
EDITORIAL

Myths as sacred narratives referring to moral values, symbols and rituals belong to the most persistently explored topics in folkloristics, ethnological and anthropological research. From the nineteenth century onwards, scholars linked them to magic and religion and inevitably included mythology in their explanations of culture and social development. However, the notion of myth also influenced social sciences and humanities in terms of political context, in which scientific traditions evolved. In nineteenth century's Central Europe this process coincided with the emergence of national states. Classic approaches considered myth as an essential element of oral tradition and folk culture, in which language played the most important role. Mythology was perceived as a source of the study of the nations' history and therefore as a means of either unifying politically fragmented areas or achieving political independence. Thus, in the beginning folklore studies were interconnected with the idea of the nation and cultural specifics. This line of argument persisted in later scholarly explanations of folk culture in various forms; but it was not a dominant perspective in anthropology as a comparative study of human cultures.

Later explanations of myths and mythology in the social sciences and humanities reflected a diverse palette of theoretical approaches, from psychoanalytical tools to the perspectives firmly grounded in the materialistic view. In terms of political context the term myth came to denote a narrative, not necessarily religious, which resulted from actions of individuals or small social groups in a certain political situation and was accepted by a society. Political myths were studied as cultural interpretations of social relations and social roles which legitimize hierarchy and authority and provide explanations and meaning to the political organization. The intertwined sacred and political narratives offer social scientists an opportunity to explore the link between politics, religion, and social identities.

The present volume of *Etnologia Slovaca et Slavica* brings several articles that illustrate the importance of myths in scientific traditions and contemporary societies. Tatiana Bužeková examines selected works of ethnographers who studied folk culture on the territory of today's Slovakia and links them to the

development of Slovak folkloristics and ethnology under certain political conditions. Suzana Marjanić exemplifies the development of the folklore studies in Croatia by analysing the work of Natko Nodilo, an important representative of the mythological school in this country. Lada Stevanović takes a different direction and presents an analysis of Pier Paolo Pasolini's film *Edipo Re*, arguing that the artistic application of Freud's theory to the ancient myth opens numerous questions important for the contextualisation and usage of myth in both ancient and contemporary context. Janusz Barański addresses media narratives about two traumatic events in recent Polish history, the crash of the presidential airplane in April 2010 and the flood that took place a month later; he demonstrates that these events were mythicized and supported by rhetoric characteristic of magical thinking, which provided them with new content grounded in politics and social divisions. Roman Holec considers the Treaty of Trianon which still fascinates historians as well as the non-academic public; he analyses various mythical narratives linked to this event which emerged in different countries and reflected specific cultural and political perspectives.

The rubric *Personalities* brings the overviews of works of two prominent scholars who studied myths and folk culture and considerably contributed to the development of folkloristics and ethnology in Central Europe. Hana Hlôšková presents a summary of the academic career of Milan Leščák, the outstanding figure in ethnology in Slovakia over the last fifty years, who celebrated the eighteenth anniversary in 2020. The work of Vilmos Voight, the brilliant scholar of Hungarian and European comparative folklore and philology, who also turned eighty in 2020, is reviewed by József Liszka.

The volume includes the reviews of books on survival strategies and social consequences of the First World War in Slovakia, on Slovenian folk tales, on the museum presentation, and on supernatural folk tales in Slovakia. The reports about events address creation of the online database of the Traditional Folk Culture Collection and the conference on methodology and ethics in ethnology and social anthropology that took place in Bratislava in 2019.

We believe that the present volume of our journal will give readers a taste of diverse approaches to the study of mythical narratives and folklore. We also hope that the presented collection of texts will contribute to the investigation of sacred and political narratives in Central Europe and in the globalized world.

Marta Botiková, Tatiana Bužeková