

Lidová kultura: Národopisná encyklopedie Čech, Moravy a Slezska

Chief editors: Stanislav Brouček and Richard Jeřábek; Scientific secretary: Lubomír Tyllner. Vol. 1: Biografická část, 286 pp. Vol. 2: Věcná část A-N, 636 pp. Vol. 3: Věcná část O-Ž, pp. 637-1300. Praha: Mladá fronta, 2007. 1547 Kč, hardbound. ISBN 978-80-204-1450-2 (3 volumes).

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Literature dealing with the folk culture of the Czech lands is abundant, but most articles, carefully researched, are so specialized that their readership is correspondingly limited. There are also collectively written ethnographic monographs on certain regions, for example, *Moravské Slovensko* (1921), the region of southeastern Moravia, *Moravské Horácko* (1930), a southwestern part of Moravia, and *Plzeňsko* (1934-1938), the area around Plzeň in western Bohemia. And then there are two works dealing with the folk culture of the Czech lands as a whole—*Národopis* (1937), a volume of the series *Československá vlastivěda*, with contributions by three authors, and the more recent *Lidová kultura* (1968), volume 3 of the unfinished new *Československá vlastivěda*, with contributions by twenty-four authors.

The work here reviewed takes another approach to the description of the traditional folk culture of Bohemia, Moravia, and Silesia (a historical region overlapping southwestern Poland and the northeastern part of the Czech Republic). It is a two-volume encyclopedic dictionary with wide-ranging coverage of ethnographic subjects (1300 pages of a 8¼ x 11½ inch format) and a biographical volume. Sponsored by the Ethnological Institute of the Czech Republic's Academy of Sciences and the Institute of European Ethnology of the Masaryk University in Brno (Moravia), the encyclopedia is a monumental work. The subject dictionary contains some 2200 entries contributed by 122 specialists and supplemented by 1400 illustrations (line drawings, photographs, reproductions, and color plates). The biographical volume has well over 800 entries compiled by 41 authors.

In planning the encyclopedic dictionary, the organizers divided the work into seven topical categories, each assigned to one or two specialized editors: theory and methodology of ethnography, the history of ethnography, ethnographic areas, material culture, folk art, folklore (oral traditions and folk dance, music

and theater), and nonmaterial culture—all of these relating to the folk culture of the Czech lands. That the boundaries of these categories turned out to be quite permeable can be easily shown by some of the entries: aphrodisiacs, archetype, cremation, ethnocartography, ethnochoreology, ethnodemography, eucharistic bread (host), functional structuralism, German folk music in the Czech lands, infant mortality, *Kulturkreislehre* (culture-circle concept), neofolklorism, *Schnaderhüpfel* (German term for a one-stanza air originated in the Alps), traditional Jewish culture, traveling, working classes, and others. Well represented are also entries referring to ethnographic magazines, academic institutes, and regional and local museums with ethnographic artifacts.

The dialectologist will find dozens of local dialectal terms not found even in the large academic dictionaries of the Czech language, for example, *danaj* (type of dance), *engoba* (type of glaze), *huňa* (type of cloth), *jukání* (embellishment of melody), *percák* (part of a plow), and *suka* (type of lyre). All such terms are carefully defined and supplied with other local or regional synonyms. The historian will find much useful information in the many entries in which a folk cultural item or behavior is discussed from its origin in the past to its usage in contemporary times.

The biographical volume is particularly rich inasmuch as it includes non-Czech ethnographers whose writings or research was tied to some of the ethnic minorities living in the Czech lands (for example, Germans, Austrians, or Poles) or who referred to the country's data in their comparative studies. One may be surprised to find that the oldest biographee is so-called Klaret (Bartoloměj z Chlumce) from the 14th century, who was the first source of proverbs, weather lore, superstitions, and fairy tales. This volume also includes a number of Czech and Moravian poets, writers, painters, and composers—for example, František Halas (1901-1949), who in his essays expressed his love for folk poetry; Jan

Neruda (1834-1891), the author of a brief but valuable study of Czech folk dances; Josef Mánes (1820-1871), who included in his extensive artistic legacy drawings of folk costumes and folk architecture; and the well-known composer Leoš Janáček (1854-1928), who not only was inspired in his compositions by folk songs but also wrote about them and actively engaged in collecting them.

The entries are long enough to be adequately informative and each includes a chronological list of publications about the biographee. To make this volume very comprehensive, the editors have also included Czech ethnographers (anthropologists) who have been living abroad for most of their professional lives, and those foreign scholars who at one time made the territory of today's Czech Republic their home or

place of extended visits and published in the field, for example, Roman Jakobson (1896-1982) and Hacquet de la Motte Balthasar (1739?-1815). The encyclopedic dictionary is provided with thorough registers of subjects, personal names, and place-names as well as maps of ethnographic areas of the Czech republic.

Such a wide-ranging compilation of data as this encyclopedia offers is likely to contain a few minor inaccuracies and even omissions (by virtue of its all-inclusiveness), but it would be petty to try to look for and then cite them. At a time when what little folk culture still surviving in the Czech lands is rapidly disappearing, the editors must be congratulated for having produced a primary reference work that will serve those interested in the subject for decades to come.