



GÖTEBORGS UNIVERSITET
INST FÖR SPRÅK OCH LITTERATURER

ÖVERSÄTTNING I
NATIONENS TJÄNST
J. L. RONEBERG OCH
DE CENTRALSYDSLAVISKA FOLKSÅNGERNA

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Akademisk avhandling för avläggande av filosofie doktorsexamen i Slaviska språk vid Göteborgs universitet, som med tillstånd av Humanistiska fakultetens dekanus, kommer att offentligens försvaras lördagen den 13 september 2014, kl. 13.00 i Stora hörsalen, Humanisten, Renströmsgatan 6, Göteborg

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SWEDISH TITLE: Översättning i nationens tjänst. J. L. Runeberg och de centralsydslaviska folksångerna

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ABSTRACT

This thesis investigates the relationship between Johan Ludvig Runeberg and the Central South Slavic oral songs that he had read in the collection *Serbische Volkslieder* (1827), translated into German by Peter Otto von Goetze and in Herder's anthology *Stimmen der Völker in Liedern*. The encounter with Goetze's translations of oral songs collected by Vuk Karadžić led to a short, but intense translation activity as well as to changes in Runeberg's own poetics. Shortly after he had read Goetze's translation, Runeberg decided to imitate oral poetry. The elements that he was trying to preserve in his translations were the same elements that he later used in his own poetry.

Despite the fact that the Central South Slavic influence on Runeberg's writings has always been known, the nature of this influence was not sufficiently investigated. The influence affects Runeberg's translations of Central South Slavic oral songs and can also be seen in his own poetic activity inspired by these songs, as well as in his view of the relationship between the Finnish-Swedish literary system and the Swedish one. The main question of the thesis therefore relates to the significance that the Central South Slavic oral songs have had for Runeberg's literary activity as a whole. The analyses concern different areas in which the influence of these songs stands out: Runeberg's translation strategies, artistic practices, poetics, criticism, and his position in the Finnish-Swedish literary system.

In my thesis I demonstrate the role that translations of Central South Slavic oral poetry have played in constructing the Finnish national identity. Strongly influenced by the cultural nationalism of Herder, the Finns chose cultural consolidation as the main strategy for strengthening their national identity. This was done in two ways: by turning to Finnish oral poetry and by creating a new Finnish literature based on a non-Swedish foundation. As I have shown, Central South Slavic oral poetry had a small, but certainly important role in both of these strategies.

KEYWORDS: translation, oral poetry, J. L. Runeberg, Central South Slavic, national identity

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