

Ben-Amos, Dan. (ed.), Leonard J. Schramm, (trans.) *Folktales of the Jews. Volume 2. Tales from Eastern Europe*. Philadelphia: The Jewish Publication Society, 2007. Notes. Bibliography. Indexes. XLII+624. \$75.00 (cloth). ISBN 978-0-8276-0830-6.

The editors of the *Folktales of the Jews* collection, Dr. Dov Noy (Bar Ilan University) and Dr. Dan Ben-Amos (Pennsylvania University), are now presenting readers and experts with the second volume of the collection, *Tales from Eastern Europe*. This ongoing project was launched in 1992 by The Jewish Publication Society and by the Israel Folklore Archive, and the current volume sets a standard in the anthologization and interpretation of old or contemporary folk tales. This large collection gathered over 20,000 tales, about 70 of which are included in the published volumes. Gathered from an extremely generous area and from a large number of people, the legends included in this volume cover all types of folk narratives which were present in Jewish communities from this region. There are tales with fantasy and supernatural motifs, but also rabbinic, moralizing, anecdotic ones, and last but not least, historic tales or tales dealing with Jewish - local population interactions. There are also comic tales, which are well represented in this anthology.

One of the great merits of the volume is, beyond the representative nature of the items selected, its highly scientific approach. The introduction is extremely useful (pages XV-XXXIX), as it includes a short presentation of the researched territory and of the population characteristics from the area where materials were gathered. The Jewish migration to Eastern Europe is discussed: the spoken language, the existing ethnological materials, which are presented in a historical manner, as well as the methods used to explore this large body of material belonging to individuals or associations. The structure of the volume includes, according to the editors, the presentation of the tale proper, with an indication of the performer's name, the date and place of recording, followed by its systematic analysis. It also presents the cultural, historic and literary background of the tale, together with its classification according to a wider typological system of the motifs. The tale is compared to other types of tales from the Israel Folk Archives or the international index, specifically Thompson's motif index. Thus the large majority of the tales is accompanied by an ample scholarly apparatus, which is extremely useful to researchers. A synthesis of the motifs included in these tales is attached at the end of the volume (589-

617). Thus, the 71 tales included in the present volume occupy 488 pages, to which another 180 pages of general criticism is added. The short biographies of the tellers and those of the collectors/editors of these tales are also well described (most of them live in Poland). The general bibliography of the volume is impressive, it occupies 76 pages, which makes the book extremely useful for those interested in gathering and summarizing classical or contemporary Jewish folklore.

The editors are to be congratulated on the structure of this volume. It is also worth noting that the first volume of this series, *Folktale of Jews. I. Tales from the Sephardic Dispersion*, received the National Jewish Book Award. We can all look forward to the following announced volumes: *Folktales of Arabia*, *Folktales of the Orient* and *Folktales of Other Lands*.

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