

# *Kommission für Volksdichtung (KfV)*

International Ballad Commission

Commission internationale pour l'étude de la chanson populaire

(Société Internationale d'Ethnologie et de Folklore, SIEF)

[www.KfVweb.org](http://www.KfVweb.org)

**Electronic Newsletter no. 12 (September 2011)**

(editor: David Atkinson)

## Minutes of the Business Meeting of the KfV, Faro Portugal, 24 June 2011

The President of the KfV, Tom McKean, opened the meeting and extended a welcome to the new Vice President, Louis Grijp.

This year's conference in Faro, 'Folk Songs and Relationships between Nations', splendidly exemplified its theme and it is a testament to the power of song that scholars from more than thirty countries joined us. It was a great pleasure to have paper sessions in two of the Kommission's three official languages and we encourage the use of all three at our meetings. Lastly, it was wonderful to see so many new faces. I hope they now realize they're members for life: See you in Turkey, 9–16 September 2012.

*Tom McKean*

### **1. Present**

Ardian Ahmedaja, Ingrid Åkesson, Anda Beitāne, Anna Brzozowska-Krajka, Matilda Burden, Teresa Catarella, Anne Caufriez, Sara Garcia, Marjetka Golež Kaučič, Louis P. Grijp, Eva Guillourel, Joseph Harris, Chris Heppa, Sabina Ispas, E. Wyn James, Oskar Cox Jensen, Eckhard John, Katalin Juhász, Zoja Karanović, Marija Klobčar, Wiesław Krajka, Imola Küllös, Martin Lovelace, J. J. Dias Marques, Tom McKean, María Inés Palleiro, Ieva Pāne, Isabelle Peere, Marjeta Pisk, Gerald Porter, Adam Radford, Astrid Nora Ressem, Sigrid Rieuwerts, David Robb, Andy Rouse, Michèle Simonsen, Bernadet Smid, Helga Stein, Bronė Stundžienė, Giedrė Šmitienė, Rita Treija, Djordjina Trubarac, Larysa Vakhnina.

### **Greetings from absent friends**

David Atkinson, Chris Bearman, Valentina Bold, Barbara Boock, Mary Ellen Brown, Simona Delić, Frances Fischer, David Gregory, Cozette Griffin-Kremer, Gülay Mirzaoğlu, Oksana Mykytenko, W. F. H. Nicolaisen, Sonya Petrović, Ian Russell, Inna Shved, Larry Syndergaard, Stefaan Top.

### **2. Treasurer's report**

At the Amsterdam/Terschelling meeting, the account stood at €1594. After expenses and the €300 subvention for Faro, the balance is €1146. After collection of membership fees and deduction of bank charges, the balance is €1736.

### **3. Publications**

Sigrid Rieuwerts reported on the BASIS and BASE series of publications. She emphasized that:

- a) Papers delivered at KfV conferences should first be offered to the conference organizer, not elsewhere;
- b) Because all papers are peer-reviewed, some conference papers might be rejected;
- c) Book proposals are welcomed for the BASE/BASIS series: the aim is for one volume to appear every year.

The Balmacara (2007) volume is in its final stages and should appear by the end of the year. The Cardiff (2008) and Terschelling (2010) volumes should appear by the time of next year's conference. The Minsk volume is on hold for now.

Isabelle Peere suggested that BASE/BASIS publications should be listed in internationally recognized indices/bibliographies.

J. J. Dias Marques announced that Faro conference papers should be submitted by the end of October. For style examples, see a recent volume of the BASIS series, or the KfV website under Publications.

### **4. SIEF**

A report on the SIEF conference in Lisbon in April was given by Marjetka Golež Kaučič and Tom McKean, who organized two panels on ballad and song.

The first of these, 'Places where and when species meet: human and non-human relationships in a new cultural and natural environment', organized by Marjetka Golež Kaučič and Suzana Marjanic, explored the issue of the places and spaces in which human and non-human beings meet and tried to develop a new ecocriticism of anthropocentrism. The second panel, 'Creating worlds: ballad, song and environment', looked at how songs are used to create community, how expressive cultures help us to interpret our surroundings. Both panels were well attended and are being considered for publication.

### **5. International Congress on Medieval Studies**

The KfV sponsored two very successful sessions on the ballad at the 2011 International Congress on Medieval Studies at Western Michigan University, organized by Larry Syndergaard:

**Ballad and Meaning**, chaired by Sarah Harlan-Haughey (Cornell University)

- ‘Sexy Gypsies, Runaway Wives: A Comparative Analysis of Versions of “The Gypsy Laddie”’ Lynn Wollstadt (South Suburban College)
- ‘Tragedy and Gender in Danish and Swedish Ballads’ Scott A. Mellor (University of Wisconsin-Madison)
- ‘The Ballads and the Passions’ Evelyn Birge Vitz (New York University)

**Ballad Descent and Authenticity: Negotiating the Boundaries of an Oral Genre,**  
 chaired by Scott A. Mellor (University of Wisconsin-Madison)

