

pressures affect individual performances. In one example, a distant cousin of the bride began a song that complimented the bride on her beauty and was cut off by another woman, most likely because a closer relative should sing before she did. A second part of the analysis demonstrates how aesthetic techniques of singing contribute to a continued shaping of community notions of society and morality.

Sugarman's ethnographic approach employs terms used by Prespa Albanians to describe their singing. Singing is used "as an expressive medium that conveys the emotional state of the singer and evokes emotional response from others" (61). This heightened state, referred to as *qeif*, is an important part of a desired state of openness and affection, *muabet*, which can be achieved through singing at wedding celebrations. Along with expressive descriptions, the terminology for song styles, repertoire, and techniques renders the discussion from an emic as well as an etic perspective.

The combination of photographs, song texts, transcriptions, recordings, and diagrams add valuable insight to the description and analyses of singing as part of wedding events. Within the discussion of singing, broader issues of gender, kinship, means of production and division of labor, and relations between families emerge. Sugarman's emphasis on the "intricate interplay between discourse and practice in the sphere of performance" (30) conveys the "engendering" capacities of Prespa song. *Engendering Song* is a strong theoretical and ethnographic contribution to scholarly work in ethnomusicology, anthropology, folklore, music, European studies, gender studies, and other disciplines.

Shelly Romalis. **Pistol Packin' Mama: Aunt Molly Jackson and the Politics of Folksong.** Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1999. Pp. xi + 239, bibliography, index, photos. \$39.95 cloth, \$18.95 paper.

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Written for the dual purpose of telling Aunt Molly Jackson's life story and examining her involvement with the American folk music

scene from the 1930s through the 1950s, *Pistol Packin' Mama* provides the reader with a fun and engaging introduction to a woman who has gone largely underappreciated outside folkmusic aficionado circles. In this book, we follow Aunt Molly from her “discovery” by a group of WPA authors and activists in the coal country of Kentucky to her death in Sacramento, California, almost thirty years later. Through the vehicle of this intriguing and complex woman, we become acquainted with some of the inner workings and struggles for authenticity that were part of the socialist folkmusic movement of Depression-era America.

The author, Shelly Romalis, skillfully interweaves the personal and the scholarly with the theoretical and the practical as she works toward what she imagines was always Aunt Molly’s goal: to have her story told in her own way. This goal is not strictly imaginary, though, for Molly herself often expressed it throughout her life, usually during conversations with scholars who were conducting research with her. The goal also became Romalis’s own as she learned more and more about Aunt Molly and eventually decided to pursue the project for personal, academic, and humanist reasons. She bases the book primarily in interviews and historical documentation—many of the interviews were from academic colleagues (mainly folklorists) who had attempted, at one time or another, to put Molly’s story to paper. This proved to be no easy feat. Molly was ornery and stubborn, holding tight to a strong idea about how her story should be told. Throughout the book, we encounter many instances of Molly complaining that people trying to write her story keep messing it up with fancy talk, putting it into words that she did not, or would not, say. Romalis’s approach relies heavily on such accounts for both content and guidance, and she attempts to present this complex life story in a way she believes Molly would approve. Her effort culminates in a fictitious encounter between Molly and the author, which comprises the last passage of the book. In this “interview,” Romalis asks Molly how she feels about her life finally being written, and Molly begins a typical rant, chastising scholars with whom she had previous contact for letting her down. In the end she accepts Romalis’s effort—giving it her blessing, in fact—on the condition that she doesn’t use any “high falootin’ language” in the book. The passage ends with Molly optimistically “exclaiming,” “All I can say is I hope they’ll finally know the truth!”

Both the “they” and the “truth” here are multivalent concepts that Romalis revisits continually in the book. Molly’s “truth” often clashes with and informs truths uttered by family, acquaintances, scholars, and, as Romalis reveals, the unofficial-yet-popular “truth” about folkmusic in the United States during the 1940s and 1950s. Each of the “theys” putting forth the different and conflicting truths in the book are both part of, and outside of, the “truth” Molly believed and proclaimed during her life. It is through this book that we realize the complex ways that all of these truths weave together to form a whole life—that of Aunt Molly Jackson—with many facets: wife, activist, sister, folksinger, mid-wife, union organizer, and folkloristic “informant.”

Alain Boureau. **The Lord’s First Night: The Myth of the Droit de Cuissage.** Translated by Lydia G. Cochrane. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1998. Originally published as *Le droit de cuissage: La fabrication d’un mythe (XIII^e - XX^e siècle)*, Éditions Albin Michel S.A., 1995. Pp. x + 300, notes, glossary, bibliography, index. \$55.00 cloth, \$19.00 paper.

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Alain Boureau explains the background and meaning of the *droit de cuissage* (the alleged right of the feudal lord in the Middle Ages to visit a bride on her wedding night). Boureau is specifically concerned with the history and historiography of the *droit de cuissage* in France and does not recognize its existence in any systematic manner elsewhere. Boureau envisages this study, focused on one issue in medieval French history, as part of a larger concern with the development of the idea of the individual’s possession of and rights to his or her own body and with issues of social *de cuissage* as a historical phenomenon and debunks alleged instances. This negation is possible because he defines the alleged right as systematic in feudal French society; therefore rape, even when perpetrated by a lord against a dependent, is too generalized to qualify. Boureau finds that references to this right were either made deliberately for political purposes, or as