

NEWS IN BRIEF

SCIENTIFIC SYMPOSIUM ON FOLKLORE HEROES

On February 24, 2017, the Scientific Research Centre of the Slovene Academy of Sciences and Arts (SRC SASA) in Ljubljana hosted a scientific symposium with a focus on folklore heroes, under the heading *O folklornih junakih*. The symposium was organised within the project *Heroes and Famous Persons in Slovenia and Central Europe* (ARRS J6-558; 2013–2017), which involved researches on the theme of famous individuals in history and today – the ones that have had or still have a special status in the community and symbolic imagery. The main questions of the project focused on who, why, and when can become a hero, what heroic characteristics are, why society needs and creates heroes, what society tries to tell people with specific heroes, and for whom those messages are intended. This time these interdisciplinary themes focused on folklore and how folklore heroes are included in national and local history.

The scientific symposium was opened by Dr. Monika Kropelj with a discussion on the developments in the perception of the traditions of King Matthew and Peter Klepec. This discussion was followed by the presentation of Dr. Marjetka Golež Kaučič about how folk stories about King Matthew and Lepa Vida (Beautiful Vida) were accepted into the literary canon. Parallels between King Matthew and Prince Marko were discussed by Dr. Božidar Jezernik.

The second section of the symposium included in the discussion also other Slovenian folklore heroes. Dr. Marija Klobčar introduced images of heroism in *Pegam and Lambergar*, Dr. Saša Babič focused on the manifestations of power in heroes; Dr. Anja Moric and Milan Trobič discussed Peter Klepec and Martin Krpan from the perspective of local and national history, intertwining the stories with (geographic) places and touristic use of those two characters.

The third section of the symposium expanded the concept of the folklore hero to juvenile (literary) heroes for youngsters, which were presented by Dr. Milena Mileva Blažič; Sara Špelec discussed the Slovenian folklorised (movie) hero Kekec; and Dr. Jernej Habjan concluded the conference with an expanded concept of the alpinist as an ideal folklore hero.

A common conclusion of the symposium was that most of the presentations focused on male folklore heroes, which generated the idea for a new scientific symposium dedicated only to female folklore heroes, which are most often neglected or are not even considered in the light of heroism.

The symposium was held in a pleasant environment and opened up new themes and discussions in the research into heroism as well as in folkloristics.

Saša Babič