

boos, a tendency perhaps further influenced by the Moghuls. The real problem with the *Raja's Magic Clothes* is that Pudukkottai was not all there was to Hindu kingship. A necessary debate about the conclusions that Waghorne draws from Pudukkottai requires both a historical and a comparative look at divine kingship not only in other areas of India but in other areas of the world as well (FEELEY-HARNIK 1985).

Although Waghorne's theologic of ornamentation seems prone to a glitzy exegesis matching that of Pudukkottai's ornamentation, her effort should be applauded for directing further scholarly attention toward aspects of nonorthodox India. Waghorne deserves credit for showing how different religious traditions accommodate each other. The book's pictorial "ornamentation" (which includes two photographs of the author at work) is, moreover, a joy to behold. Perhaps it is fitting that Waghorne's estimation of the works of Müller and Frazer as "decorative things" is so apt for her own work.

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MARZOLPH, ULRICH and AZAR AMIRHOSSEINI-NIHAMMER, editors. *Die Erzählungen der Mašdī Galīn Hānom | Qessehā-ye Mashdī Galīn Khānom* [The tales of Mashdī Galīn Khānom]. Collected by L. P. Elwell-Sutton. Wiesbaden: Dr. Ludwig Reichert Verlag, 1994. Volume 1: texts (Persian, with both Persian and German introductions and bibliographies). 497 (Persian numerals) + 7 (Arabic numerals) pages. Paper DM 98.—; ISBN 3-88226-621-X. Volume 2: Begleitband (supplementary volume). 66 pages. Bibliography, indices, glossary. DM 36.—; ISBN 3-88226-627-9. (In German)

MARZOLPH, ULRICH. *Dāstānhā-ye širin: Fünfzig persische Volksbüchlein aus der zweiten Hälfte des zwanzigsten Jahrhunderts* [Sweet stories: Fifty Persian chapbooks from the second half of the twentieth century]. Abhandlungen für die Kunde des Morgenlandes, Band 50,4. Stuttgart: Franz Steiner Verlag, 1994. 115 pages. Illustrations, bibliography. Paper DM 72.—; ISBN 3-515-06359-5; ISSN 0567-4980. (In German with transcribed Persian original descriptions of each booklet)

Folk narratives of the Islamic Middle East were first studied by Western scholars out of philological or dialectological interest. Then, animated by patriotic sentiments, indigenous scholars joined in collecting and eventually established their own folklore studies. Yet it is only quite recently that this complex field was studied and organized systematically. Both Ellwell-Sutton and Ulrich Marzolph have played a major role in this process.

Marzolph published the two books under review as homages to the late Elwell-Sutton (1912–1984), an eminent and many-sided British Orientalist and one of the pioneers in the field of collecting and studying Persian folktales. The first work contains the original texts of Elwell-Sutton's well-known collection of Persian tales, which were hitherto available only in partial English and German translations. Volume 2 contains a list of his publications on Persian folktales (3–4). Moreover, more than half of the chapbook materials in Marzolph's second work come from Elwell-Sutton's personal collection. Scholars should be grateful to Marzolph for making Elwell-Sutton's rich harvest of Iranian folklore available for future research.

Both works are intended for those with advanced Persian reading ability — that is, Iranists, Persianists, and Iranians themselves. The first volume of the first work contains the original texts of the tales collected by Elwell-Sutton in Tehran from 1943 to 1947. The narrator, Mashdī Galīn Khānom was a woman of seventy who used to work as a nanny and who was renowned for her storytelling ability. Elwell-Sutton recorded 117 tales from her in the Persian vernacular, but he estimated her repertoire to be over a thousand. One more tale, no. 118, came from a friend of Elwell-Sutton's — the journalist Jawāher-Qalam, the very same person who introduced him to Mashdī Galīn Khānom.

This is in many ways a unique collection. For the student of Iranian philology it is the longest vernacular Persian text recorded from a single narrator in Iran. For folklorists it is perhaps the first collection of Iranian tales that names the storyteller (and even puts her in the title). Given the Iranian cultural framework, which always cherished oral transmission and often preferred anonymity even in written works (especially in the humble genre of popular literature),¹ it has only been in fairly recent times that collectors of tales in Iran started to provide data on their informants. The first collector to do so was the late Enjavī-Shīrazī, an outstanding Iranian folktale scholar.

