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978-0-521-51936-6 - Voices of the People in Nineteenth-Century France
David Hopkin
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Voices of the People in Nineteenth-Century France

This innovative study of the lives of ordinary people – peasants, fishermen, textile workers – in nineteenth-century France demonstrates how folklore collections can be used to shed new light on the socially marginalized. David Hopkin explores the ways in which people used traditional genres such as stories, songs and riddles to highlight problems in their daily lives and give vent to their desires without undermining the two key institutions of their social world – the family and the community. The book addresses recognized problems in social history, such as the division of power within the peasant family, the maintenance of communal bonds in competitive environments, and marriage strategies in unequal societies, showing how social and cultural history can be reconnected through the study of individual voices recorded by folklorists. Above all, it reveals how oral culture provided mechanisms for the poor to assert some control over their own destinies.

DAVID HOPKIN is Fellow and Tutor in History at Hertford College, University of Oxford. His research concentrates on the oral and popular cultures of nineteenth-century Europe. He is an editor of the journal *Cultural and Social History*.

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To my mother

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With what reverence stories are listened to and told on board! And how strongly a sailor is inclined towards the adventurous element in them! Himself as it were half-adventurer, a man seeking strange new worlds, what fantastic things does he not see at the first startled sight? Have I not myself experienced the same on approaching an unfamiliar coast, a new country, or even a particular period in history?

Johann Gottfried Herder, 'Journal of a Voyage to Nantes', 1769

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Abbreviations

AC Montigny	Archives communales de Montigny-aux-Amognes
AD Côtes-d'Armor	Archives départementales des Côtes-d'Armor, Saint-Brieuc
AD Haute-Loire	Archives départementales de la Haute-Loire, Le Puy-en-Velay
AD Ille-et-Vilaine	Archives départementales d'Ille-et-Vilaine, Rennes
AD Loire	Archives départementales de la Loire, Saint-Étienne
AD Meuse	Archives départementales de la Meuse, Bar-le-Duc
AD Moselle	Archives départementales de la Moselle, Metz
AD Nièvre	Archives départementales de la Nièvre, Nevers
BEROSE	Base d'étude et de recherche sur l'organisation des savoirs ethnographiques en Europe
BM Nancy	Bibliothèque municipale de Nancy
BM Nevers	Bibliothèque municipale de Nevers
BM Puy-en-Velay	Bibliothèque municipale du Puy-en-Velay
CRBC	Centre de Recherche Bretonne et Celtique
MMD	Musée des manufactures de dentelles, Retournac
MNATP	Musée des arts et traditions populaires, Paris
SHM	Service Historique de la Marine, Brest

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Map 1. Map of the main locations mentioned in the text.