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JEWISH FOLKLORE

An Annotated Bibliography

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INTRODUCTION

Although this book constitutes the first attempt to present the fruits of the study of Jewish folklore in the form of an annotated bibliography, it was not composed in a void. I am greatly indebted to the separate bibliographies on different branches of Jewish folklore and on various forms and topics.¹ Nevertheless, the present work aims at providing a critical summary of one hundred years of the study of Jewish folklore. The first stage of such a review cannot take the form of an ordinary bibliography, but must review and assess the contribution of each study to the development of the field.

It should be clear, however, that no bibliography, even an annotated one, can replace a historical and analytical description of the development of Jewish folkloristics. It is to be hoped that the present work represents the first step towards fulfillment of this aim.

A bibliography on such a vague and broad concept as "Jewish folklore" is confronted, first of all, with the methodological problem of delineating the temporal and conceptual borders of the field. The first principle that should be emphasized is that it is a bibliography of *folkloristics* and not of *folklore*: e.g., it discusses studies alone and no other kind of publication on Jewish folklore texts or artifacts. Such a selection may seem problematic, especially in the field of folklore, as the collection, recording, and publication of texts seems to be the essence of the field. Nevertheless, our aim was to distinguish the mere collection and publication of tales, proverbs, and folksongs and the descriptions of folk customs from the scientific attempts to analyze and understand the folkloric phenomenon. It is of particular importance today to emphasize the difference between the work of thousands of "amateur folklorists" all over the world and the systematic and professional work of folklorists who invest great

intellectual efforts in describing the "folkloric factor" as an essential part of the human experience.

There have been some attempts to determine the beginning of Jewish folkloristics. The most important is that of Dov Noy who considers the publication of Max Grunwald's programmatic manifesto of 1898 to mark the beginning.² However, Noy points to earlier studies as well. The earliest entry in the present bibliography dates from 1823, but it is included here mainly as a curiosity.³ I consider the beginning of the scholarly treatment of Jewish folklore to be the essay by the father of Jewish bibliography, Moritz Steinschneider, published in 1872.⁴ This article is not merely a study of a specific subject or theme in Jewish folklore, but delineates both clearly and methodically the limits of the field, its materials, and especially its future goals.

The most recent entries included in the bibliography are from 1980, when the work of collecting and cataloging was completed. Thus, the present study can be considered as a review of one hundred years of Jewish folkloristics.

We mentioned above the problem of drawing the conceptual limits of the bibliography and that of what should be included in, or omitted from this work. The following are some of the decisions taken, which can indicate the limitations of the present book.

First, this bibliography does not include the study of East European Jewish culture. The main reason is that this branch of Jewish folklore seems so vast and complicated that it requires a special bibliography. Meanwhile this field is covered by the almost out-of-date work of Uriel and Beatrice Weinrich.⁵ A similar case is that of Judeo-Spanish folklore. In recent decades this branch of Jewish folklore has developed significantly. The main expansion was in the study of Judeo-Spanish balladry or *Romancero*. After a survey of this field it became clear that there is no possibility of including these thousands of publications in a bibliography of limited goals such as the present one. In contrast to the situation in the field of Yiddish folklore, there are good and up-to-date bibliographies of *Judizmo* folklore and especially the *Romancero*.⁶ I have included here only some central and significant publications.

Other types of methodological difficulties were the treatments of Biblical scholarship and of studies in Talmudic-Midrashic literature and Jewish musicology and art. Since the great works of Herman Gunkel, the study of Biblical literature has tended more and more towards the methods of study of folk-literature. It may be assumed that most of the studies of Biblical narratives and poetry in recent decades belong to the approach known as "form-criticism," which makes intensive use of the folkloristic tools developed to study folk-literature. The present bibliography could not allow itself to become a bibliography of Biblical scholarship, and thus we could include here only those studies that describe and analyze Biblical literature as folk-literature.⁷ Similar was the case of the Talmudic-Midrashic Agada. Most scholars today accept the hypothesis that Rabbinical legend was mostly created and transmitted orally. Nevertheless, there is no justification for including in a folkloristic bibliography hundreds of studies analyzing the legal, historical, philological, and literary aspects of this literature. Here also we have included only those studies that analyze Agadic literature as folk-literature.

