

BOOK REVIEWS

GENERAL

WOLF-KNUTS, ULRIKA, Editor. *ARV: Nordic Yearbook of Folklore 1993, Volume 49*. Uppsala, Sweden: The Royal Gustavus Adolphus Academy, 1993. 190 pages. 1 photo, maps. Cloth SEK 198; ISBN 91-22-01592-2. (Distributed by Almqvist & Wiksell International, Stockholm, Sweden)

WOLF-KNUTS, ULRIKA, Editor. *ARV: Nordic Yearbook of Folklore 1994, Volume 50*. Uppsala, Sweden: The Royal Gustavus Adolphus Academy, 1994. 241 pages. Tables, illustrations. n.p.; ISBN 91-22-01630-9. (Distributed by Almqvist & Wiksell, International, Stockholm, Sweden)

The two volumes of *ARV* (which means "heritage") open a new chapter in the history of this seasoned, representative yearbook of Nordic folklore scholarship. Focused on Scandinavian philology and folklore, the yearbook was originally confined to the Scandinavian languages, but the editors, realizing the importance of a wider exchange of ideas, started welcoming submissions in English and German. Bengt Jonsson, the former editor, turned *ARV* into a truly international forum by making it an English-language publication and inviting contributions from around the world. The present editor, Ulrika Wolf-Knuts of Abo (Turku) University, introduced an expansion of the concept "Nordic" by including folklorists from the three Baltic states and declaring her intent to "inspire and complement international folkloristics" from the areas of research in "folk literature, belief, customs, folk ideas . . . values and attitudes . . . to reach an audience beyond the Nordic countries" (*ARV* 1993, 8).

Volume 49 is a valuable special issue that reports on legend research in the Nordic countries. Twelve essays, originally presented by Nordic scholars at the Nordic-Celtic Legend Symposium in Galway, Ireland, 1991, offer a good overview of the current status of legend research.

Stein R. Mathisen distinguishes two categories of North Norwegian legends about magic experts whose supernatural power and knowledge come from either their sinister relationship with the devil or their reliance on the *huldrefolk* (the hidden people, guardians of social norms). Reimund Kvideland discusses the formulation of Scandinavian variables of an international legend-theme about two neighbors who establish a border at the point at which they encounter each other after walking equal distances. Such an act is too minor to base a legend upon, writes Kvideland, but feelings like mistrust and suspicion of fraud stimulate elaborate text variables. Irma-Riitta Järvinen evaluates Greek Orthodox Karelian Finn's sacred legends on the basis of archival materials collected during the 1930s. She finds Christian personages molded into the general supernatural tradition of the region as informants relate empirical encounters with nature spirits, God, Jesus, and the devil. Eydun Andreasson reviews a classic legend collection of ninety texts from the Faroe Islands, compiled by Jakob Jakobsen during the 1890s. The author raises the question of authenticity in view of the fact

that these texts are heavily edited in the Grimmian style.

On the basis of variants of eight legends in the Finnish Folklore Archive, Pirkko-Liisa Rausmaa discusses the widespread belief that the Devil taught people to dance. She concludes that it is always women who are punished for the "sin" of dancing, never men. Marjatta Juohainen discusses the group of supernatural legends in the Finnish corpus of the national folklore archive. The impressive supernatural legend stock is the fruit of systematic collection since 1850. The author shows changes due to migration and urbanization in the 1,000 items collected in 1961. She raises questions concerning the distributional change of certain legends, the decline of belief, and the classification and indexing of the latest crops of urban legendry. Bengt af Klintberg reports on his preparation of a Swedish legend catalog. Unlike earlier indexes, this is based not on archive systems but on the acceptance of Tillhagen's concept of legend. He identifies twenty-five legend groups and describes the arduous task of creating analytical categories for fixing the basic plots of this unfixable genre.

Asa Nyman's plea to map the dissemination of legends is interesting despite the problems current proponents of ethnographic cartography face in tracking the movements of culture in mobile modern societies. Olaf Bo traces belief in fabulous animals and incredible creatures, outlining the evolution of the concept that certain beings live hidden underground. Bo describes the main representatives of the *huldrefolk* in Norway — the troll, the *huldra*, the *julenisse*, *tomte*, *vesse* and *tinsse*, *kverknurre*, *fossegrim*, and others — and mentions parallel characters in the legends of adjacent countries related to similar landscapes. Jukka Saarinen presents the Finnish "Hiisi" as a complex legend-concept of many meanings in the numinous world. Hallfredur Örn Eiriksson's survey of Icelandic ghost fabulae indicates a great wealth of ghost stories. The legends appear to be influenced by international types as well as by Icelandic sagas, as illustrated by reference to AaTh 326 (The Youth Who Wanted to Learn What Fear Is). Another approach to the "hidden people" is offered by Jón Hnefill Aðalsteinsson, who targets Icelandic legends featuring encounters of humans with elves and the *huldufolk* as dream and waking experiences. Unfortunately, the author had no access to the legend texts and depended primarily on the data in Thompson's motif index. Samuli Aiko's article on legends of the *stállu* among the Lapps closes the anthology. The Arctic animal-demon appears in diverse folkloric genres and in diverse regions, which the author lists without answering his question, What is a *stállu*?

