




1969

Review of Raphael Patai, *Man and Temple in Jewish Myth and Ritual*

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Recommended Citation

Ben-Amos, D. (1969). Review of Raphael Patai, *Man and Temple in Jewish Myth and Ritual*. *The American Journal of Folklore*, 82 (325), 284-284. <http://dx.doi.org/10.2307/538724>

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Review of Raphael Patai, *Man and Temple in Jewish Myth and Ritual*

Abstract

Patai's *Man and Temple* was originally researched and written during the thirties and the forties, when the myth and ritual approach to the study of religions was at its peak.

Disciplines

Cultural History | Folklore | Jewish Studies | Near and Middle Eastern Studies

BOOK NOTES

FROM CONTRIBUTORS

Man and Temple in Jewish Myth and Ritual. By Raphael Patai. (New York: Ktav Publishing House, 1967. Reprint of 1947 edition with a new introduction and postscript. Pp. xiv + 247, index. \$5.95.)

Patai's *Man and Temple* was originally researched and written during the thirties and the forties, when the myth and ritual approach to the study of religions was at its peak. Accordingly, he drew analogies between Jewish festivals and other Near Eastern celebrations and considered the water libation rite, the principal ritual with which he was concerned, as a rain-making ceremony similar in kind and pattern to other Babylonian and Egyptian New Year fertility rites. After presenting a detailed reconstruction of this festival as it took place in the Second Temple in Jerusalem, based upon Mishnaic and Talmudic sources, Patai expounds on the mythical connotations of the ritual. These involved, among other things, the conception of the Temple as a symbol of the universe, standing upon the very place from which the creation of the world began, which became in turn the center of the cosmos. These symbols served, according to the myth and ritual hypothesis, the pragmatic purposes of the ritual.

In spite of his acceptance of the theory of the priority of ritual over myth Patai noticed that "in the ritual itself the myth was declared to be the primary element and the ritual secondary" (33). Although the question is no longer considered crucial, this study still has merit. The well-organized presentation of the data and the many references to material scattered in sources not easily accessible make this reprint valuable for future studies of the myths and the rituals in the ancient Near East.

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European Folk Ballads. Edited by Erich Seemann, Dag Strömbäck, and Bengt R. Jonsson. (Copenhagen: Rosenkilde and Bagger, 1967. European Folklore Series, vol. 2. Pp. xxxii + 248.)

European Folk Ballads includes among other things a ballad from Russia ("The Robbers' Sister"). The title and the first lines of this ballad, however, bear absolutely no resemblance to Russian. This is probably due to the fact that after the death of Erich Seemann evidently neither of the remaining members of the editorial committee knew Russian. The lines in question appear as follows:

Kak Dvra Mo
Kaky by lato žila da molo do vydova,
molo dato vydo va da vdova pašipa
Ka kyu toj de vydo vy da by do pa šm noj (104).

They should read,

Starina pro vdovu pašinu
Kak byla-to žila da moloda vdova,
Moloda-to vdova da vdova pašina.
Kak u toj le vdovy da bylo pašinoj.