

# Folklore in Israel

Autor(en): **Ben-Amos, Dan**

Objekttyp: **Article**

Zeitschrift: **Schweizerisches Archiv für Volkskunde = Archives suisses des traditions populaires**

Band (Jahr): **59 (1963)**

Heft 1-2

PDF erstellt am: **17.07.2024**

Persistenter Link: <https://doi.org/10.5169/seals-115803>

## **Nutzungsbedingungen**

Die ETH-Bibliothek ist Anbieterin der digitalisierten Zeitschriften. Sie besitzt keine Urheberrechte an den Inhalten der Zeitschriften. Die Rechte liegen in der Regel bei den Herausgebern.

Die auf der Plattform e-periodica veröffentlichten Dokumente stehen für nicht-kommerzielle Zwecke in Lehre und Forschung sowie für die private Nutzung frei zur Verfügung. Einzelne Dateien oder Ausdrucke aus diesem Angebot können zusammen mit diesen Nutzungsbedingungen und den korrekten Herkunftsbezeichnungen weitergegeben werden.

Das Veröffentlichen von Bildern in Print- und Online-Publikationen ist nur mit vorheriger Genehmigung der Rechteinhaber erlaubt. Die systematische Speicherung von Teilen des elektronischen Angebots auf anderen Servern bedarf ebenfalls des schriftlichen Einverständnisses der Rechteinhaber.

## **Haftungsausschluss**

Alle Angaben erfolgen ohne Gewähr für Vollständigkeit oder Richtigkeit. Es wird keine Haftung übernommen für Schäden durch die Verwendung von Informationen aus diesem Online-Angebot oder durch das Fehlen von Informationen. Dies gilt auch für Inhalte Dritter, die über dieses Angebot zugänglich sind.

## Folklore in Israel

By *Dan Ben-Amos*, Bloomington, Ind., U.S.A.

A short survey of the titles of books published in the last fifteen years about ethnological problems in Israel will immediately reveal the dynamic nature of the demographic changes and cultural conflicts occurring simultaneously with the condensation of geographically remote cultures into a relatively small area<sup>1</sup>. This drastic transformation of the Palestinian ethnic scene started with the Jewish immigration in the eighties of the last century and reached its peak in the fifties of the present century<sup>2</sup>. Remote ethnic groups were confronted not only with each other, but with the local population and its folklore as well. Thus, there is a three-dimensional cultural contact and diffusion of folkloric elements which takes place: within the immigrant groups themselves and between each one and the local Moslem, Christian, and Jewish populations. Israel of today is by no means an integrated cultural and geographic unit, and in terms of folklore, we rather can conceive of the "dual regionality" of each ethnic group: that of the country of origin and that which is acquired through acculturation and establishment in a new setting.

Since there is a greater continuity over centuries of artifacts and mentifacts among the Oriental ethnic groups than among the Euro-

---

<sup>1</sup> Among these books are, first of all, those dealing with problems of immigration and its absorption like Samuel N. Eisenstadt, *The Absorption of Immigrants: a Comparative Study Based Mainly on the Jewish Community in Palestine and the State of Israel* (London 1954); *Between Past and Future: Essays and Studies on Aspects of Immigrant Absorption in Israel*, ed. Carl Frankenstein (Jerusalem 1953); Moshe Sicron, *Immigration to Israel, 1948-1953* (Jerusalem, 1957); secondly, books which stress the cultural aspect of the problem, like Raphael Patai, *On Culture Contact and Its Working in Modern Palestine* (Menasha, Wisconsin, 1947 = Memoir Series of the American Anthropological Association, 47) written on the cultural situation in Palestine prior to the establishment of the State of Israel and R. Patai, *Israel Between East and West* (Philadelphia, 1953) describing the demographic mosaic like Ruth Grube, *Israel Today, Land of Many Nations* (New York, 1958), Itzhak Ben-Zvi, *The Exiled and The Redeemed* (Philadelphia, 1957), Abraham Shumski, *The Clash of Cultures in Israel* (New York 1955). No bibliographical statistical conclusion is meant to be drawn about the preponderance of these books in relation to others published in this given period in Israel.

