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International Scientific Conference *Contemporary Serbian Folkloristics 16*

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Organized by the Association of Serbian Folklorists (Belgrade), the University Library “Svetozar Marković” (Belgrade), Institute for Literature and Art (Belgrade), and the Scientific, Educational, and Cultural Center “Vuk Karadžić” (Tršić), the International Scientific Conference *Contemporary Serbian Folkloristics 16* took place in Tršić, October 3–5, 2025. The editors of this year’s Conference (and the forthcoming volume) were Prof. Ljiljana Pešikan-Ljuštanović, PhD, Lidija Delić, PhD, and Danijela Lekić, PhD. The Conference was supported by the Ministry of Science, Technological Development, and Innovation of the Republic of Serbia, as well as the Ministry of Culture of the Republic of Serbia. Prominent scholars from scientific and cultural institutions in the country and abroad, such as the Institute of Political Science of the Slovak Academy of Sciences (Slovakia), Indiana University (United States of America), ZRC SASA Institute of Slovenian Ethnology (Slovenia), the Center for the Belarusian Culture, Language, and Literary Research, National Academy of Sciences of Belarus (Belarus), Institute of Ethnography SASA (Serbia), Institute of Ethnology and Folklore Research (Croatia), Faculty of Philosophy, University of Belgrade (Serbia), Russian State University for the Humanities (Russia), Faculty of Philology, University of Belgrade (Serbia), Faculty of Philology, University of Banja Luka (Bosnia and Herzegovina), Faculty of Philosophy, University of Novi Sad (Serbia), Faculty of Philosophy, University of Niš (Serbia) took part in the organization and implementation of the Conference, as members of the Program and Organizing Committees, along with the organizers. The main topic of the Conference was the *Internet, Artificial Intelligence, Posthumanism: Challenges of Folklore Material and Folklore Studies*. In addition to this topic, the participants were also offered to explore *Contemporary Folkloristics*, within which, as every year, results of ongoing research in any folkloristic domain were presented. At the Opening Ceremony, the participants (almost 50, some of whom were online) were welcomed by Nikola Nenadović, director of the Scientific, Educational, and

Cultural Center “Vuk Karadžić” in Tršić, and Prof. Danijela Popović Nikolić, PhD, president of the Association of Serbian Folklorists. Keynote lectures were given by Prof. Ljiljana Gavrilović, PhD, with the topic *Fan-fiction as a Contemporary Folklore Production and the Birth of a New Literary Genre*, and Smiljana Djordjević Belić, PhD, who spoke about *Dreaming in the Age of Digital Culture*. The Conference was indeed multidisciplinary, considering that literary historians, linguists, anthropologists, ethnologists, museologists, musicologists, ethnomusicologists, etc., presented on various folklore topics. In addition to Serbia, the Conference gathered researchers from Bosnia and Herzegovina, Macedonia, Bulgaria, Russia, Belarus, Ukraine, and the USA. The dominant topics were digital folklore and Internet culture, the use of technology and AI in folklore, as well as the application of modern digital tools (i.e., implicitly the necessity of cooperation between the humanities and the IT industry), the transformation of “traditional” genres in a new environment, as well as rituals and beliefs in a contemporary context. Along with contemporary approaches to the “classical” corpus, the participants engaged in new media, mimes, humor on the Internet, conspiracy theories, fan fiction, ritual in a digital context, the relationship between humans and animals, and special interest was shown in topics related to artificial intelligence.



A part of the participants on the last day of the Conference at the Scientific, Educational, and Cultural Center “Vuk Karadžić” (Tršić)

The most extensive part of the program consisted of works that study new forms of folklore in the digital environment and their connection with modern technologies, media, and social networks. Digital folklore, internet memes, media, and mass culture were the subject of the works by Ana Banić Grubišić, who analyzed these forms in the context of social and political crises; Marina Mladenović Mitrović and Aleksandra Bjelić, who explored the narrative of predicting the future in “The Simpsons”; as well as Daria Radchenko, who observed “dark” internet memes as an expression of urban identity and collective humor in the post-Soviet context. Ana Milinković and Dejan Ilić analyzed memes as contemporary digital folk humor and social self-irony.

