

Catalogue of Lithuanian Narrative Folklore

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The first volume of the new Catalogue of Lithuanian Narrative Folklore was published in Vilnius in 1999. Systematized by Bronislava Kerbelyte of the Institute of Lithuanian Literature and Folklore, Volume 1 contains animal tales, fables, and fairy or magic tales. The Catalogue of Lithuanian Narrative Folklore is based on a card-index in which are systematized descriptions or copies of more than 85,000 variants of Lithuanian folk narratives recorded from 1835 to 1982. Almost half the texts included in the first volume are folk tales. They are classified according to the Aanti Aarne - Stith Thompson (AT) system as presented in The Types of the Folktale. A Classification and Bibliography. Antii Aarne's Verzeichnis der Marchentypen Translated and Enlarged by Stith Thompson. Folklore Fellows Communications, No. 184 (Helsinki, 1961). AT tale type numbers are assigned to the Lithuanian folk tale variants; however, not all narratives fit the AT tale type scheme. B. Kerbelyte's investigation of the structures and semantics of Lithuanian folk tales has led her to the conclusion that complex plots are elementary plots (EP's) which have been transformed into hierarchical systems. B. Kerbelyte has worked out a special semantic language for the description of EP's and gives semantic descriptions on three levels. She also gives elementary plots types. She finds 151 types of EP's in Lithuanian folk tales, legends, and anecdotes, each of which has several versions. Her classification system is essential to establishing similarities between texts on the basis of deep-lying semantic features. The principles used for assigning tale types and the formation of tale type versions are explained in detail in the introduction to the volume.

Those Lithuanian folk narratives which can be assigned AT numbers are grouped according to structural-semantic types and their versions and the variation of text structures are described. Narratives are further grouped according to genre; each genre section has an index of elementary plots and their types. This arrangement helps the scholar find similar or semantically related elements among different AT tale types.

The Catalogue of Lithuanian Narrative Folklore deviates from the Aarne-Thompson arrangement in certain ways. Fables are separated from animal tales and plot types from several different AT sections are grouped under the heading Parables. Some plot types have been moved to genre sections different from the ones assigned by Aarne-Thompson.

We hope that the new Catalogue of Lithuanian Narrative Folklore will become the acknowledged standard for all those studying Lithuanian folk narrative or for those simply interested in Lithuanian folklore.