<sup>2</sup> In 1882, the date when modern resettlement began, the Jewish population in Palestine numbered 24,000. Until 1914 the number grew to 85,000, and during the years of British rule, 1919-1948, about 452,000 Jews entered the country, bringing the sum total to 650,000, including natural increase. At the beginning of 1962, the total was 2,232,300 people of which there were 172,000 Moslems, 52,000 Christians, and 24,000 Druze. In addition, 37% of the Jewish population was born in the country, 35% came from Europe, America, and Oceania, 16% from Asia and 12% from Africa. These figures are quoted from *Facts About Israel, 1962*, Publication of the Ministry for Foreign Affairs, Information Department.

pean<sup>3</sup>, there is a confrontation of cultures in terms of time as well as of space. Past and present are not successive and chronological but co-existing tenses confronting each other not only within each of the groups but in the intercultural contact. However, the variety of cultures find a common ground by their having been minority groups in their countries of origin. Moreover, all of them preserve, to a certain extent, folkloristic elements which were part of their culture in Palestine before the dispersion<sup>4</sup>.

In a very broad and general way it is possible to distinguish imitation motivated by exoticism as the main trend in what we may call the mutual interchange of folkloristic elements. To avoid the conception of a unilinear vertical movement of folklore items implied in the notion of "gesunkenes Kulturgut" we may view this interchange as an "imitation system" that is to say, a multilinear transmission of folklore<sup>5</sup>. In the Israeli cultural situation, exoticism, "the fascination of the unfamiliar"<sup>6</sup> is a driving force<sup>7</sup>. It has functioned, first of all, to widen the scope of the folklore of the different ethnic groups. And, secondly, it has motivated the European interest in studying elements of Near Eastern and Jewish populations in Palestine, which seemed to be the most preserving of old tradition before they become acculturated<sup>8</sup>. It is possible to point out three main trends in folklore research in Israel, and formerly in Palestine, each of which may have dominated at one period or another; however, any chronological or personal division will be inevitably misleading, since these studies overlap purely chronological classification<sup>9</sup>:

1. the study of Palestinian folklore, mainly but not exclusively that of the Arabs by European scholars,

<sup>3</sup> See Raphael Patai, *The Middle East as a Culture Area*, in: *The Middle East Journal* 6: 1 (Winter, 1952) 15-21.

<sup>4</sup> For example, Elijah the prophet has been one of the main folk miracle workers and heroes from ancient times, through different diasporas. See Louis Ginzberg, *The Legends of the Jews* (Philadelphia, 1909-38), Vol. 4, 193-238; James E. Hanauer, *Folk-lore of the Holy Land* (London, 1907) 55-58; M. Gaster (ed.), *Ma'aseh Book*, 2 vols. (Philadelphia, 1934) 313-316. Now he is the most popular hero in the tales recorded in IFA (Israel Folklore Archives), collected from immigrants from different countries.

<sup>5</sup> Hermann Bausinger, *Volkskultur in der technischen Welt* (Stuttgart, 1961) 144-152.

<sup>6</sup> This is the definition found in *Webster's New World Dictionary of the American Language*.

<sup>7</sup> See Bausinger (as note 5) 75-85. Exoticism affects other aspects of life in Israel, as well. On its role in literature see Simon Halkin, *Modern Hebrew Literature* (New York, 1950) 111-130.

<sup>8</sup> See Raphael Patai, *Problems and Tasks of Jewish Folklore and Ethnography*, in: *Journal of American Folklore* 59, nr. 231 (1946) 34. This approach essentially persisted till today, see Dov Noy, *The First Thousand Folktales in the Israeli Folktale Archives*, in *Fabula* 4 (1961) 110.

<sup>9</sup> I am excluding research on old written sources which contain folkloristic material, a study which has its own specific traditions and problems.

2. the study of Jewish Oriental and Sephardic folklore by Jewish European scholars,
3. the study of Jewish European and Oriental folklore by professional and skilled amateur folklorists who investigate their own ethnic traditions.

The turn of the century marks the emergence of folklore collecting in Palestine. On the trail of Palestinian Arabic dialects, Oriental linguists, rather common initiators of folklore collecting, began to transcribe folktales, folksongs and proverbs and, although doing it primarily for linguistic purposes, could not avoid realizing the value of their material for folklore studies. In most cases, they were European scholars, like Enno Littmann<sup>10</sup>, Gustaf H. Dalman<sup>11</sup>, and Hans Schmidt<sup>12</sup> who came to the Near East for research purposes and did their work in Palestine in the first decade of our century. All three of them collected material from the local Arabs. On the other hand, E. J. Hanauer was interested in the variety of religious and ethnic groups in Palestine. Although he did not reproduce the tales he heard literally, as did the above-mentioned scholars, he gives in his book an overall view of Palestinian folklore, including that of Moslems, Christians, and Jews<sup>13</sup>. This trend of studying local Palestinian folklore was not confined to that period alone. In 1925–26 and 1928–29 the Finnish scholar Aapeli Saarisalo, who was engaged in archeological research in the Galilee, collected folksongs from the Druze of the village of el-biqe'a (Peki'in in Hebrew)<sup>14</sup>. At a later period, Martin Thilo collected Palestinian Arab proverbs<sup>15</sup> and Leo Haefli tried to get a better insight into the Arab folk life through their witty sayings<sup>16</sup>.

