

ing to compare the same geographical area on overlapping maps and find different information. Place names which are found on one of the maps are not infrequently missing in the overlapping area on the other map. Tributaries of rivers occur on one but not on the other, and if they do appear, sometimes flow off in different directions in each of the maps. Since landmarks are the vital clues for locating language boundaries, their inaccuracies may at times modify the map's usefulness.

With the publication of this set of maps behind him, Stephen Wurm (personal communication) is now preparing a sequel, a set of thirty or so maps of China. About half of them, to be published some time in 1986 will cover the non-Chinese languages of China, the others will be devoted to the dialects of Chinese. If these maps are anything like the quality of those already published, scholars of East Asia will have a superb resource available to them.

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#### INDONESIA

KOUBI, JEANNINE. Rambu solo', " *la fumée descend*". *Le culte des morts chez les Toradja du Sud* (The cult of the dead among the Southern Toraja). Paris: Éditions du Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique, 1982. 530 pp. Maps, fotos, bibliography and appendix of Toraja texts. Paper FFr. 150. ISBN 2-222-03020-X. (In French).

Recent years have seen a renewed interest among anthropologists in the study of death and funerary rites. The book under review is a well matured fruit of this and at the same time it is more.

Although she was forced to cut down on the material, Koubi displays an immense wealth of documents, descriptions and interpretations. It is the result of two and a half years of intensive fieldwork among the Southern Toraja. By now it is almost common practice that an anthropologist in the field learns the language of the area studied in order to conduct research as a kind of continued exchange between the anthropologist and his hosts. Yet the results of all this effort can be seen in most cases only as the author's descriptions and conclusions. About half of Koubi's book follows this approach, except that her extremely detailed descriptions are only with difficulty kept in balance so that they finally converge naturally into the multifaceted picture intended by the author. Where Koubi differs greatly from other authors is in the attention she pays not only to the beliefs that give life to the rites, but especially to the various categories of oral literature that have a role to play in the rites or serve as means of interpreting their meaning. Her presentation of the Toraja cult for the dead rests on a triad formed by the funerary rites themselves together with the myths and the beliefs concerning death (8). In combining these three areas, she has succeeded in depicting not only a ritual process but also a culture as it becomes apparent in its manifold aspects in the unfolding of its rites.

One of the key concepts of this culture is the idea of a stratified, hierarchical society. This stratification is also reflected in the rites. On one hand, each of the four social classes has its individual ritual form, although the basic ritual prescriptions concerning the cult of the dead apply to all of them in a generalized manner. On the other hand, the rites themselves develop as a series of what Koubi calls *palier* (plat-

form) which are part of the *échelle rituelle* (ritual ladder) giving expressions to a still other kind of stratification. While an individual cannot escape his hierarchical position, each has to go through the different stages that mark his path toward and final integration into the other world. This integration means that he is not simply dead, but has become an ancestor, or even a divine being. In discussing the central position the term *échelle rituelle* has for the interpretation of the rites, Koubi leads us to understand that the long period needed to perform the rituals is not just a function of the readjustment efforts of a human group that has lost one of its members, nor is it merely a question of economic resources. In discussing the significance of the rites as a place where members of the same family or social group meet, share in sorrow and also joyful entertainment, and as a place of extensive material exchange that can lead to lifelong indebtedness, the author extensively portrays how these factors do operate. Yet they are not the main causes for the protracted time of the rites. The main cause is the idea of an *échelle* and with it the belief that the deceased has to go through a series of trials (*épreuve*) that finally lead to his apotheosis. With this last step of the ladder the deceased enters into a new cycle of rites of an entirely different character from the immediately preceding one. The rites of this cycle are grouped with daylight and the "rising sun," whereas the funerary rites belong to the cycle of the "setting sun," of darkness, where the "fumes descend."

For the folklorist this book offers a rich collection of texts, in Toraja and in French translation. There are chants, poems, and most of all myths which constitute a body of precious material concerning the mythology of this group. Myths about the origin of death, the journey to the other world, rebirth, etc. will certainly be of wide interest to many scholars. In fact, most of the texts are given in more than one version and allow therefore for comparative examination. The original home of the Toraja is the area of Sa'dan, from where a group has split off and migrated farther west. The author takes care not to disregard these differences and describes the rituals of the two areas separately. The same procedure is followed for the stories, as far as suitable material was available, in order to show some of these differences.

