

TURKEY

Yurtbaşı, METİN. *A Dictionary of Turkish Proverbs*. Ankara: Turkish Daily News, 1993. xxvii + 654 pages. Paper US\$25.00; ISBN 975-95703-0-0. (Available from: Metin Yurtbaşı, Hv. Joj. A-10/8, Eitmesgut, Ankara, Turkey).

One look at the "New and Reprinted Proverb Collections" list included in *Proverbium: Yearbook of International Proverb Scholarship* since 1984 suffices to show the major advances that paremiography has made during the past decade. Every year an average of about two hundred proverb collections appear worldwide, spanning the spectrum from small popular books to major national collections to important comparative works in two or more languages. As scholarly interests become increasingly global, it is the international collections that are gaining in value not only for paremiologists but for anthropologists, linguists, folklorists, cultural historians, and foreign-language instructors as well. Several years ago the reviewer noted the need for more polyglot collections (MIEDER 1990); Metin Yurtbaşı's massive and impressive *A Dictionary of Turkish Proverbs* is a prime example of such a work.

The title may not do justice to this proverb collection, suggesting as it does that the book is simply a compilation of Turkish proverbs in English translation. This book is, in part, precisely that, but it also contains much other information that makes it unique among modern bilingual proverb collections. While Turkish-English proverb dictionaries have been published before (e.g., DAGPINAR 1982; MUALLIMOGLU 1988) they fade in comparison to Yurtbaşı's gargantuan undertaking. His new collection contains more than five thousand Turkish proverbs with English translations, cultural explanations, and, whenever possible, an equivalent proverb from English. References to major proverb collections are also included. The following example illustrates the author's lexicographical procedure:

Al elmay tas atan cok olur. Many will throw stones at red apples. [There are always those who will be jealous of a good thing and try to do it harm.] ÖAA 184, AVP-1.
It is only at the tree loaded with fruit that people throw stones. Oxford p. 837.

Many entries list several equivalents going back to classical times, not only from the English-language proverb stock but also from that of other languages. Such entries give both the general reader and the scholar an idea of the interrelationship of proverbs on an international scale. Some proverbs have exact parallels in Turkish and English because of a common early source; others exhibit quite different metaphors and structures while retaining the same meaning. In any case, comparative paremiographers will find the rich materials listed in this book most useful.

The collection is organized into 172 categories with such headings as "absence," "adversity," "advice," "age," "agriculture," etc. This lexicographical methodology, along with the humorous illustrations at the head of each section, serves primarily those readers who use this book as an entertaining way of getting to know the wisdom of Turkish proverbs. For the serious student, Yurtbaşı has included voluminous Turkish (411-540) and English (543-654) indices, with the actual proverb collection occupying pages 1-406. The author himself contributes only a one-page "Word to the Reader" at the very beginning of the book, and has enlisted Steven E. Hegaard — former Fulbright scholar in Turkey and current consultant on Western relations with the new Central Asian Turkic republics — to write a comprehensive introduction (i-xvii). Hegaard discusses problems of definition, surveys earlier Turkish proverb collections, and analyzes the structural and linguistic features of Turkish proverbs. Yurtbaşı supplies English (xviii-xix) and Turkish (xx-xxi) lists of the categories and an invaluable bibliography (xii-xxv) of the sources he used. Finally, there is a two-page (xxvi-xxvii) list, "Proverbs about Proverbs," that indicates what people from

various cultures and countries around the world have had to say about the usefulness, importance, and wisdom of proverbs. Altogether this is a most accessible and user-friendly bilingual proverb collection that will serve as a model for others to follow.

People interested in proverbs now have a solid introduction to the rich proverbial wisdom of the Turks. Yurtbaşı spent close to ten years compiling this book, and his labors have not been in vain. Since its publication in 1993 this large and valuable compendium has become the standard work on Turkish proverbs. It has also been translated into German (YURTBAŞI 1993), with an introduction by Professor Wilfried Buch. In view of the importance of the role played by the Turkish people in Germany over the past few decades, this is indeed a welcome development. It will give German readers the opportunity to acquaint themselves with the rich cultural heritage of the Turks, their codes of human behavior, and their worldview. Such knowledge might help bring about a better understanding of this influential minority in modern Germany.

According to Yurtbaşı, other translations are scheduled to appear, and I can well see this book becoming available in French, Japanese, Russian, Spanish, and other languages. By all signs so far this is a successful scholarly work, and one that deserves a place on the shelves of libraries and of all individuals interested in traditional Turkish language, folklore, and culture.

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MINTON, JOHN. "*Big 'Fraid and Little 'Fraid*": *An Afro-American Folktale*. FF Communications No. 253. Helsinki: Suomalainen Tiedekatemia, 1993. 111 pages. Maps, bibliography. Paper n.p.; ISSN 0014–5815; ISBN 951–41–0701–2.

The present work, though written in a difficult style of English and concerned with a narrative type not found in most Asian and European traditions, is nevertheless something that no narrative researcher should ignore. Ambitious and diligently executed, the work contains a rich store of information in an area that has not yet attracted much scholarly interest. I personally see three main reasons why *Big 'Fraid and Little 'Fraid* deserves serious study.

First, Minton forces his readers to come to terms on epistemological grounds with the geographical-historical method and with the two kinds of index based on the Indo-European cultural context: the type index and the motif index. The author points out the problematic circularity inherent in Stith Thompson's method, but also the judiciousness,