In the fields of Jewish music and art the methodological problem is different, but the decisions were taken along the same lines. In both fields, until the modern era, there was no differentiation between "artistic" or "high" music and art and the folkloric mode. Should Biblical or medieval music be considered as folk or "elite" music? Architecture of synagogues, Hanukka lamps, Torah ornaments, and the like constituted the entire body of Jewish art until recent decades. Thus, in most cases distinctions between religious, artistic, and folk-artifacts are almost impossible. As in the above-mentioned cases, we could not allow this book to become a bibliography of Jewish music or art.⁸ Most publications on these subjects have nothing to do with the study of folklore, and here too decisions had to be taken about the sometimes subtle border between musicological study and study in the strict field of Jewish folk-music and folk-art.

A rich portion of world folklore is dedicated to the Jews in folklore. Most of the material consists of antisemitic jokes, proverbs, folksongs, and folk-art. The best example might be the legend of the Wandering Jew. This legend has attracted the at-

tion of folklorists all over the world.⁹ These and similar publications are not included here as they cannot be considered Jewish folklore.¹⁰

The constraints and difficulties of the present bibliography can be summarized by stating that we have not attempted to undertake the impossible, i.e., to present everything that has been published in the field of Jewish folklore, including its numerous byways and branches. The present work does not place the emphasis on the presentation of everything that has been published, but on detailed description and evaluation of the important and representative studies. The annotations for each entry are intended to fulfill certain aims. Not every publication was clearly evaluated. Naturally enough, I focused mainly on those studies that bare outstanding achievements and had a strong impact on future studies and, vice versa, on those that might mislead the reader through unreliable conclusions. The evaluation factor in the annotations serves mainly as a guide to which studies cannot be disregarded by any new work in the field.

The descriptive factor in the annotations is more significant for students of Jewish folklore. Here I tried to present in detail every theme, motif, and subject discussed in each study, even if this was not the main purpose of the publication. Thus the student will be able to locate his or her subject of research, whether or not it is mentioned in the title of the article or even in the table of contents of the book. All these themes, motifs, names, and approaches were included in the general index. This detailed index will, I hope, be a useful tool for almost any research on Jewish folklore.

Another important goal of the annotations is the summary of the publications in Hebrew. In the last few decades, Israel has become the center for the study of Jewish folklore. Most of the works in the field were published in Hebrew, and thus it was almost impossible for folklore students around the world to know and evaluate these achievements. A typical example is the works by Prof. Dov Sadan, all of them published in Hebrew (and some also in Yiddish). As a result, even the name of this eminent scholar is unfortunately little known outside the world of Jewish studies.¹¹

In conclusion, it is my pleasure to thank the people and institutions who played a part in preparation of this book. The work of collection and research was carried out in four libraries: the Library of Congress in Washington, D.C., the Library of the Jewish Theological Seminary in New York City, the New York Public Library, and the National and University Library in Jerusalem. In all these celebrated libraries of Jewish studies I received generous and helpful treatment, and I wish to thank them all. Mrs. Chaya Galai helped me to give this book a reasonable English form, and Liora van-Moppes did all the complicated typing and indexing with skill and intelligence. I am very grateful to both of them.

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Notes

1. Bibliographies of general character are: Robert Attal, *The Jews of North-Africa: A Bibliography* (Jerusalem, 1973); "Bibliographie annotée sur les juifs d'Afrique du nord 1974-1979," in *Pa'amei Ma'arav. Etudes judeo-maghrébines*, ed. Itzhak Bezael (Jerusalem, 1983), pp. 305-357; A. Berger, "The Literature of Jewish Folklore," *Journal of Jewish Bibliography* 1 (1938-1939): 12-20, 40-49; D. Noy, *The Study of the Folktale—A Selective Bibliography for Students* (Jerusalem, 1969); D. Noy, "The Study of Jewish Folklore in 1968. Selective Bibliography," *FRCS* 1 (1970): 389-423; H. Schwarzbaum, *Studies in Jewish and World Folklore* (Berlin, 1968); Yosef Tobi, "The Folk Creativity of Yemenite Jewry," chapter D in *The Jews of Yemen, Bibliography* (Jerusalem, 1975), pp. 110-126. Other bibliographies will be mentioned in the following notes. Compare also the general index under "Bibliography."