- ‘Landscape as Poetic Revelation: The Irish “Dindshenchas” and the Ballad Tradition’  
 Danielle Marie Cudmore (Cornell University)
- ‘Swedish Ballad Pastiche and the Issue of Authenticity: The Case of Olaf von Dalin’  
 James Massengale (University of California-Los Angeles)
- ‘Ballads, Fragments, and Recontextualizations in Nineteenth-Century Sweden’ Jason  
 Schroeder (University of Wisconsin-Madison)

The Wollstadt paper returned to a labour-intensive approach little seen of late, the exhaustive analysis of most of the variants of a ballad type in order to discern the surprising variety of actual narrative scripts; and the Mellor paper provided an intensive, close-reading analysis of symbolism, gendering, and the supernatural. Evelyn Vitz identified the most notable differences in the ‘emotional budget’ of oral-traditional and broadside ballads.

The Cudmore paper discussed significant echoes of narrative motifs in genres that can hardly be genetically connected. James Massengale challenged the ‘medieval’ definitional filter applied in forming and editing the Swedish corpus; and the Schroeder paper challenged the designation of certain variants as ‘fragments’ or ‘incomplete’ in a pioneer Swedish ballad edition.

The quality of the analyses was high, although audiences were more modest in size this year. A good sign for our discipline is that one chair and two presenters were advanced graduate students, and one first-time presenter was a senior professor in an allied field. A ballad-mongers’ dinner at the organizer’s home has become an ICMS tradition in itself, and our congenial 2011 group continued that tradition this spring.

*Larry Syndergaard*

## **6. Elections**

Details of the elections for Executive Secretary and Treasurer of the KfV have been sent to members. Two names were proposed at the meeting: David Atkinson for Executive Secretary (proposed by Tom McKean, seconded by acclamation) and Ingrid Åkesson for Treasurer (proposed Tom McKean, seconded by Andy Rouse).

No further nominations have been received and therefore David Atkinson and Ingrid Åkesson are duly elected.

The meeting unanimously voted to send a letter of support to the outgoing Treasurer, Barbara Boock, who was prevented from attending this and future conferences by her employer.

## **7. 2012 conference**

The next KfV conference will be held in Akyaka, Turkey, on the Aegean coast, 9–16 September 2012. The call for papers will be issued in January.

- The President reminded the meeting that papers will not be read for scholars who are unable to attend.

## **8. Future conferences**

Offers were accepted from Matilda Burden to organize the 2013 conference in Stellenbosch, South Africa; and from Andy Rouse in Pécs, Hungary, in 2014.

## **9. KfV Fellows**

A proposal was made by the board to create up to 24 KfV Fellows, scholars who have contributed to the field of ballad studies and have been active members of the KfV in the past but for various reasons can no longer attend. The proposal was accepted by a vote.

Five Fellows were proposed and accepted for the inaugural induction:

Rolf Wilh. Brednich  
Jürgen Dittmar  
Ildikó Kríza  
W. F. H. Nicolaisen  
Stefaan Top.

The following selection criteria and procedures for KfV Fellows were agreed:

### Criteria

- The ‘Fellows of the KfV’ exists to honour those who have made a notable contribution to the organization’s development and growth
- Fellows should have special merit through significant involvement in the KfV (e.g. long-term contribution, conference organizing, eminent scholar, officer of note, etc.)
- Officers may be considered for induction (on merit) only after stepping down from office
- A maximum of 2 Fellows may be proposed every two years (2013, 2015, etc.).

### Procedure

- Any KfV member may nominate Fellows
- Nomination proposals of 100–200 words will be accepted up to one month before the relevant conference (2013 next)
- The executive will put forward two nominees to the Business Meeting for approval
- Fellows will be listed on the website and will receive a letter of appreciation signed by the Executive on behalf of the members.

## **10. Funding**

Funding of €300 was voted for next year's conference organizer to help fund participants.

## **11. Website**

The website now features programmes and abstracts from recent past conferences, as well as tables of contents for all KfV publications. Anyone wishing to access an article from these publications may e-mail the President or the Secretary and we will try to obtain a PDF. Anyone with documentation (programmes, abstracts, hand-outs) from previous conferences is invited to submit them for inclusion on the site.

Tom McKean made an appeal for photographs to add to the KfV website. Sigrid Rieuwerts urged caution in the use of such material; pictures will be selected with this in mind.

## **12. KfV ballad CD**

The long-awaited CD of traditional ballads is progressing. The executive will prepare a publication brief and consult with possible distributors to produce a firm plan for next year's meeting.

## **13. Closing**

The meeting closed with thanks and presentations to J. J. Dias Marques and Sandra Boto, the conference organizers, and their team, and wishes for a speedy recovery were sent to Jeroen Salman, who fell ill during the conference.

