Contents

List of Illustrations ix
Notes on Transliteration from Russian and Sakha xi
Acknowledgments xiii

Introduction: Encountering Olonkho 1
1 Epic Traditions, Performers, and Audiences 11
2 Effects of Change during the Soviet Era 33
3 Esteem for a Masterpiece: The Quest for Recognition 64
4 Examining the Role of UNESCO and Intangible Cultural Heritage 89
5 Elements of Resilience: Stable and Malleable 108
6 Epic Revitalization: Negotiating Identities and Other Challenges 135
7 Ensuring Sustainability through Transmission and Innovation 156

Glossary of Russian and Sakha Words 163
Notes 165
Works Cited 203
Index 225