Here belong, among others, the Finnish "Kalevala" (LÖNNROT 1985), the Estonian "Kalevipoeg" (KREUTZWALD 1861), the Latvian "Lāčplēsis" (PUMPURS 1888), and the Serbo-Croatian "The Death of Smail-aga Čengić" (MA URANIĆ 1980). In addition to these wholly authored and signed works, outright fakes were also produced. In the reviewed volume the Setu imitation-epic about Peko is amply discussed (by M. Arukask, 420–32; P. Hagu, 433–63; and S. Suhonen, 464–75). We may add the example of Petranović's collection; he also "recorded" epic songs which he ordered from a good singer, in order to deliberately propagate ideas of the Serbian national movement against Ottoman rule (PETRANOVIĆ 1989, Introduction by Kilibarda). The phenomenon of "imitation-epics" merits further scholarly attention.

The reviewer hopes that with Lauri Honko's untimely passing away, scholarly attention to the genre of epic will not fade away.

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## JAPAN

FRITSCH, INGRID. *Wax Cylinder Recordings of Japanese Music (1901–1913)*. The Berlin Phonogramm-Archiv, New Series Historical Sound Documents, CD 1. Artur Simon, Series Editor; Susanne Ziegler, Coeditor. Berlin: Staatliche Museen zu Berlin, Preussischer Kulturbesitz, Ethnologisches Museum, Abteilung Musikethnologie, Phonogramm-Archiv, 2003. CD + booklet of 96 pages. Illustrations, musical examples. Price €15.00; Order number: BphA-WA 1. (German and English)

Students of Japanese music have long known of the existence of early recordings scattered around the globe, with one hundred thirty-two wax cylinders of Japanese music presently stored at the Berlin Phonogramm-Archiv. This CD presents twenty-five selections from these cylinders, recorded between 1901 and 1913. To date only a few of the pieces included have been available inside or outside Japan. This CD will thus be welcomed by musicologists and indeed by anyone curious about how Japanese music sounded a century ago.

The first four tracks offer music recorded by Otto Abraham and Erich von Hornbostel in November 1901, when the troupe of Kawakami Otojirō (1864–1911) and his wife, the legendary singer-dancer-actress Sada Yakko (1872–1946), arrived in Berlin on their second tour of Europe. These pieces and the following two tracks are from the collection that Abraham and Hornbostel used as the basis of their landmark study “Studien über das Tonsystem und