The present collection has a history of its own. ELWELL-SUTTON published a selection of six tales in English translation intended as children's literature (1950). These tales were the result of the abridging and reworking of eleven original texts (MARZOLPH 1985, 144.). This selection was then retranslated into literary Persian by JAWĀHER-QALAM (1963).

Marzolph himself produced a German translation of twenty texts that, with the exception of two, were formerly unpublished (MARZOLPH 1985).

In addition to the texts, volume 1 contains an introduction in German with a short bibliography that focuses on Western studies of Persian folktales. There is also a corresponding introduction in Persian, with a rather modified bibliography that includes relevant Iranian scholarship.

Volume 2, the companion volume, is largely in German. Comprising five parts, it is on the whole useful and informative for the Iranist but perhaps rather frustrating for a folklorist from any other field, since there are no summaries or translations (even of the titles). Such readers would be better advised to consult MARZOLPH 1985 to get a textual foothold.

In volume 2, the reader is advised to focus mainly on the introduction (especially pages 1–5); on part 3 (content analysis, especially paragraphs 1 [repertoire], 3 [on the narrator], and 4 [on tale 118]); and, above all, on part 4.2 (typology of the folktales). This last section contains a classification of the stories according, wherever possible, to the Aarne-Thompson index.

Some tales do not fit into this system, nor can they easily be identified in the framework of Thompson's motif index. A random example is tale 72, "The Police Officer and the Wife of His Subordinate," which starts as a tale of attempted seduction but turns into a horror story. I was able to classify it under Mot. T 320 (Escape from undesired lover), though in the present case this is obviously an understatement. The story centers on the theme of protecting female honor, even at the cost of one's child's life. Honor (Persian *nāmūs*, Arabic *'ird*) is a concept fundamental to the Mediterranean and Middle Eastern worlds, a life-and-death matter that is upheld by religion and tradition. Stories about it abound in modern literature and cinema all over the Middle East. It is curious that the *Motif Index* lists only one reference

to honor per se (W 45). Stories related to female honor end up in the category "Sex" "T", under the subdivisions of "Married Life" or "Chastity."

Tale 23, "The Two Wives of the Rich Merchant," was also left uncategorized. It is in fact the ironical reversal (or parody?) of the moral of J 242–45 (Useful preferred to beautiful). Marzolph views this as an example of "personal reference" (*Persönlicher Bezug*), i.e., self-irony by the narrator (cf. vol. 2, 40), since the term *shalakhte* (denoting female shabbiness and laziness) is used elsewhere by the narrator in reference to herself (vol. 1, 23). This interpretation is, however, based on a misunderstanding of the subtitle, or "moral," of the tale; "Feṭme-ye zahrā betete zwei rak'at für die unordentlichen Frauen" [(Even) Fatime Zahra prays for (instead of) the shabby women]. This is not a personal reference but a popular saying (cf. DEKHODĀ 1959–60, 1,133), though a quite ironic one. It means, roughly, "Even the saints help the unworthy (Dekhoda offers another variant: "God helps the lazy"). "Feṭme-ye zahrā" is the transcribed Persian spelling of the name of Fatime, the daughter of the Prophet Mohammad, the perfect obedient woman ideal of Islam. "Zahrā," "The Radiant," is her most popular honorific and ought to be capitalized inside a translated sentence, like the Virgin in the title of her Christian archetype.

All in all, though, the editor(s) made a good effort to identify proverbs and popular sayings (cf. vol. 2., chapter 2.2.5.4. and 2.2.5.5), and did a wonderful job of elucidating many of the linguistical and philological aspects of the published texts. Indeed, the philological work occupied the major part of the project, and is offered in a humble and almost self-denying way for which we must all be grateful. The narrative side, however, awaits further exploration.

The second volume, *Dastanha-ye-šīrīn*, is important more for its bibliographical information. It describes 104 Persian chapbooks originally in the private collections of the three Iranists: Elwell-Sutton (54 books), Hans Müller (12 books), and Marzolph (38 books). These collections are quite recent, with publication dates (often not given, only guessed) ranging from 1947 to 1989. Their contents are, of course, much older. Some are in verse, but most seem to be in prose. They were printed by special publishers, located mostly in the traditional bazaar area of Tehran. Their scholarly collectors carefully selected them for their narrative value from among the multitude of other popular literature (18–21).

