

CALL FOR PAPERS
50th International Ballad Conference of the Kommission für Volksdichtung
Tiranë and Gjirokastër, Albania, 24–29 May 2020

BALLADS AND THE AUDIENCE IN TIME AND SPACE

Deadline, 6 December 2019

Location

The Albanian Academy of Science invites paper submissions for the 50th International Ballad Conference of the Kommission für Volksdichtung.

The conference will start in Tiranë (Tirana), surrounded by hills to the east and overlooking the Adriatic to the west, before moving to Gjirokastër (Gjirokastra), a UNESCO World Heritage Site. The old part of Gjirokastër is a well-preserved Ottoman style town, with a fortress overlooking the entire city, old wooden houses built against the slopes, and a National Folk Festival following the conference.

This 50th conference of the KfV is in some ways a return home for our field of study, since Albania is host to such a significant tradition of epic song. We look forward to welcoming you!

Theme

The conference will focus on the complex relationships between the singer-creator-performer and the audience. Papers may explore this relationship directly, or look at the history of the genre, relationships between orality and print, and medieval origins to today's reality.

We will explore how this relationship is developed in several dimensions: What is the role of audience? What kind of transformations derive from the audience itself? How are the roles of singer/creator and audience delineated or shaped? How does the relationship change in modern times and in the context of developing technologies?

We hope to explore how ballads and other folk songs, as part of the larger world of folklore, are treated in former socialist countries, particularly in the second half of the twentieth century. How has their transformation influenced audiences? How have expectations of the genre – creation, transmission, process – changed over time? How is this heritage seen in our culture today? To what extent can we consider latter-day creativity and its products to be part of folklore and tradition? What has happened to the older traditions in this context?

Contributions may explore these issues from many perspectives, such as, meaning, performance, communication, function, authority, and many more.

Submissions on other aspects of ballad and other folk songs are also welcome and we welcome alternative formats, presentations, or roundtable discussions.

Papers are welcome in the three official languages of the KfV (English, French, German).

KfV Bursary for Early Career Researchers

The KfV is offering a small bursary of €300 to an early career researcher to support their attendance at the conference. For the purposes of this award, an early career researcher is someone relatively new to the field, of any age or affiliation. If you wish to apply, please include (1) a CV, (2) a letter of support from an academic figure, and (3) a covering letter outlining your relevant work and interests, when you submit your paper proposal. The award will be decided by the KfV Executive.

Deadline

6 December 2019. Please submit abstracts of 200–300 words as Word/RTF attachment to Olimbi Velaj (olimbiolimbi@gmail.com).

Applicants will be notified by **13 December 2019**.

Programme Committee: Prof. Nicola Scaldaferrri (University of Milan), Acad. Francesco Altimari (University of Calabria), Acad. Vasil Tole (Albanian Academy of Science), Acad. Assoc. Shaban Sinani (Albanian Academy of Science), Olimbi Velaj (University of Durrës), Thomas McKean (KfV, University of Aberdeen).

Provisional Conferene Schedule

- 24 May (Sun) *Arrival in Tiranë, opening talk.*
- 25 May (Mon) Papers in Tiranë, evening travel to Gjirokastër (provided).
- 26 May (Tue) Papers in Gjirokastër.
- 27 May (Wed) Excursion to Butrint
- 28 May (Thu) Papers in Gjirokastër.
- 29 May (Fri) *Depart, or stay on for weekend festival activities.*

Travel and Accommodation

Delegates can fly round trip to Tiranë, or *into* Tiranë and *out* of Ioannina, Greece, which is 90km from Gjirokastër. One can also fly to Corfu, take the ferry to Saranda, and then a bus or taxi to Gjirokastër. The organizers are arranging group hotel accommodation close to conference venues at reasonable prices. More details on both travel and accommodation will be provided closer to the time.