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## Folk Narrative and Culture: The Interim Conference of the International Society for Folk Narrative Research

Beytepe – Ankara, Karabük – Safronbolu, 1–6 September 2015

DOI 10.1515/fabula-2016-0011

The Interim Conference of the *ISFNR*, organized by the Department of Comparative Turkic Folkloristics, Hacettepe University, Ankara under the title „Folk Narrative and Culture,“ convened 1–3 September at the Beyaz Ev Congress Center on the Beytepe campus and relocated to Karabük University, Karabük, Safronbolu 4 September for the conclusion of the academic program. Some of the eighty papers articulated different aspects of three broad themes: Cultural heritage, societies in transition, and narrative and religion. Though it runs against the grain of the presentations, for the present purpose categorization proves an efficient tool. Note, numerous late cancellations required revisions to the program and shifted the majority of presentations to Turkish colleagues. I can only vouch for presentations at panels I attended of course.

Murat Tuncer, President of the Organizing Committee, and Secretary Özkul Çobanoğlu welcomed the group assembled in the Congress Center. In his opening remarks, *ISFNR* president Professor Ulrich Marzolph (Göttingen) outlined a history of Turkish folk narrative studies that emphasized their import for the discipline and concluded that such study fosters empathy for the plight for all human beings ensnared in existential conflict. Dan Ben-Amos (Philadelphia) delivered the plenary address (*Theories in Folklore*) tracing the many turns in folklore theory and cautioning that the transformation of tradition (continuity) into heritage (disruption) empties social dynamics of their significance leaving behind meaningless husks.

Now I offer a review of the conference papers. Aspects of comparative myth were explored by Ali Osman Abdurrezzak (Kastamonu; *Common Findings on Tree and Forest Cult in the Kalevala and Mythological Epics of the Turkish World*), Nilgün Aydın (Konya; *The Importance and Place of the Nart Epics of the Karacay-Malkar Turks in Turkish Mythology*), Erkan Kalyacı (Ankara; *The Typology of Heroes' Journeys to the Underworld in Altai Epic*), and Metin Özarslan and Hicran Karataş

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(Ankara; *Satan in Altai Turkish Epics*), Gustavo-Adolfo Loría-Rivel (*Epic Sacred Texts or Sacred Epic Texts: The Correlation between Epics and Revelation in the Bible*), and Meral Ozan (Bolu; *Traces of Mythical Thinking in the Collection of Folktales of Ignác Kúnos*). Attila Mátéfy (Ankara; *The Transformation of a Totemistic Myth in the Course of History Due to Changes in Worldview and Popular Belief*) mapped the chased-doe myth from pre-Bronze Age narrative to the *Historia Regum Britanniae*.

Folk medicine featured in papers from Sanju Boruah (Assam; *The Role of Charms and Spells Practiced by the Tea Tribes of Assam*), and özlem Şahin (Ankara; *A Conservation Practice from „Al Basması“: „Al Bağlama“*), as well as Sanjukta Naskar (New Delhi; *Exploring the „Ritual“ Mother*). The uncannily oriented Berna Turan (Ankara; *Memorates from Coal Mines in Zongdulak Vicinity*), Hilal Tavukçu (Ankara; *The Concept of „Bugaboo“ in the Nightmare Perception of Boys in Turkish Culture*), Yücel Özdemir (Ankara; *The Horror Hiding in the Shadows: Terrifying Myth in the Tradition of Karagöz*), and Sandis Laime (Latvia; *Tradition of Domesticated Night Witches in Northeastern Latvia*).

Papers on women broached their education, Alev Karaduman (Ankara; *Ottoman Seraglio: A Place of Education or Seduction?*), their murder, Gülperi Mezkit Saban (Ankara; *The Narration of the Problem of Woman-Centered Honour Perception in Turkish Custom and Some Facts about Honour Killing*), and role as teachers, Gülay Yavuz (Ankara; *Women as Culture Transmitters*). Music informed Serdar Erkan (Ankara; *The Narrative Formulation of Anatolian Zeybek Songs*), Meruyert Kurmangaliyeva Sanatovna (Astana; *Troubadour of the Kazakh Steppe: Mukhit Meraliyev [1841–1918]*), Mrinalini Atrey (Jammu; *Karak Gathas: Sacred Narrative Songs in the Jammu Region*), and Mrinal Kumar Borah (Assam; *Tradition and Folk Narratives Associated with Manasa Worship*), while the ludic engaged Dilek Türkyılmaz (Ankara; *The Performance, Frequency, and Place of Turkic Riddles*), and Sinan Mimaroğlu (Hatay), Alim Koray Cengiz (Ankara), and Şule Can (Binghamton NY; *It is not just an „Egg“: Play, Influence, and Power among Arab Minorities in Samandag*).