<sup>10</sup> He was a member of the American Archaeological Expedition to Syria in 1899–1900 and collected tales in Jerusalemian Arabic dialects, primarily from one woman. The text, first published as *Modern Arabic Tales* (Leyden, 1905), for linguistic purposes, was translated 52 years later as *Arabische Märchen* (Leipzig, 1957), annotated with reference to standard folklore works.

<sup>11</sup> He did his field work in Palestine from March 1899 until June 1900. The folksongs collected were published in *Palästinischer Diwan* (Leipzig, 1901) and the research on folk life and manners in *Arbeit und Sitte in Palästina*, 5 vols. (Gütersloh, 1928–1935).

<sup>12</sup> He collected folk prose narratives in the winter of 1910–1911 in the village of Bir-Zet near Jerusalem and published them, with the collaboration of P. Kahle as *Volkserzählungen aus Palästina*, 2 vols (Göttingen, 1918–1930).

<sup>13</sup> J. E. Hanauer, *Folk-Lore of the Holy Land* (London, 1907).

<sup>14</sup> *Songs of the Druze* (Helsinki, 1932). At the time of collection, there were in this village, besides the Druze, fifty Jewish peasants. In a forthcoming collection of *Folktales from Israel*, edited by Dov Noy (see footnote 35) is included a tale about a righteous Jewish inhabitant of that village. There are about 18 Druze villages in Israel, most of them in the Upper Galilee and a few in the Carmel Mountains.

<sup>15</sup> *Fünftausend Sprichwörter aus Palästina* (Berlin, 1937).

<sup>16</sup> *Spruchweisheit und Volksleben in Palästina* (Luzern, 1939).

The foundation of *The Palestine Oriental Society* in 1920, initiated by the American Assyriologist Albert T. Clay, and the publication of its journal<sup>17</sup>, promoted research in local Palestinian folklore on the part of local scholars. The articles by Taufik Canaan, Stephan H. Stephan, and Omar Barghuthi<sup>18</sup> concentrate on both material and verbal local folklore and, in addition, other scholars refer frequently to folkloristic problems. The vital interest in local folklore which was prevalent in Palestine at the time, motivated by awareness of the impact of Western culture on the local population, is brought out by the fact that the first reprint series inaugurated by the Society was *The Folklore Reprint Series*.

In the thirties we can distinguish a shift of interest in folklore and ethnology scholarship. The Oriental Jews who had already begun to form their own communities in Palestine fascinated the Jewish European scholars as much as the local Arabs had at earlier periods. The Kurdistan and Yemenite Jews who had lived for many years in relative isolation became the subjects of ethnographic monographs based on material collected in their native countries as well as in Palestine by E. Brauer and S.D.F. Goitein<sup>19</sup>. The Jewish communities in North Africa were the subject of a thorough research work by N. Slouschz<sup>20</sup>. We have to bear in mind that these studies were not isolated phenomena. The contrary is true. A flourishing literature of articles in daily newspapers as well as scientific journals accompanied them.

At the same time, the Jewish European folkloristic movement was transferred to Palestine. Since the second half of the 19th century, Jewish Eastern European life underwent a transitional process of westernization and modernization brought about in part through immigration to America and Western Europe<sup>21</sup>. Awareness of this cultural crisis gave rise to a Jewish folklore movement in which the central figures were Y. L. Peretz, a writer who leaned strongly on folk

<sup>17</sup> *The Journal of the Palestine Oriental Society*, 1920-38.

<sup>18</sup> Taufik Cannan, *Haunted Springs and Water Demons in Palestine* (Jerusalem, 1922); S. H. Stephens, *Modern Palestinian Parallels to the Song of Songs* (Jerusalem, 1922), and Omar Barghuthi, *Judicial Courts among the Bedouin of Palestine* (Jerusalem, 1922).

