are thanked in the preface), and more. Structure and History in Greek Mythology and Ritual is a stimulating book for folklorists interested in myth, ritual, festivals, or semiotics.


Reviewed by Eren Giray-Saul

Folktales of Egypt, the long awaited addition to the Folktales of the World Series, is especially welcomed by scholars interested in a relatively neglected area of folklore scholarship: the Middle East. Dr. El-Shamy offers a fine presentation of the living folk narrative tradition in Egypt, fourteen years after the first mention of such a volume with the general editor of the Series. The author informs us that paucity of accurate texts available at the time, and his subsequent decision to use his own field data for the volume, caused the delay. The opportunity for such a compilation arose with the author's appointment in 1968 to the Center for Folklore in the Ministry of Culture in Cairo which sponsored field trips to collect the material. As a result, the volume is comprised of seventy texts chosen from among eight hundred narrative texts the author and his colleagues collected between 1968 and 1972.

The tales are taken from both rural and urban settings, and from both elite/intellectual and peasant or nomadic informants. The prevalence of "urban folklore" has long been established in American folklore scholarship, but Middle Eastern specialists will understand the need to investigate urban folklore in a culture area where the elite have often systematically denied the importance of a "folk culture." While many countries in Europe have expedited their folk narrative research through numerous archives since the late nineteenth century, Middle Eastern folk literature archives are rare and recent. El-Shamy's first
task in assembling the texts for this volume was the initiation of a central archive for the collections and the assignment of international tale type numbers to the texts when possible.

El-Shamy's introduction gives valuable information on the status of narration in Egypt by offering views on the attitudes of those who bear the tales. At times these views are flavored by El-Shamy's cognitive behavioral approach to folklore. Especially notable is the difference between written and oral tradition which the author states is delineated in the mind of the bearers because written and oral narratives belong to "separate cognitive systems." The author grants that the line between the two traditions is not always clear—a predicament that has plagued folkloristic analyses for generations. The interrelation between the written and oral traditions is one which requires thorough investigation. If one wishes to analyze the delicate interplay of the two traditions in the Middle East, an historical perspective would probably add to our understanding.

Folktales of Egypt includes contextual information to supplement the texts. The author's method of disclosing attitudes, biases, values—in short, what the author calls the "affective elements"—is relevant and valuable. In addition, El-Shamy gives a folk classification of the tales in which four broad categories of prose narrative are recognized: serious, non-serious, humorous, and undelineated narrative talk corresponding to memorates or local belief legends. The basis for the classification is stated as the "cognitive process of grouping" which is plausible. Of course, emic categorizations do not always correspond to etic ones, and the importance of recognizing them in oral oral literary criticism cannot be overstated. The assignment of one of these folk categories to each tale would have been welcome in the helpful notes which the author provides before each tale. The notes include standard contextual information such as the social background of the informant, education, the place and time the tale was learned, as well as the attitudes of the narrators toward the tale and storytelling in general. The sum of these notes reveals the general status of storytelling in Egyptian society.
The extensive annotation for each tale gives the Aarne-Thompson tale type(s), a breakdown of the tales into motifs, and the distribution of the tale in the Middle East, Europe, and Sub-Saharan Africa using a large number of Arabic, English, French, and German collections. In a short introductory note to his annotations, the author speaks of the difficulty of assigning the Aarne-Thompson tale types to Egyptian narratives. As in Europe, conglomerates are found to occur, showing the need to develop culturally specific and perhaps national type indices to complement the international one. The Eberhard and Boratav Typen Türkischen Volksmärchen, for example, treats Turkish tales as separate from the Aarne-Thompson classification. It would have been useful to compare the types in this work with the Egyptian tales since the narrative traditions of Egypt and Turkey have many elements in common, as seen in the parallels of anecdotes about the evil eye and the Goha or Hoca Cycle of trickster tales.

The tale texts in the volume are arranged into eight sections: fantasy tales; realistic and philosophical tales; tales based on religious themes; etiological belief narrations; saints and culture heroes; local belief legends and memorates; animal and formula tales; humorous narratives and jokes. Most of the narratives do not have fixed titles in the minds of the folk. If, however, the title in the text is one given by the informant, the author has marked it with an asterisk to distinguish it from titles he suggests. Very few grammatical changes have been made in the texts. Changes which the author has made are attributed, he states, to the confusion they may cause the reader: for example, inconsistencies in verb tenses within a sentence. One productive addition the author makes is the indication of paralinguistic devices employed by the narrators, such as dramatic pauses. El-Shamy is careful to include each and every remark in the transcription, even though many narrators are prone to superfluous comments that have nothing to do with the narrative content. The indices and extensive bibliography are informative, and a general index at the end provides references to key words, terms, and names.

In his foreward, Dr. Dorson gives a very good account of Edward William Lane's An Account of the Manners and
Customs of the Modern Egyptians, first published in 1836. The summary provides a background in Egyptian culture for those who are less familiar with Egypt's social and artistic environment.

Hasan El-Shamy's Folktales of Egypt stands as a landmark achievement in the field of the folktale. Egypt represents a point of cardinal importance for the study of folk narrative, standing at the crossroads between the Middle East and Africa. The very first written records considered in folk narrative research are found in Egypt. This special position has dissuaded many efforts in dealing with such a vast and pervasive culture, leaving a significant gap. This gap has now been commendably narrowed with Folktales of Egypt.


Reviewed by Gary Stanton

Learning the Fiddler's Ways is an interesting, and in some ways exciting, book for a folklorist. The book represents neither a popular, how-to-fiddle guide, nor a tune source book. Even its title informs us that the work will not be a scholar's treatise on traditional fiddling. Guntharp weaves his narrative from reports of how fiddlers learn to play, from his personal account of learning to play the fiddle, and from his quest with Robert Doyle for fiddlers in the Buffalo Valley region of central Pennsylvania. The important contribution of folklore, giving vocabulary and historical depth to his work, is especially evident. Samuel Bayard, whose Hill Country Tunes is one of the earliest works in folklore on traditional instrumental music in America, was the mentor for this project, and has written the foreword.

Guntharp guilelessly descends into a simultaneous discussion of how fiddle players learn to play and, having learned, how they do play. He postulates (not unexpectedly)