Nedeljka Bjelanović explored the reception of folk tales in the online environment, and Danijela Lekić connected the theory of the folkloric formula with Internet culture, pointing to the continuity of traditional structures in new media. Nataša Mladenović Ribić analyzed online narratives about charismatic religious leaders, while Miloš Matić examined the representation of the culture of dwelling on the Internet. Maria Kovshova explored cultural names in Russian Internet poetry, and Olga Pashina considered the relationship between traditional folk culture and contemporary media. Milan Tomašević presented on contemporary conspiracy theories as a folkloric belief system and as a way of shaping collective reality in the media age.

Transformations of genres in new media were subjects of the proposals by Olga Orlova, who talked about contemporary riddles; Yevdokia Dadakina studied online obituaries; Daria Belobradova examined Serbo-Croatian calendar paroemias; Suzana Miceva presented on screened fairy tales; and Maria Yasinskaya analyzed online greetings for church calendar days as a form of new Orthodox tradition. Veronika Abramova and Yulia Arkhangelskaya examined how traditional Russian folklore is reinterpreted in the online space, Ljiljana Pešikan-Ljuštanović and Lidija Delić analyzed eschatological narratives from the classical ones, to the contemporary Internet corpus to transhumanist narratives, while Dragana Vukićević explored the continuity between gossip and today’s clickbait.

Digital humanities and the use of artificial intelligence were the topics of the papers of Jasmina Nikolić, who considered the parallels between traditional memory patterns and generative AI, Smiljana Antonijević Uboa, who emphasized the importance of low-resource languages in the age of AI technologies, using the example of Serbian, and Natalia Gramatchikova and Evgeniia Potapova, who pointed to the possibilities and limitations of using AI in interpreting folklore texts. Milena Davidović and Marta Riparante presented research on the use of paleographic tools for the preservation of cultural heritage. Veselka Toncheva considered the possibilities of 3D technologies in documenting instrumental dance accompaniment.

A part of the papers was dedicated to contemporary field, theoretical, and methodological research on folklore. Vernacular religiosity and contemporary practices were analyzed by Anna Plotnikova, who studied contemporary Roma funerals as hybrid forms at the crossroads of tradition and modernity, while Tatsiana Valodzina spoke about the influence of media on vernacular religiosity among the Belarusians. Alexandra Ippolitova presented manuscript collections of beekeeping of the East Slavs from the 18th century, while Svetlana Koroleva studied the context and gestures in laments.

In his presentation, Saša Knežević looked back on the process of Tešan Podrugović's biography heroization. Danijela Popović Nikolić discussed methodological problems of indexing mythological and demonological legends. Ivana Bašić analyzed metaphors of knowledge in Serbian traditional and contemporary culture.

Marko Stojanović discussed a managerial approach to folklore in a museum context, while Katarina Radisavljević's research was dedicated to the interpretation of women's textile creativity through the work of Jelica Belović Bernadžikovska. Mladen Stajić and Danilo Trbojević presented their field research on ethnomedicine in Jadar and Radjevina. Slobodan Naumović and Bogdan Dražeta investigated the relationship between humans and animals in the border areas of eastern Herzegovina and Pešter, while Nevena Milanović Minić and Sonja Žakula analyzed folklore as a communicative practice between humans and animals.

A part of the proposals was dedicated to musical and dance folklore. Bojana Radovanović Šuput and Maja Radivojević presented the contemporary state of Vlach "singing without words" and the problems of its field recording. Miloš Marinković and Zorana Guja Dražeta presented the projects of the Institute of Musicology SASA dedicated to traditional music. Katarina Nikolić studied new dance forms that are developing in the post-Yugoslav communities in the diaspora.

During research session breaks, the attending scholars had the opportunity to hear the presentation of ASF's new editions, namely Aleksandra Bjelić's report on the edited volume *Contemporary Serbian Folkloristics 14*, as one of the editors, followed by a presentation by Jelenka Pandurević, editor of the collection *Contemporary Serbian Folkloristics 15*, as well as Djordjina Trubarac Matić, who informed the attendees of the Content of the last two volumes of *Folkloristics*, the journal of the Association of Serbian Folklorists. The participants could also visit the Saborište complex, the house Vuk Karadžić was born in, Tronoša Monastery, and the Museum of Vuk's Early Education. A formal dinner was also organized for the participants. The Conference was very successful by virtue of the members of the Organizing

Committee and hosts, whose direct engagement enabled an uninterrupted flow, but also of the participants, whose innovative, high-quality and well-founded research proved that the topic of this year's Conference was relevant and inspiring.

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