<sup>19</sup> S. D. F. Goitein, *Jemenica: Sprichwörter und Redensarten aus Zentral Yemen mit zahlreichen Sach- und Wörterläuterungen* (Leipzig, 1934); Erich Brauer, *Ethnologie der jemenitischen Juden* (Heidelberg, 1934); Erich Brauer, *The Jews of Kurdistan*, ed. and trans. by Raphael Patai (Jerusalem, 1948). A collection of orally-transmitted epics was published by J. J. Rivlin, *The Epics of the Kurdistan Jews* (Jerusalem, 1959).

<sup>20</sup> *Travels in North Africa* (Philadelphia, 1927).

<sup>21</sup> See Arthur Ruppin, *Die Juden der Gegenwart, eine socialwissenschaftliche Studie* (Berlin, 1904).

traditions and inspired a group of collectors, among them, his disciple Y. L. Cahan (Kahan), and Sh. Anski<sup>22</sup>. The central figure in Western Europe was Max Grunwald<sup>23</sup>. Transferred to Israel, this movement gave rise to the third trend of folklore research, that is to say, scholars who studied their own ethnic tradition. In the forties, this movement became even stronger. The physical extermination of Jewish life made the Eastern European folk tradition a subject of collecting, memoirs, and writings. At that time the idea that folk tradition will die out became more than an academic hypothesis. It was a tragic reality. The publication of *Reshumot* (New Series)<sup>24</sup>, a collection devoted to memoirs, folklore and ethnology in 1946, edited by Yom-Tov Lewinski and Dov Shtok (Sadan) was in line with this tendency in folklore studies. The editorial work by both Dov Shtok (Sadan) and Yom-Tov Lewinski is not their only contribution to the study of Jewish European folklore. Both of them have published numerous articles in newspapers and journals in this field. Yom-Tov Lewinski, now the head of the *Society for Jewish Folklore and Ethnology* has always been one of the main promoters of folklore studies in Israel. In the same decade the Jewish folklorists in Israel began to form their organization. In 1942 *The Society for Folklore and Ethnology* was founded with N. Slouschz as president, and its special folklore section was headed by Yom-Tov Lewinski. In 1944 Raphael Patai and J. J. Rivlin founded the *Palestine Institute of Folklore and Ethnology*, which aimed mainly at research on the Oriental Jewish ethnic groups and communities<sup>25</sup>, since they are the equivalent in the Palestinian Jewish society to the European peasantry. The Institute publication *Edoth*<sup>26</sup> contains valuable material for the study of Oriental and Sephardic ethnic groups.

During the same period folk music research was conducted in Palestine, emphasizing heavily the music of the Oriental ethnic groups. The initiator of this study was A. Z. Idelsohn, a Jewish European musicologist who was already familiar with the melodies of his country of origin and during his stay in Palestine (1906–1922)

<sup>22</sup> Most of their works were published in Yiddish. For bibliographical references see Uriel and Beatrice Weinreich, *Yiddish Language and Folklore* (The Hague, 1959).

<sup>23</sup> Editor of *Mitteilungen zur jüdischen Volkskunde*, 32 vols., 1898–1929.

<sup>24</sup> The first series was *Reshumot, Collection of Jewish Memoirs Ethnography, and Folklore*, 6 vols. (Odessa, 1914–1920); Vols. 1–3 ed. A. Druyanov; Vol. 4, ed. H. N. Bialik, A. Druyanov, Y. H. Ravinski; Vols. 5–6, eds. H. N. Bialik and Y. H. Ravinski.

<sup>25</sup> For a statement concerning this approach see R. Patai (as note 8).

<sup>26</sup> *Edoth* ("communities"), is a quarterly for Folklore and Ethnology edited by Raphael Patai and Joseph J. Rivlin. 3 vols. 1945–48. (In Hebrew with English synopses).



explored the music of the Orient, both Arabic and Jewish, collecting a great amount of melodies and trying to establish the link between early Christian chants and ancient Jewish liturgy on the basis of his findings<sup>27</sup>. In 1935 the musicologist Robert Lachman came to Palestine. He already was known in Germany as one of the experts in this field, and upon immigrating to Palestine, he built up the *Archives for Oriental Music* at the Hebrew University<sup>28</sup>. After his death in 1939 recordings from Oriental Jews stopped and were not resumed until 1947 by Edith Gerson-Kiwi under the patronage of the *Palestine Institute for Folklore and Ethnology*. In 1950 the *Institute for Oriental Jewish Music*, directed by E. Gerson-Kiwi was transferred to the Ministry of Education and in 1953 was incorporated into the Hebrew University School of Oriental Studies. Five thousand new recordings were made in that period<sup>29</sup>. Although the study of Oriental Jewish music out-balanced that of the Eastern European tradition, the latter was not neglected. For example, Joachim Stutchevski, descendent of a family of folk musicians and a prominent Israeli cellist, has studied the folk music traditions of European Jewry mainly from his personal contact with the material<sup>30</sup>.