2. Dov Noy, "Eighty Years of Jewish Folkloristics: Achievements and

Tasks," in *Studies in Jewish Folklore*, ed. Dov Noy and Frank Talmage (Cambridge, Mass., 1980), pp. 1–12. Compare also his important article: "The Place of Sh. Ansky in Jewish Folkloristics," *Jerusalem Studies in Jewish Folklore* 2 (1982): 94–107 (H).

3. William Brown, *Antiquities of the Jews, carefully compiled from authentic sources and their customs. Illustrated from modern travels* (Philadelphia, 1823). This book consists of a long list of customs of Jewish life without any differentiation between religious and folk customs. For an excellent list of these books compare: Daniel Haskell, ed., "Jewish Customs. A List of Works Compiled by A. S. Freidus," *Studies in Jewish Bibliography and Related Subjects in Memory of Abraham Solomon Freidus* (New York, 1929), pp. lxxvii–cxxx.

4. Moritz Steinschneider, "Über die Volksliteratur der Juden," *Archiv für Literaturgeschichte* 2 (1872): 1–21.

5. Uriel and Beatrice Weinreich, *Yiddish Language and Folklore. A Selective Bibliography for Research* (The Hague, 1959).

6. Samuel Armistead, "Recent Developments in Judeo-Spanish Ballad Scholarship," *SJF*, pp. 21–32; Samuel Armistead, "New Perspectives in Judeo-Spanish Ballad Research," in *The Sephardi and Oriental Heritage*, ed. Issachar Ben-Ami (Jerusalem, 1982), pp. 225–235; Robert Attal (note 1 above); Henry V. Besso, "Don Ramon Menendez Pidal and the 'Romancero Sefardi,'" *Sefarad* 21 (1961): 343–374; David Bunis, "Judezmo Folklore and Folklife," in his *Sephardic Studies. A Research Bibliography* (New York and London, 1981), pp. 99–168, which includes: folk-music, ballads, folktales, proverbs, humor, riddles, folk-drama, games, folk-medicine, magic, foodways, costumes, material culture, life and year cycle, and folklore of specific areas; Reginetta Haboucha, "The Folklore and Traditional Literature of the Judeo-Spanish Speakers: Recent Scholarship and Research," in *The Sephardi and Oriental Heritage*, ed. Issachar Ben-Ami (Jerusalem, 1982), pp. 571–588; M. Studemund, *Bibliographie zum Judenspanischen* (Hamburg, 1975). See in the index "Judeo-Spanish," "Romancero," and "Sephardic."

7. The term "Bible" is used in this book to refer only to the twenty-four books of the Hebrew Bible, not including the New Testament or the Apocrypha. The latter will be referred to specifically.

8. A useful bibliography is: L.A. Mayer, *Bibliography of Jewish Art* (Jerusalem, 1967). Compare also H. Schwarzbaum (note 1 above), pp. 438–439. An excellent bibliography of Jewish music is that of Alfred Sendry, *Bibliography of Jewish Music* (New York, 1951). Compare also

Schwarzbaum (note 1), pp. 409–417 and A. Shiloh and E. Gerson-Kiwi, "Musicology in Israel 1960–1980," *Acta Musicologica* 53 (1981): 200–216.

9. Compare as general literature the bibliography in G.K. Anderson, *The Legend of the Wandering Jew* (Providence, R.I., 1965) and Galit Hasan-Rokem, "The Wandering Jew in Finnish Folklore," *Jerusalem Studies in Jewish Folklore* 2 (1982): 124–148 (H).

10. For some bibliographical notes on this theme compare A. Berger (note 1 above).

11. Names of books and articles published in Hebrew or Yiddish were given in addition to the English translation only. I did not find any reason in giving them in Latin transcription and in English translation, as readers who cannot read Hebrew will not understand it anyway and readers of Hebrew and Yiddish will in any case turn to the original.