Narrative in transitioning societies were the concern of Louise S. Milne (Edinburgh; *Monstrous Patrons: The City, The Garden and the Sea*), Özkul Çobanoğlu (Ankara; *Narratives and Society: Transformal Interactions between Oral and Written Literary Traditions in the Case of the Ottoman Turkish Minstrel Tradition in the late 19th – early 20th Century*), Mark Bender (Columbus OH; *Material Culture of Hunting and Warfare in Oral Narratives and Related Contexts in Southwestern China*), and Aynur Gazanfargizi (Baku; *The Narrative Problems During the Soviet Union*). The topic was also linked to other themes: Başak Acınan (Ankara; *Cinematographic Narrative of Turkic-Islamic Belief Motif called „djinn“ (haunting demon)*), Nemanja Radulović (Belgrade; *Between Folk Magic and New Age: Con-*

*temporary Healing Narratives in Serbia*), Ihsan Akbulut (Ankara; *Applied Folkloristics in the Context of Globalization*), and Amanzhol Kalys (Almaty; *Single-Parent Families in Kazakhstan: Study Problems*).

Fieldwork reports were delivered by Gönü Gökdemir Reyhanoğlu (Hatay; *Fairy Tale Tradition in Cypriot-Turkish Tale Culture: Listener, Narrator, and Tale Context*), Dace Bula (Riga; *Detached from Water: Identity Shift and Eco-Narratives in a Suburban Peninsula Community*), Mehmet Akif Korkmaz (Gumushane; *Personal Narratives of Turks in Germany*), and Zehra Kaderli (Ankara; *Inside(r) but Not a Stable/Safe Place!: Positioning the Researcher's Identity in the Context of Migrants' Personal Narrative Performances*). Incongruous genres, diaries for Batsheva Ben-Amos (Philadelphia PA; *Dialogical Dimensions in Narrating Lives and Life Writing*), and beggars' narratives for Georgios Kouzas (Athens; „*Living Through Narratives*“: *Narratives as a Means of Survival for the Homeless People in Athens*) revealed commonalities. Subjectivity was the theme of Lee Haring (Brooklyn NY; *Poetics and Genre as the Organizing Systems of Expressive Forms*).

Sacred spaces motivated papers from Salfinaz Ismailova (Moscow; *Legends and Beliefs about the Sacred Places of Karachay Malkar*), Ruganiyat Musaeva (Dagestan; *The Sacred Places and Sanctuaries of the Kumuk People*), Pinar Taşdelen (Ankara; *Pagan and Christian Sacred Landscape Narratives: From Stonehenge to St. Patrick's Purgatory*), and Zoltan Magyar (Budapest; *Legends of a Mary's Shrine*). Heritage in jeopardy and its memorial value engaged Elsev Brina Lopar (Prizren; *Material and Moral Cultural Elements in Kosovo*), and Yuliya Bilitska (Karabük; *Crimean Landscapes in the Collective Memory of the Crimean Tatar Diaspora in Turkey Based on Folk Narratives in Emel Magazine*), Emine Mediha Ulutan (Ankara; *Nearly Forgotten Nahil Culture: Sustaining Anatolian Turkish Culture*), Albina Tuzlu (National Holidays as the Cultural Heritage of the Tatar People: *Traditions Being Lost and Lasting Long*), and Semra Türker-Tuğba Kılıó (Ankara; *Intangible Cultural Heritage of Ankara*).