The genres are varied, but can be broadly categorized as follows. 1) Heroic romances of protagonists both pre-Islamic (Rustam, Alexander, Bahrām Gūr) and Islamic (Ḥamza, 'Alī); also the later Safavid and post-Safavid romances of Ḥoseyn the Kurd, Amīr Arslān, and the like. 2) Romances of famous lovers (Leilī and Majnūn, Ḥosrao and Šīrīn). 3) Fantastic adventure stories and tales (reminiscent of the *Thousand and One Nights*). 4) Hagiographies, i.e., the popular common Islamic *Lives of the Prophets* and Shia martyrologies like the *Mukhtār-nāme*. 5) Collections of anecdotes, parables, and jests, well represented by the large assortment of "Nasreddiniana" from the author's personal collection.

The author uses the word *dāstān* to refer to all of these categories, but actually *dāstān* refers more specifically to a longer story of epic character or a romance (whose more traditional term is *nāme*). The word *qeṣse* too is traditionally used for romances, but nowadays is increasingly applied to folktales (also *afsāne*, "legend"). A more generic term is *hekāyat* (short story), which is applied to love stories, tales, anecdotes, and jests. For the last of these there is also the more specific term *laṭīfe*.

Many of the heroic and love romances are direct chapbook derivations of early medieval "high literature": the classical works of Firdausī, Niẓāmī, Jāmī, and other famous authors (who of course also depended much on oral tradition).

These various genres of stories are located on the borderline between folklore and literature. The division is all the more blurred because they are often encountered in oral tradition and are included in many folktale collections. Many of the stories (including such typical Iranian examples as the romances of Rustam and Bahrām Gūr) spread all over the Middle East, Central Asia, and India, and were translated into many local languages like Turkish, Arab, and Urdu, where they formed an important part of the respective oral traditions.

The booklets, intended as inexpensive domestic entertainment, are becoming increasingly scarce due to competition from television and other modern forms of amusement, and to recent restrictions on “frivolous” and irreligious themes (many of the books are romances, heroic narratives starring non-Islamic personages, or, worst of all, jestbooks). They will be the next form of popular amusement to disappear, following on the heels of the coffeehouse storyteller (*naqqāl*).

After a richly documented introduction (1–27), the book takes up the task of cataloguing the booklets. They are numbered with Arab numerals, then arranged into fifty head titles that are, in turn, put into alphabetical order and numbered with Roman numerals. The bibliographical and typological data of the themes are provided after each heading whenever possible. Individual copies are also indicated by their first and last lines in transcribed Persian.

Since the titles are not all self-evident, and since some are unfamiliar even to the specialist, a brief outline of the stories would have been very welcome. To characterize the books by their first and last line provides little hint of the context, since these lines are always quite formulaic. It is of help only in distinguishing one variant copy from another. (I wonder how personages from themes VII and XVIII [Malek Jamshīd and Malek Bahman] ended up in the opening and closing lines of theme XXVII: Ḥosrou-e šīrīn, no. 54 and no. 55. Although chapbooks are not shy about pairing together heroes of different traditions, some explanation would nevertheless have been welcome.)

It would be very helpful if these and similar texts were published in either the original or in translation (or if at least their summaries and comprehensive bibliographies were made available). This would greatly aid future comparative research in narrative literature and promote understanding of the complex phenomenon of Middle Eastern popular literature.

NOTE

1. Women narrators in particular would often not consent to disclose their identity (MILLS 1990). Incidentally, there has always been much mystery and mystification surrounding “women folklore” in the segregated milieu of the Middle East. Women were suspected — both seriously and jokingly — of creating and transmitting their own traditions on how to outwit and dominate men. It would be interesting to study of Mashdī Galīn Khānom’s repertoire from this perspective. Besides the usual stereotyped stories on the wiles of women (e.g., no. 36–38: Type 1741), there are many interesting and often very realistic stories with an insider’s point of view. Tale no. 65, for example, has so many intimate details that it does not seem like a conventional narrative, but rather reads like a personal life history.

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