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Abstract

A thematic bibliography has the dual function of research summation and discipline boundary-demarcation. When a discipline is still forming, and its patterns are still pliable, a bibliography could have a stabilizing effect, laying the foundation for future scholarship. The admittance of entries from a variety of relevant fields into the bibliography establishes them as the scholarly canon, and they become the core around which subsequent research clusters. This function is apparent in particular in this bibliography of Jewish folklore.

Disciplines

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

duction to the subject. Mieder has made it available again with a fine reprint, not of the original 1931 edition, but of the 1962 reprint that includes a new foreword by Taylor and *An Index to "The Proverb,"* which had originally been published separately. For this edition Mieder has written an introduction tracing Taylor's life and work as a paremiologist, together with the bibliography of Taylor's proverb studies published earlier in Mieder's edition of *Selected Writings on Proverbs* by Archer Taylor (Helsinki, 1975). The following items, though occasionally trivial, might have been included: "Out of the Horse's Mouth," *American Notes & Queries*, 7 (1948), 158; "One for the Cutworm," *Western Folklore*, 17 (1958), 52-53; "Spick and Span," *Western Folklore*, 23 (1964), 267-268; "Raw Head and Bloody Bones," *Journal of American Folklore*, 77 (1964), 81; reviews of A. H. Holt, *Phrase Origins* (*Modern Philology*, 35 (1937), 109-110); W. C. Korfmacher, *Othloni libellus proverbiorum* (*Modern Philology*, 36 (1938), 102); and Edmund I. Gordon, *Sumerian Proverbs* (*Journal of American Folklore*, 73 (1960), 351-352). In his introduction Mieder speaks highly of Taylor's role as an inspirer of continuing research in proverbs. Indeed, not only was he capable of instigating initial research, but as an indefatigable letter writer, he constantly prodded his friends and colleagues into increased endeavor, generously sending photocopies of obscure materials pertinent to their interests, all the while keeping constantly aware of the work being done in proverb studies around the world. It is altogether fitting and proper that Mieder should be led to produce this new edition of *The Proverb*, since it is obvious that Taylor's paremiological mantle has fallen to him.

Jewish Folklore: An Annotated Bibliography. By Eli Yassif. (New York: Garland Publishing, 1986. Pp. xxi + 341, introduction, index. \$65.00)

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A thematic bibliography has the dual function of research summation and discipline boundary-demarkation. When a discipline is still forming, and its patterns are still pliable, a bibliography could have a stabilizing effect, laying the foundation for future scholarship. The admittance of entries from a variety of relevant fields into the bibliography establishes them as the scholarly canon, and they become the core around which subsequent research clusters. This function is apparent in particular in this bibliography of Jewish folklore.

Jewish traditional thought, and consequently its study, shares concepts and terms with the discipline of folklore. *Oral tradition* and *oral transmission*, which have been the fundamental principles upon which folklore has developed as a scholarly discipline, have also been the terms with which Jewish traditional thought defines its own postbiblical law, lore, and literature, contrasting them as a binary set with the *written tradition*, a term reserved for the Old Testament. Consequently, in Jewish Studies much of the research overlaps with the discipline of folklore and theoretically could have been legitimately included in this bibliography. This would have meant that many studies of the Talmud and practically all the research on midrashic literature should have appeared in the present volume.

In addition, three other research areas in the history of Jewish cultures and literatures could have been rightfully encompassed by folklore: (1) the study of the apocryphal books that offer early literary formulations of some standard tale types, such as 505-508 "The Grateful Dead" and 934 B "The Hero Predestined to Die on His Wedding Day" in *The Book of Tobit*, or 2031 "Stronger and Strongest" in the apocryphal *First Esdras*; (2) the research into medieval Jewish narrative tradition, which includes many more written renditions of internationally diffused tales; and (3) the scholarship on Jewish mysticism (including demonology) that deals with a phe-

nomenon that became apparent in late antiquity and flourished in the Middle Ages. Such a bibliography would have had proportions of alarming enormity.

In order to avoid the problems inherent in overly large bibliographies, Eli Yassif has chosen wisely to use method rather than subject as the criterion for inclusion of entries in the bibliography; or, in his words, "It is a bibliography of *folkloristics* and not *folklore*." In his work, he has not even attempted to include all the accumulated multidiscipline scholarship that is relevant to Jewish folklore, but has concentrated only upon those studies that either attempt, or claim to be accountable to, folklore methods, theories, and concepts.

The distinction between subject and method in the study of Jewish folklore can well be demonstrated by the entry Yassif selects to represent the inception of Jewish folklore studies. While the earliest analytical study in Jewish folklore is by Leopold Zunz, *Die Gottesdienstlichen Vorträge der Juden: Historisch Entwickelt* (1832), Yassif postpones the beginning of Jewish folklore scholarship by four decades to Mortiz Steinschneider, "Über die Volksliteratur der Juden," (1872), [no. 1142 in the bibliography]. Zunz's work antedates the term *folklore*, but not *Volkskunde*, and is often regarded as the starting point of Jewish studies in general. It is a historical survey, tracing the development of religious sermons in the synagogues from their earliest known period to the 18th and 19th centuries in Germany. With chapters dealing with such topics as "the Haggadah," "the ethical Haggadah," and "the historical Haggadah," offering a literary historical and bibliographical examination of Jewish legends, this book could have served as the starting point of Jewish folklore studies as well. However, Zunz does not employ folklore concepts; he perceives himself accountable to Jewish religious history. In contrast, Steinschneider, whose figure dominates the second half of the 19th century in Jewish studies, specifically employs the term *Volksliteratur*, examining medieval Hebrew and Yiddish folk-books, manuscripts of the communities' memorial books, and other texts as examples of Jewish folk literature. Though not a folklorist, Steinschneider employs folklore concepts, addressing folklore issues, and his essay could correctly mark the beginning of Jewish folklore scholarship.

