

a chthonic kind of thinking, which are typical for an ancient peasant people. The content of these songs as well as the selection arrived at by the author paint a representative picture of the polymorphous character of Newari culture represented by the literary products of approximately four centuries.

The author has placed before each of the translations of the hundred poems a short introduction with explanations and bibliographic references. There are at times thorough notes to the translation. The full Newari texts are also transcribed in the second part of the book.

In the last analysis it is a book which fulfills all requirements—those of a friend of Nepalese culture as well as those of the scholar—in an ideal manner.

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IRAN

MARZOLPH, ULRICH. *Typologie des persischen Volksmärchens* [Typology of the Persian oral tale]. Beirut Texte und Studien, Band 31. Beirut: Orient-Institut der Deutschen Morgenländischen Gesellschaft, 1984. Distributed by Franz Steiner Verlag, Wiesbaden. Xiii+311 pages. Motif index, bibliography. Paper DM 90.—, ISBN 03-515-03702-0. (In German, with English summary).

This book is a new contribution to the systematic survey of Persian folktales after Adrienne Boulvin's pioneer work, *Contes populaires persans du Khorassan*. The author, a German specialist of the popular literature of the Islamic Middle East, here undertakes the task of classifying Persian folktales from diverse regions of Iran according to the Aarne-Thompson system. Methodically, the work seems to be modeled on Heda Jason's "Types of Jewish-Oriental tales" (1965) in which the AT index was first applied to the comprehensive survey of Near Eastern tales. Marzolph's *Typologie* depends mostly on formerly printed materials, but he also makes use of hitherto unpublished rare sources, such as Erika Friedl's Bovir Ahmadi tales, Adrienne Boulvin's typewritten folktale catalog, Golaleh Pak's master thesis: "A study of the animal folk-tales in Iran" (1979)—the latter two works based on researches in the folklore archives of the Ethnological Museum of T'ehran—and above all, the extensive tape-recorded private collection of the late Professor Elwell-Sutton, the leading authority on the study of the Persian folktales.

As we learn from the Preface, Marzolph's work is a slightly modified version of a dissertation presented at the University of Cologne in 1981. It consists of two main parts: Introduction (1-32), and the typology itself (33-264).

The Introduction includes a concise history of Persian folktale research, supplying bibliographical data (1-7); sections concerning working methods and the choice of sources (7-15); and two statistical charts accompanied with maps on the ethnic and administrative divisions of Iran (16-19). The first chart shows the geographical distribution of the folktales surveyed. They are mainly concentrated in the areas of Isfahan, Shiraz, Tehran, and in the province of Khorasan, while large parts of the West, the region of the Persian Gulf and Sistan and Balujistan are almost entirely neglected. (It is a pity that a Soviet collection of Sistani tales—*Shazki i legendy Sistana* (1981) equipped with AT index!—could not be used for the present survey, to represent

better an area so central in ancient Iranian tradition.) The other chart lists the thirty-eight most frequent Persian tale types (AT 408 and 894 are the most popular among them). Then the thematic and stylistic characteristics of the Persian folktales are treated (20–32). The observation about the considerable correspondences of the Persian tales with the Turkish ones, and their relatively little affinity with the Arab tales, will be of valuable guidance for any comparative study of the oral literatures of the Near and Middle East (32).

The typology is based on some 1300 texts and contains 351 types, among which 228 closely and 77 partly correspond with those of the AT Index, while 26 new types had to be added (cf. 11–13). Each type is given a short synopsis, the indication of its sources, and occasional comparative notes and references to the literary use of the stories. Most of the material falls into the category of “Jokes and anecdotes” (192–251; 126 types) and “Tales of magic” (60–142; 81 types).

It seems that the AT division “Religious tales” (types 750–849) is not very appropriate for the Persian material. This category is represented in the present work by only nineteen types, including tales of no religious character (cf. the Persian versions of AT 780, 821 B, 832 A), and clearly cannot reflect the richness of the Persian religious legends which demand an index of their own.

There are savory pieces of information in the index for every interest. Japanese readers will be amazed to recognize in the type *1705 (*Geister im Bad*) a very similar tale to one of their horror stories made famous by Lafcadio Hearn's *Kwaidan* (“*Mujina*”). The Persian tale is actually closer to the Japanese one, than to any European tale listed in the AT Index. The relatively small number of misogynic anecdotes (total absence of jokes on Old Maids!) will give some food for thought for the anthropologists and sociologists of the area.

The short appendix to the second part contains a supplementary survey of new material (261–262), and a list of tales of literary origin (263–264). An alphabetical (not Thompson's) Motif Index (265–300), a very useful chart of correspondences with Eberhard-Borataw's *Typen türkischer Volksmärchen* (301–303) and an extensive bibliography (305–311) follow the main part of the book.

In spite of the impressive amount of information gathered, folklorists probably will feel the lack of data concerning the narrators of tales (seldom given by Iranian collectors anyway) and find the surveyed tales too few in number. The present historical circumstances in Iran apparently excluded the possibility of any archive research; still more cooperation with indigenous scholars could be rewarding. It is also regrettable that Mr. Marzolph's work has not been further updated. In the five years between the presentation of his dissertation and its publication, a very important contribution was made in the field of Iranian folktale studies, namely the publication of the huge *Kulliyoti fol'klori Tojik* (Compendium of Tajik folklore. vol. 1. 1981. Cf. the review of Elwell-Sutton in AFS 42 (1983) 317–319). Since the Tajik collections of folktales have been available for some time in Russian translations, the absence of any reference to the Tajik data, both in the Introduction and in the comparative notes to types, is rather disappointing, since Tajik—a Central Iranian dialect—is linguistically and culturally a very close kin to Persian.

Regardless of such flaws, Marzolph's study is of great erudition and value. It provides a solid basis for any further inquiry and successfully brings Persian folktale research, which generally has been confined within the field of Iranian studies, into the broader perspective of folklore scholarship. The text is philologically well prepared, and printed with a minimum of errors. It is a significant contribution to the study of Middle Eastern oral tradition.

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CAMEROON

NDONG, NORBERT. *Kamerunische Märchen. Text und Kontext in ethnosoziologischer und psychologischer Sicht* [Tales from Cameroon. Text and context in ethnological and psychological perspective]. Artes Populares: Studia Ethnographica et Folkloristica, No. 8. Frankfurt am Main, Bern, New York: Peter Lang, 1983. 444 pages. Paper sFr. 79.—, ISBN 3-8204-5411-X. (In German)

African folklore has come of age. No longer apologetic, it assumes its position among the literatures of the nations without any pleading for its literary value, nor with any defensive rhetorics to ward off unwarranted interpretations. Native scholars are taking charge of their own literatures with a commanding authority that combines profound knowledge of their own tradition with the breadth and depth of folklore scholarship. In doing so they are setting new scholarly standards that advance our research methods from a phase of participant-observation to a new level of indigenous scholarship, leaving behind the Sisyphean task of interpreting traditional texts that non-native speakers face.

Norbert Ndong's work is a prime example of the strength indigenous scholarship has to offer. He is a Beti person from Cameroon who has studied in African and German universities. His erudition reflects both his native knowledge of Beti folklore and academic learning. In his study of eleven Beti tales, Ndong offers a synthesis of theories of folklore with knowledge of tradition that amounts to excellent essays in interpretive folklore.

The book consists of three parts: (a) a theoretical introduction, (b) the texts and their interpretations, and (c) an analytical evaluation.

In his introduction Ndong discusses the concept of the *Märchen* in relation to Beti generic distinctions, and the position of the *Märchen* in Beti culture and society; he