

CONTENTS — SOMMAIRE — INHALT

Ján Podolák (Bratislava)	
Contemporary Problems and Tasks of Slavonic Ethnology.	9
Актуальные проблемы и задачи этнографии славян	16
V. P. Aleksejev, J. V. Bromlej (Moskva)	
On the Role of Autochthonous Population in the Origin of Southern Slavs	23
T. V. Staňukovič (Leningrad)	
Zur Frage der gegenseitigen kulturellen Beeinflussung. (Nach Materialien der ostslawischen Dorfbevölkerung Mittelasiens und Kasachstans).	37
К вопросу о культурном взаимовлиянии. (По материалам восточнославянского деревенского населения Средней Азии и Казахстана). (Резюме)	48
D. A. Mačinskij (Leningrad)	
Die älteste zuverlässige urkundliche Erwähnung der Slawen und der Versuch, sie mit den archäologischen Daten zu vergleichen	51
Древнейшие достоверные письменные свидетельства о славянах и опыт их сравнения с данными археологии. (Резюме)	69
Je. P. Busygin, N. V. Zorin (Moskva)	
Die Slawen im Mittelwolgagebiet.	71
Славяне на Средней Волге. (Резюме)	88
Jaroslav Kramář (Praha)	
Die ethnographische Problematik in der Abbildung der Přemysl-Szene in der St.-Katharinakapelle zu Znojmo	89
Etnografická problematika vyobrazení Přemyslovy orby v rotundě znojenské (Resumé)	107
Mirko Barjaktarović (Beograd)	
Forms of Ownership as Types of Traditional Institutions in Yugoslavia. . . .	109
Oblici svojine kao vrste tradicionalnih institucija u Jugoslaviji (Rezime) . . .	115
Stojan Genčev (Sofia)	
Phänomen, historische Wurzeln und Entwicklung der traditionellen volkstümlichen Gevatterschaft bei den Bulgaren.	117
Прояви, исторически корени и развой на традиционното народно кумство у Българите. (Резюме)	135

Ján Komorovský (Bratislava)	
The Evidence of the Bride's Innocence in the Wedding Customs of the Slavs . .	137
Svedectvo nevestinej nevinnosti v svadobných obyčajoch Slovanov. (Resumé)	146

Tatjana A. Koleva (Sofia)	
Sur l'origine de la fete de Saint-Georges chez les Slaves du Sud	147
За произхода на празника Гергьовден у южните славяни. (Резюме)	173

Oldřich Sirovátka (Brno)	
Die Jánošík-Sagen in der tschechischen Tradition	177
Jánošíkovská pověst v české tradici. (Resumé)	199

Viera Gašparíková (Bratislava)	
Zur Frage der Beziehungen zwischen der slowakischen und tschechischen	
Volksprosa	201
K otázke vzťahov slovenskej a českej ľudovej prózy (Resumé)	212

V. K. Bondarčik (Minsk)	
Byelorussian Soviet Ethnography and Folklore in the Postwar Period	215
Белорусская советская этнография и фольклор в послевоенный период (Резюме)	229

INFORMATIONES

Où en sont les études du folklore slave à l'Université de Brno. Bohuslav Beneš, Brno	231
--	-----

The Development, State, Problems and Perspectives of Ethnology in Serbia. Mirko	
Barjaktarović, Beograd	234
Notizen über die heutige bulgarische Ethnographie. Christo Vakarelski, Sofia . . .	238
III rd International Symposium Ethnologia Slavica. Ján Podolák, Bratislava . .	242
III Международный симпозиум „Этнология Славика“. (Резюме)	248

Ethnography and Folklore at the VII th International Congress of Slavists in War-	
saw. Ján Komorovský, Bratislava	250
Die Konferenz der sowjetischen Zweigstelle der Internationalen Kommission zur	
Erforschung der Volkskultur des Karpatengebietes in Užhorod 1972. N. Gracians-	
kaja, Moskva	253
Das zweite nationale Symposium für Folklore in Bulgarien. Tatjana A. Koleva,	
Sofia	255

RECENSIO LIBRORUM

Ethnographia Carpatica I, Bratislava 1972; II, Moskva 1972. Ján Podolák, Bra-	
tislava	259
Die Slowakische Volkskultur. Bratislava 1972. Soňa Kovačevićová, Bratislava. .	262
Probleme der bulgarischen Folklore. Sofia 1972. Liljana Bogdanova, Sofia	264
Český lid 1972.	266
Izvestija na Etnografski institut i muzej XIV, 1972.. . . .	267
LUD LVI, 1972,	268
Makedonski folklor 1970—1973.. . . .	268

Narodna tvorčist ta etnografija, 1972.	270
Národopisný věstník československý 1972.	271
Slovenski etnograf 1970—1971.	271
Slovenský národopis 1972.	272
Sovjetskaja etnografija 1972.	273
Zborník SNM-Etnografia 1972	274
List of Contributors	274

Recent developments, particularly the events of the Second World War II have witnessed an increased interest in the study of Slavic nations. Several important institutions, such as the American and Soviet Slavic Studies, in which the study of Slavic nations is pursued, the contribution of Slavic languages to world literature is elucidated, and a study of the origin of the Slavic languages and historical development of the individual Slavic nations. The scope and interest of the part of world scholarship in the Slavic languages is evidenced in relation with the increasing interest in the study of the role in the economic, social and cultural development of mankind.

In this introductory statement at the 11th International Symposium *Ethnologia Slavica* held in Bratislava is to be a stimulus for pondering upon the existing problems and tasks of Slavonic ethnology, if it is to be a challenge to a gradual elaboration of a long-term common programme in the field of an ethnological study of the Slavs, then I take leave to turn back one century into the past, to a time when the programme of Slavonic ethnology was being formulated and when numerous valuable postulates were expressed — postulates, that despite the lapse of time, have not lost their cogency.

In this connection, may I recall above all the founder of Slavonic ethnology, the erudite Slovak scholar Pavol Jozef Šafárik. His scientific works — in particular his *Slavonic Antiquities* (*Slavanské starožitnosti*, published in 1837) and *Slavonic Ethnology* (*Slavanský národopis* which appeared in 1842) — not only provide a compendium of data known at that time on the languages and cultures of the Slavs, and the ethnic boundaries of their settlement, but also formulate the theoretical and methodological postulates of ethnology as a historical science. In addition, Šafárik laid down the foundations of demographic statistics on an all-European scale. His method of ascertaining ethnic boundaries is still utilisable even at the present time. His demand for a complex study of the Slavs (from the all-sided aspect of linguistics, ethn-

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