*Gerald Porter (Acting Secretary in the unavoidable absence of David Atkinson)*

# Conference report

The 2011 conference of the KfV was held on the Penha campus of the Universidade do Algarve in the ancient city of Faro, Portugal. The numerous participants, and particularly the nearly forty nationalities represented, confirmed the impression of earlier years that the KfV is getting rapidly younger, larger, and more diverse. The large number of participants (starting with the President) living in a different culture from their country of birth was very noticeable, giving depth and immediacy to the theme of the conference, 'Folk Song and Relationships between Nations'.

More than sixty papers were presented with a huge diversity of themes and approaches. There were a number of parallel sessions (unusual for KfV conferences), so it would be invidious to single out particular sessions, but the papers dealing with ballads from Portugal and Brazil, and those presented by participants from Spanish-speaking cultures, were particularly welcome. We hope that these new faces will continue to attend in future years. A larger number than usual of the papers were in French: a welcome reminder, as this newsletter makes clear, that the KfV is trilingual.

There were two unforgettable evening concerts performed in a beautiful town house: Mocas Nagragadas sang folk music of the Algarve to guitar and accordion accompaniment; and a women's *a cappella* group, Cramol, performed powerful polyphonic music from northern Portugal. A day trip was organized to the Moorish/Crusader village and castle of Silves and then along the coast to Lagos and the spectacular caves and natural rock arches of the Algarve coast.

J. J. Dias Marques and Sandra Boto organized the conference efficiently and unobtrusively and the high temperatures throughout the week meant some striking attire: in particular J. J.'s knees made their long-awaited appearance.

*Gerald Porter*

*Matilda Burden* recalls some highlights:

- a little old woman, solo performer of a remarkable group of women singers, moving her shoulders to the rhythm of old traditional Portuguese ballads
- stunning rock formations on the Algarve coast near Lagos
- campus cafeteria cacophony... and trying to have a decent discussion
- an enlightening walk through old Faro, guided by a very competent historian (J. J. himself)
- 63 opportunities to hear some excellent, fascinating papers, reflecting thorough research, new insights and marvellous humour (despite some anxious moments on day one caused, of course, by technology)
- waiting every morning (on a stationary bus) for the latecomers (or non-comers), while being entertained by J. J.
- groups of crazy ballad scholars waving at each other from sailboat to sailboat
- plastic cups scorching fingers at coffee breaks
- the piercing, beautiful, polyphonic sounds of 17 women's voices, singing traditional songs
- Swimming on Praia beach with improvised costumes
- Metin entertaining with his saz
- wonderful, interesting and stimulating discussions after papers, but even more so during coffee/tea breaks
- two long tables in a Silves restaurant with confused delegates who, without exception, forgot what they had ordered for lunch
- an efficiently conducted and informative business meeting
- a U-formed table in a Faro restaurant with very happy delegates who, despite the fact that they had totally forgotten what they have ordered for dinner, were saved by J. J., who unexpectedly produced photocopies of the order form
- an excellent conference in the fascinating 'very ugly city' (as promoted to us last year in Terschelling) of Faro, organized by a very efficient team
- Thank you, J. J., Sandra, and the rest of the team – Faro was an unforgettable conference!

## NEWS

Last year individual members of the KfV, as well as the Board, through Tom McKean, wrote letters of support about Svenskt visarkiv. I would like to tell you that the situation

for our institution is now much better, and that we think the letters from organizations and individuals both outside and inside of Sweden had some impact, in combination with other factors. The director of the whole governmental body to which we belong has recently been replaced with a person with a more positive approach towards knowledge, and the separate institutions will remain as independent institutions. During the near future, at least, Svenskt visarkiv will continue its work as before.

Thank you again for your support!

*Ingrid Åkesson*

Barbara Boock reports these new titles:

„Alt und authentisch“ – Wunsch und Wirklichkeit bei der Suche nach der verlorenen Tradition im Volkslied. In: *Jahrbuch des Österreichischen Volksliedwerkes* 60. 2011. S. 23 – 30, Ill., Notenbeisp.

Hasenstrophen. Ambivalente Gefühle in der Metaphernsprache älterer Volkslieder. In: *Musik im sozialen Raum. Festschrift für Peter Schleuning zum 70. Geburtstag*. München, Allitera, 2011. S. 216 – 226, Ill., Notenbeisp.

"Bei nächtlicher Weil an ein's Waldes Born..." ein romantisches Lied mit einer interessanten Geschichte. In: *ad marginem* 82/83. 2011. S. 21 – 27, Ill., Notenbeisp. – Leicht veränderter Text meines Vortrags in Terschelling.

Der Spuk von Lübbenau. Eine literarisch-theatralische Liedgeschichte. In: *Der Ring wird geschlossen, der Abendwind weht. Festschrift für Helmut (helm) König*. Berlin, Verlag für Berlin-Brandenburg, 2010. S. 201 – 207, Ill., Notenbeisp.

Water. 40. Internationale Balladenkonferenz der Kommission für Volksdichtung. In: *Fabula* 51. 2010. S. 307 – 310.

David Atkinson, 'Genetic Foundations for a Palimpsest Model of the Anglo-Scottish Ballad Text: Evidence from the J. M. Carpenter Collection', *Folklore*, 121 (2010), 245–67.