

polemic songs. No. 25 is a very interesting and puzzling narrative that describes, according to Kassam, the death of Pīr Shams. It is a pity that the author does not provide here (as she usually does) the original term for the ambivalent English word “case,” which the congregation must prepare for the farewell ritual. Would this be a coffin or a bier?

Also some comment would have been desirable concerning the mysterious *ghatpat* ceremony of offering up holy water, to which there are many references in the texts. Modern scholarship pays much attention to Ismā‘īlī theology and philosophy but little to its ritual. Is this ceremony typical of the Satpanth only? Unfortunately, Kassam provides few details on the performance side, being primarily interested—like her predecessors—in problems of chronology and historicity, so that her focus is generally too much on the philological side. One wishes that she could have included more detailed anthropological or folkloristic accounts of the community.

The translation of the *ginān* anthology is concluded by twenty-eight *garbīs*, special songs actually sung by Pīr Shams himself as he began converting Hindus during a festival. *Garbī* originally meant a Gujarati folk dance, a circle dance (hence the title) around a lamp pot in honor of a deity (the goddess Mātā Bhavānī in the texts). According to legend, Pīr Shams saw such a dance during a Hindu festival, joined in and started to sing, calling the Hindus to abandon the worship of their idols. He worked many miracles and finally converted even the Brahmins, the local king, and his ministers.

Syncretistic traditions are not faring well nowadays. Fundamentalists are more than eager to extirpate them, and even liberals have started to view them with contempt. For the intellectuals of a religious minority to disclose and even cherish their controversial cultural heritage requires great moral courage and dedication. There is a tendency in Ismā‘īlī officialdom to discourage research on *gināns*; some of the *gināns* translated here (such as No. 32, the so-called Ten Avatār) are no longer in use. It is only individual scholars who still find them important for preserving the memory of the centuries-old life of the community with its great historical and emotional value. With the present loss and decay of traditional culture throughout the world, such efforts deserve our appreciation.

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EUROPE

PERKOWSKI, LILIANA DASKALOVA, DOROTEJA DOBREVA, JORDANKA KOCEVA, and EVGENIJA MICEVA. *Typenverzeichnis der bulgarischen Volksmärchen*. Edited and translated by Klaus Roth, Juliana Roth, and Gabi Tiemann. FF Communications 257. Helsinki: Academia Scientiarum Fennica, 1995. 424 pages. Glossary, indices, maps, bibliography. Paper FIM 190; ISBN 951-41-0771-3; ISSN 0014-5815. (In German)

This type-catalogue of Bulgarian folktales was produced and carefully introduced by Liliana Daskalova Perkowski, Doroteja Dobрева, Jordanka Koceva, and Evgenija Miceva, and has been provided with a German preface by the editors and translators. The work indicates Bulgaria’s role as mediator between the Orient and the Occident, a position resulting from the Balkan Peninsula’s five centuries under the Ottoman Empire and consequent separation from Occidental development, the late beginning of literary communication, and the centuries-long continuation of a vital orality.

In the preface Klaus Roth explains the extraordinary nature of the four authors' achievement. Their ambitious work was planned at the end of the 1960s, during the time of Bulgaria's isolation. Though completed in 1985, it was not until 1994 that it became available. Most of the authors' difficulties in classification were caused by the very vitality of the oral tradition, which has shown an amazing independence in its use of topics and themes. The Bulgarian tradition separates and blends motifs and even complete episodes at liberty. The authors managed to deal with the problem through close description and sympathetic understanding. This is the type of case that demonstrates the necessity of revising Aarne and Thompson's type index. The editor praises the exact descriptions and detailed analyses of the 5,500 variants of the 1,600 tale types classified, noting that this work will benefit all comparative folktale research (7).

The authors, who went along with the ticklish task of shortening the 827 pages of the Bulgarian edition to almost half that length, had to sacrifice a considerable amount of material, including the history of the Bulgarian research and the extensive subject catalogue. The final result, however, shows improvements in practical usability, and is better suited to those less acquainted with the history, geography, and culture of Bulgaria. It is an approach worthy of imitation. Since many tale types on the Balkan Peninsula are not seen in the West, the list of tale translations into German and English should be welcome. Even more welcome will be the painstaking explanation of how to use the catalogue. At the end of the book one finds a glossary; rules of pronunciation; information on towns, districts, and departments (including maps); and lists of tale collections, translations, and secondary literature on the Bulgarian folktale. There are even short biographies of the four authors.

All in all the reader will find this a careful, well thought out, and balanced work, in which even the type titles and analyses reflect the rich individuality of this story-telling landscape.

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PAPUA NEW GUINEA

JUILLERAT, BERNARD. *Œdipe chasseur. Une mythologie du sujet en Nouvelle-Guinée* [Oedipe the hunter: A mythology of the subject in New Guinea].

Le fil rouge. Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1991. 292 pages.

Figures, tables, photographs, bibliography. Paper FF188; ISBN 2-13-043407-X; ISSN 0768-5459. (In French)

The most common response from anthropologists regarding the psychoanalytic interpretation of myth is, "It may be so, but it may not be so." Such a more or less negative, noncommittal attitude is frustrating for those who advocate psychoanalytic approaches, and a variety of new theoretical frameworks have been introduced to make such interpretations as plausible as possible. No matter how plausible they become, however, it is quite unlikely that they will obtain general acceptance by anthropologists not of a psychoanalytic persuasion, for psychoanalytic interpretations of myth are in principle ethnographically untestable, even when the myths under study are still "alive." When latent meanings for a myth are discerned in the collective unconscious of a people, the people cannot be said to be "conscious" of these meanings unless they have learned to approach this collective (or their own individual) unconscious. The logical implication of this, I believe, is that the psychoanalytic analyses of myth need not make reference to local interpretations of the myth, as such references would be of little use