With the establishment of the State of Israel (1948) and the increased flow of immigration to the country, the *Hebrew Society for Folklore and Ethnology* faced problems with which it was unprepared to cope. Although in January 1948 *Yeda-'Am*, the Journal of the Hebrew Folklore Society, was published, edited by Yom-Tov Lewinski<sup>31</sup>, and in October 19, 1948, the first meeting of the society members from all over the country took place in Tiberias, nevertheless, the tools for modern research and collecting were not yet developed. But in 1955-56, Dov Noy initiated the Israeli branch of the *Society for Folk Narrative Research* and the *Israeli Folktale Archives* (IFA), based on modern

---

<sup>27</sup> See Abraham Zevi Idelsohn, *Thesaurus of Hebrew Oriental Melodies*, 10 vols. (Leipzig, 1914-1932) and *Jewish Music in its Historical Development* (New York, 1929).

<sup>28</sup> See Robert Lachmann, *Jewish Cantillation and Song in the Isle of Djerba* (Jerusalem, 1940). A bibliography of all his works is included.

<sup>29</sup> Edith Gerson-Kiwi, *Musicology in Israel*, in: *Acta Musicologica* 30: 1-2 (1958) 17-25. The article contains further bibliographical references.

<sup>30</sup> Recently he published two books in Hebrew: *Musical Folklore of East European Jewry* (Tel-Aviv, 1958) and *Jewish Folk Minstrels* (Jerusalem, 1961).

<sup>31</sup> The first issue was edited by Yom-Tov Lewinski and G. Karsel. The journal is published irregularly, and has, so far, twenty-six issues.

principles of classification and research<sup>32</sup>. In the past seven years more than 5000 tales were recorded. In the current year, the flow of tales to the *Israeli Folktale Archive* amounts to 70 to 100 items per month. More than 90 collectors are involved in this collecting project, doing their work on a voluntary basis. Prizes in the form of books are distributed annually to the best collectors and informants, and a weekly publication of one of the recently collected tales along with its recording data in two of the daily newspapers (*Omer* and *Herut*) are the encouraging rewards for the devoted collectors. A successful experiment conducted in a school in the south of Israel involved using children to record tales from their parents. Because of the relatively short distances between places, the collectors are not necessarily members of the same community as their informants, but when they are, they usually occupy educational or public positions in their villages and towns. Collectors are not necessarily from the same ethnic group as their informants<sup>33</sup>. The contrary is more frequently the case. The figures given by Dov Noy in *Fabula*<sup>33a</sup> concerning the first thousand tales collected indicate that, whereas there is one Eastern European informant, there are ten Eastern European collectors. The proportion has not changed radically since that time. Collecting is done among the Palestinian Arabs and Druze as well; however, at the present, this is being done not by Europeans but by local Arabs who look for the traditions which are prevalent and transmitted among the people in their own villages. Of course, Palestinian Jews have been collected from as well. Last year, for example, over 200 tales were recorded by Heda Jason and Rachel Sari from Shmuel Rikanti, a native of the Old City of Jerusalem. In IFA there are tales collected from immigrants from more than 30 Asian and European countries, of which the Eastern European, Yemenite, Iraqi, and Sephardic Palestinian Jews are the major groups. The tales are classified according to

---

<sup>32</sup> The data concerning current folklore activities in Israel are taken in the main from Dov Noy, *Folklore in Israel—Collecting, Application, Research*, in: *Cultural Absorption of the New Immigration: Survey of the Activities and Conclusions*, ed. Zvi Rotem (Jerusalem, 1962) and *The First Thousand Folktales in Israel in Israel Folktale Archives*, in: *Fabula* 4 (1961) 99–110, and *Archiving and Presenting Folk Literature in an Ethnological Museum*, in: *Journal of American Folklore* 75, nr. 295 (1962) 23–28 and minutes of the meetings of the Section for Folk Narrative Research from June 14, 1962 and from the minutes of the annual meeting of Israeli collectors, May 30, 1962.