The stories are first of all taken as sources to explain aspects or sequences in the ritual process. Therefore they are not further analyzed as stories. I do not want to say that the author herself should have done so, but I do want to point out that her carefulness in presenting the material makes it possible to use the material also for studies of different kinds. In this context the author raises another important point. She reminds the reader that the texts and words used in the rituals are not only a fixed and definitely formulated literature to be repeated as need may arise. These texts are living entities in a double sense. On the one hand they allow for situational adaptations to give expression to the feelings of the performers or listeners. On the other hand the words are imbued with a power to produce in fact what they tell about. To sum up, here we have an ethnography in which mythology is shown as being not merely an appendix, but an integrated part in the functioning organism of this particular culture.

This book is a rich source for everyone interested in the study of ritual. The only problem is that it is not very easy to use. A table provides crossreferences between the Toraja texts in the appendix and the French translations in the running text. Practical as this may be, it is of use only to those few who can handle the Toraja text. For others a subject index or at least a glossary explaining the main terms would have been most helpful. There are references in the footnotes but they are much too casual and do not help much if the reader e.g. needs to have a term explained because he missed its explanation where it first occurred or if he wishes to check quickly

on certain aspects of the ritual, as e.g. the role of fire. These purely technical shortcomings, however, do not essentially detract from the value of Koubi's work. The book has much to offer even to readers who might not expect to find material for their work in Sulawesi.

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#### ISRAEL

SCHWARZBAUM, HAIM. *The Mishle Shu'alim (Fox Fables) of Rabbi Berechiah Ha-Nakdan: A Study in Comparative Folklore and Fable Lore*. Kiron, Israel: Institute for Jewish and Arab Folklore Research, 1979. Lv+658 pp. Bibliography, tables of narrative types and narrative motifs, general index.

With the death of Haim Schwarzbaum, international folklore lost one of its most erudite scholars. This volume, despite its somewhat limited title, is a *tour de force* on the fable and fable scholarship in Europe, the Middle East, and South Asia, with reference to scholarship and distributional data elsewhere as well. The core of the volume consists of a detailed analysis of (with voluminous annotations on) a single Medieval Hebrew collection of Fables, titled the *Mishle Shu'alim* (Fox Fables). Rabbi Berechiah Ha-Nakdan, sometime in the twelfth or thirteenth century, assembled an anthology of fables which were current in the European tradition. These fables, which he gathered from a wide variety of sources, were "judaicised" by being purged of their mythological and "pagan" elements and other non-Jewish patterns and rewritten in an elegant Hebrew rhymed prose. The book has been widely cited by subsequent scholars and also has been translated into a number of other languages, including an elegant translation into English by Moses Hadas (1967). The work provides the most extensive corpus of Medieval Hebrew fables available for analysis. The term "fox fables" in the title is artificially limiting, as the term had become a designation for fables in general by the time of R. Berechiah. While many of the fables in the collection do, indeed, have the fox as a character, many do not include him, and a number have no animals at all involved.

Each of the 118 chapters in the main text takes a single fable from this collection for analysis. Many of these chapters would serve as major articles in their own right. Each consists of an extended annotation of the fable tracing its history through the extant literature and discussing its geographical distribution. The geographic references (although especially strong on the Arabic tradition) range from Spain to Korea and Burma, and from Sweden and Siberia to sub-Saharan Africa, with a few references on the spread to the New World of European versions. The historical analysis takes the fable from R. Berechiah and his *Mishle Shu'alim* and other Medieval European versions through Latin versions to the Aesopic tradition, and ultimately, to the ancient Near East, where analogs for many are found in Sumerian and other early texts. The line of reasoning is impressive and convincing. The ties between the various fable traditions which are demonstrated in this book are fascinating, and would, alone, make this work a valuable contribution to the literature on the fable.

The fifty five pages of the introduction set the collection in its cultural and historical context and also provide a general theory of the fable. The analysis of the Medieval fable tradition is especially well done, demonstrating the many lines of interaction between the various European traditions and their great influence on each