Myth and myth reconstruction engaged Abdülselem Arvasi (Çankırı; *An Old Turkic Legend in Contemporary Khakasia and the Cultural Dimensions of its Myth*), Duru Özden Gürbüz (Ankara; *The Reflection of the Deer Motif to the Turkish Folk Dance from Shamanism: „Deer Dance“*), Eva Poçs (Pécs; *Talots Beliefs and Narratives: Hungary's Pagan Heritage?*), and Radvilé Racénatiré (Vilnius; *Lithuanian Etiological (Origin) Legends: The Particularities of Content as the Basis for Their Classification*).

Death and mourning customs were the themes of Hyunjoo Park (Ankara; *Cemetery Traditions of the Ancient Koreans*), Mustafa Sever (Ankara; *Customs of Death of the Tuzla and Their Surroundings*), Harika Zöhre (Mersin; *Approach to Ritual of Death within the Context of Memorates in Paterson, New Jersey*), and Yaşar Kalafat (*Mourning Food—Sacred Food Smell and a Legend*). Hagiography, grave

veneration, and the oneiric motivated Sean Martin (*Two Lives of St. Guthlac: Changing Attitudes to Sainthood in England, From the Anglo-Saxons to the Plantagenets*), Yuliya Absalyamova and Gulnar Yuldybaeva (Ufa; *About the Cult of Saints in the Bashkir Shejere*), and Zubaida Shadkam and A. C. Zhumazhanova (Almati; *Kazakh Epos Heroes Born Under the Protection of the Saints*). Ayşegül Saklıca (Barcelona; *Comparison of Structure and Cultural Elements in Oral Texts of Ferhat and Sırrın and The Lovers of Teruel*), Hatice Kübra Uygur (Mardin; *The Companions of the Cave/Seven Sleepers According to Syriac Narratives*), Anastasiia Zherdieva (Bucharest; *Legends about Saints in Christianity and in Islam*), and Willie Van Peer (Munich; *Narration as Adaptation and Blending*) attended to comparative study of legend.

New narrative forms were examined by Suzana Marjanić (Zagreb; *Conspiracy Theories: Mythic Legends and/or Beliefs*), and Ahmet Serdar Arslan (úankırı; *An Essay on Fieldwork on the Internet: The Legend of Contorium*), while pedagogical perspectives were forthcoming from Pınar Kasapođlu Akyol (Ankara; *Integration of Intangible Cultural Heritage into Schools*), and Şenay SaraÓ (Ankara; *Narrating the Perceptions of Native Speakers from Several Cultures on Their Language Being the Most Difficult to Learn*).

Additional unique papers were presented by Pınar Karataş (*Who Tells Jokes? Self-criticism Jokes from Occupational Groups*), Özlem Demrem and Bahar Köse Karaca (Sivas; *An Essay on the Role of Lies in Everyday Life in the Frame of Schema Theory and Lie Phenomenon in Turkish Oral Narratives*), Leniye Demirdzhaieva (Kırım; *Folklorism of Eshref Shemiy-zede's Poetry in the Context of Crimean Tatar Literature's Development*), and finally, Thiago Silva de Amorim Jesus (Pelotas; *Body, Ritual, Pelotas and Carnival; An Analysis of Street Parades Between 2008 and 2013*).

The Ankara finale, on 3 September, featured an alfresco banquet enlivened by dancers and musicians on a hillside setting that served as venue for celebration for the plenary speaker's birthday. Friday, 4 September, buses ferried the group to Karabük University, following a ceremonial parade half-way across the bridge to the University campus, the group was welcomed by University Vice-Rector Dr. Ali Güneş, Dr. Taştalan, and Safronbolu's mayor, Dr. Necdet Aksoy. President Ulrich Marzolph emphasized *ISFNR's* commitment to the study of universal and particular dimensions of folk narrative as a vehicle for gaining a clearer understanding of the dynamics of human relations. After Özkul Çobanođlu's concluding remarks, the group continued on to Safronbolu for a banquet accompanied by local folk dancers in the courtyard of the Cinci Han Hotel. Protestations notwithstanding, a different Ben-Amos' birthday celebration capped the festivities. Saturday, 5 September, the group toured in and around Safronbolu town.

As might be anticipated, as stimulating as the academic presentations proved to be, delectable the meals, and enticing the entertainments, it is the conversations with new friends and old acquaintances that will require no prompting from scribbled notes or conference program to summon their warmth and grace into the present.