While the criterion of folklore method offers Yassif a useful limit for the bibliography, other criteria he employs limit its usefulness. First, he excludes studies of Yiddish and Judeo-Spanish (*Judezmo*) folklore. He reasons that bibliographies on these special areas in Jewish folklore either exist or are planned and are being prepared by other editors. This may be so, yet the omission of these two areas in Jewish folklore leaves serious gaps in the present bibliography. Perhaps a solution to the problem would have been the planning of a multivolume bibliography on Jewish folklore, of which the present book would have been only the first.

Secondly, Yassif omits collections of texts from his bibliography. Indeed, the inclusion of folk-tale anthologies, folksong collections, and proverb compendia, and the discrimination between scholarly and popular publications, or between traditional and literary editions could have easily turned into a bibliographer's nightmare. But the total ban on texts in this bibliography is a solution by elimination that leaves the searching student wondering, and results in bibliographical paradoxes. For example, Yassif includes Schwarzbaum's *Studies in Jewish and World Folklore* (no. 1050), but omits Naftoli Gross's, *Maaselech un Mesholim: Tales and Parables* (New York, 1955) upon which Schwarzbaum based his study. He includes Salcia Landmann's essay "On Jewish Humor," (no. 611), but leaves out her book *Der Jüdische Witz* (Olten and Freiburg im Breisgau: Walter, 1962) in spite of her lengthy analytical introduction (pp. 15–123). My own introduction to *Mimekor Yisrael: Classical Jewish Folktales* by Micha Joseph Bin Gorion (not Ben Gorion) is listed (no. 95), but not the collection itself, nor even its German edition *Der Born Judas*, 6 volumes (Leipzig: Insel, 1916–23) that introduced European folklorists to the riches of medieval Jewish folklore. Yassif omits Immanuel Olsvanger, *Rosinkess mit Mandlen: Aus der Volksliteratur der Ostjuden* 2nd edition (Zurich: Arche, 1931), which is a phonemic transcription of oral Yiddish tales, listing instead only a popular essay by this fine scholar (no. 840).

While these omissions are deliberate, there are a few that are accidental, doomed to occur in every bibliography. For example, Yassif includes the excellent study "Rambam (Maimonides) in Folk-Legends," by Isaiah Berger (no. 112), but misses the equally important article by the same author "Folk Legends on Rashi," pp. 147-179 in *Rashi: His Teachings and Personality*, edited by Simon Federbush (New York: Cultural Department of the World Jewish Congress, 1958). He lists several studies by Gershom Scholem (nos. 1022-1029), but misses one of his earlier essays "Bilar (Bilad, Bilid, BEAIAP), the King of the Demons," *Mada'ei Ha-Yahadut* 2 (1926):112-127, which Scholem himself considered to be an exemplary folklore study. In a later essay, he wrote, "Folklore scholars chose to ignore that article, and over the years I read some nonsense that they would not have written had they read that essay" (Scholem, in *Tarbiz* 19, 1948, p. 60).

However, these critical comments and additional references should not overshadow the significance of the contribution to folklore studies that Yassif makes with this bibliography. For every entry that I found missing, I encountered ten I did not know. During the period in which I had the book under review, I myself was involved in a project of a bibliographical nature. I have already made use of Yassif's bibliography for research and I can attest that it includes many essays I did not know about. He lists about 1313 entries (at least 43 entries have been omitted without renumbering the original list of 1356 references) that appeared as books or as articles in journals, festschrifts, and other scholarly collections. His annotations are succinct and clear, though the use of the German form *Agada* instead of the English "Haggadah" is bewildering. He cites the works of prominent scholars who wrote primarily in Hebrew, like Dov Sadan and Yehudah Zlotnik, who deserve to be better known by folklorists everywhere. Most prominently, Yassif cites the works of current folklore scholars in Israel. This is a dynamic, well-known, scholarly community, consisting mostly of students and colleagues of Dov Noy who founded the Israeli Folktale Archives in the fifties and then brought modern folklore research methods to Israel. The bibliography sums up their work and establishes a basis for future, even more vigorous, Jewish folklore scholarship.

Cosmology and Social Life: Ritual Exchange among the Mambai of East Timor. By Elizabeth G. Traube. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1987. Pp. xxiii + 289, preface, acknowledgments, introduction, notes, references, index, figures, black and white photographs. \$32.00; \$14.95 soft cover)

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Elizabeth Traube has written an eloquent and powerful account of the Mambai, the ritual guardians of Heaven and Earth, whose "brooding preoccupation with the hidden mysteries of creation" (p. 31) has inspired this work. Like her other writings, *Cosmology and Social Life* is alive: while developing a finely textured analysis of the structure of Mambai cosmology, social organization, and ritual, she never loses touch with the complexities and ambiguities of lived experience; while presenting a picture of the world as viewed by the Mambai, she never loses sight of the place that her own experiences and interpretive efforts have in the portrait she draws. To carry off any one of these projects well is an achievement: to balance them all with equal grace, as she does, is a rarity.

Traube's book is, moreover, an innovative and important contribution to the study of the relationship between the forms of social life, symbolic classification, and ritual. Opposing Durkheim's theory of the "social origins of symbols" to the structuralist conceptualization of the "symbolic origins of society," Traube clearly stands with the latter (p. 2). Nevertheless, she is