This anthology abounds in interesting themes, but, except for Kvideland, Juohainen, af Klintberg, and Nyman, none of the authors addresses the theoretical and methodological issues of legend study. Most authors also depend heavily on archival materials, not their own current field experience. The outsider is tempted to ask, Are the legends presented here historic documents only? Does nothing contemporary exist for the ethnographer to study?

Volume 50 (1994) shows more diversity in its themes and approaches. Ann Eriksen (Norway) contributes to the ongoing international discussion on the meaning of tradition in the social changes of the industrial age. She seeks to find out what people mean by "tradition" by sending questionnaires to regular contributors to the Nordic ethnological archive. The results are predictable: older people bemoan the loss of the traditional ways and maintain what they can of the old rituals and customs, while the young are vague about tradition but feel that anything old and venerable is nice. But wouldn't questionnaire-based results have been similar two hundred years ago? Folklore changes as generations change; a new tradition emerges on the ruins of the old and is articulated by the mainstream generation; the eyes of the young are on the future, not the past.

Päivikki Suojanen, speaking of "current traditions," discusses the rhetoric of Finnish politicians. She claims that politicians, like preachers, use oral and written traditional speech formulas, mannerisms, and strategies when delivering their messages ("ritual discourse") to the public. Suojanen's equation of fundamentalist religious communities to political parties is interesting, but tradition is not necessarily folklore; in this case perhaps we should ask if this is not going beyond the limits of our field of competence. Gerald Thomas's piece about his fieldwork in French Newfoundland should be required reading for students in graduate

folklore classes. Describing his work in four small communities over fourteen years, he argues forcefully for the superiority of long-term intensive field study over short-term visits. There is no better way, he says, to gain the confidence of the people so that they naturally reveal their folklore, feelings, and beliefs.

Ulf Palmenfelt characterizes the conversation between interviewer and interviewee as a "tug of war" as he examines levels of competition between the speakers. He cites three texts in Per Arvid Säve's collection of Gotlandic words from the second half of the nineteenth century. The author attributes the presence of several valuable narrative folklore items in the collection to informants who tricked the collector into listening to their stories as well as to their articulation of dialect words. Olav Christensen's article is a fine addition to the burgeoning ethnographic literature on national identity construction. Writers of the Age of Enlightenment gave rise to the notion of "Norwegianness," composed from idealized images by insiders and outsiders that essentially fits the present-day image: a healthy strong race, bred by its spectacular winter landscape and its national sport, skiing.

Olaf Solberg's comparison of a jocular ballad to the legend of a medieval saint will be difficult going for folklorists unfamiliar with Nordic saga tradition. The Norwegian ballad about the girl who marries despite her father's threat of punishment can hardly be compared to the martyr legend of Saint Barbara, rooted in medieval Christian clerical tradition. Though there may be motific-formulaic similarities and perhaps even a generic relationship, a direct connection to the saint's legend seems hard to substantiate. Jón Hnefill Aðalsteins-son's paper examines legends about Icelandic magicians, particularly the historic character Saemundur the Wise (1056-1133).

Gustav Henningsen, in an illuminating presentation of photographs from the Danish Folklore Archive, describes how folklore was documented with photographs of artifacts, performers, and performances between 1839 and 1950 by Danish folklorists Evald Tang Kristensen and Axel Olrik. Henningsen describes two forgotten dictionaries of comparative folkloristics by Henning Frederik Feilberg (1831-1921), a theologian who collaborated with leading folklorists of his time. After his death his collection of 60,448 cards was donated to the Danish Archive. Finally published in 1992, it consists of eighty-four standard microfiches accompanied by Henningsen's handbook, and comprises a unique source for students of folklore.

The book-review section of *ARV* is truly exemplary in its thorough presentation and critical discussion of the latest publications. The twenty-seven reviews in volume 49 and twenty-six reviews in volume 50 offer a wealth of information about current works. Only three of these works are non-Nordic, however. The inclusion of more theoretically significant books from other countries would, I feel, further the internationalization of Nordic folkloristics and help establish a true give-and-take (rather than a simple give) relationship with the rest of the world.

Linda DÉGH
Indiana University
Bloomington, Indiana