<sup>33</sup> For description of such a collecting situation see Elisheva Schoenfeld, *Jüdisch-orientalische Märchenerzähler in Israel*, in: *Internationaler Kongress der Volkserzählforscher in Kiel und Kopenhagen* (Berlin, 1961) 385–390.

<sup>33a</sup> See footnote 32.



Aarne-Thompson Type Index and W. Eberhard and P. N. Boratav *Typen türkischer Volksmärchen* (Wiesbaden, 1953). The text of the tales is mostly in Hebrew, however, English translation, done on request by Mrs. Gene Baharav, is available for research purposes. Several Hebrew collections of tales from IFA have been published already<sup>34</sup> and another two, in English and in German, are due for publication next spring<sup>35</sup>.

The primary project of the Israeli folklorist now is to collect the material available before the traditions brought by the newcomers to Israel are lost in the process of acculturation, and to archive and classify it to provide the foundation for scholarly research. Although folktale collecting is more developed and well-organized than other fields of folklore research<sup>36</sup>, the same plan is being formulated for riddles and proverbs as well as beliefs and customs, the latter in collaboration with the Department for Religious Culture in the Ministry of Culture and Education, directed by Yona Ben-Sasson. On the trail of customs and ceremonies, Israeli folklorists found the Israeli National Broadcasting Service (Kol Israel) a useful collaborator. A team composed of professional broadcasters and folklorists goes out to the field and while the collectors enjoy broadcasting service facilities, the radio program is done with scientific supervision.

The *Hebrew Songs Archive* is another project undertaken by the *Ethnological Museum and Folklore Archives*. Meir Noy established this archive which consists of printed material. Each song is classified in the main file alphabetically according to its first line, and in secondary files according to the composers, subjects, and musical beginnings<sup>37</sup>. By the end of May 1962 the main file consisted of more than 11,600 cards (each printed version of a song has a separate card). The Hebrew song as a folksong is a rather complex phenomenon, the discussion of which is out of the scope of this paper; however, a file of printed versions will have a significant role in the future of folksong research when Hebrew Israeli songs will turn up in the field collections. Collecting is the primary object of the folk music scholars as well. Johana Spector, whose collection done previously was transferred to the

<sup>34</sup> Dov Noy, *The Diaspora and the Land of Israel* (Jerusalem, 1959), reviewed by Heda Jason in *Fabula* 4 (1961) 199 and Eliyahu Agasi, *Chuscham Mibaghdad* (Tel Aviv, 1960) reviewed by Dov Noy in *Fabula* 4 (1961) 274.

<sup>35</sup> *Folktales from Israel*, ed. Dov Noy and *Yefet Schwili erzählt*, eds. Dov Noy and Heda Jason. For other books in preparation see Dov Noy in *Fabula* 4 (1961) 108.

<sup>36</sup> Some of the material collected has been incorporated into research work, for example, Haim Schwarzbaum, *The Jewish and Moslem versions of some Theodicy Legends*, in: *Fabula* 3 (1960) 119-169.

<sup>37</sup> Meir Noy, *Card-Index of Hebrew Songs*, in: *Tatzlil* 1 (December, 1960) 25-27.

Hebrew University library, continues her recording mainly among the Oriental Jews. *The Institute for Religious Music Research*<sup>38</sup>, directed by Avigdor Herzog, transcribes and collects Oriental Jewish religious music, which is closely related to folk music. A wealth of material is stored in the *Institute for Oriental Jewish Music*, directed by Edith Gerson-Kiwi. Collecting and recording of folk speech and dialects is done by Shlomo Morag, the director of the *Institute for Oriental Jewish Dialects*.

A collection of documents dealing with the ethnohistory of the Oriental Jewish communities is done by the *Ben-Zvi Institute for Research on Jewish Communities in the Middle East*. Although this institute is not concerned with folklore per se, the documents stored in its archives and library and its publications have a wealth of information with direct bearing on folklore<sup>39</sup>. Although collecting and establishing scientific modern international methods for folklore research in Israel is the primary purpose of the folklorists of the country, they try to establish folklore research in Israel on an international scale. In September 1959 the First International Congress for Jewish Folklore Research met in Tel Aviv, Israel. The participants of this congress, scholars from many countries, founded the *World Center for Jewish Folklore Research* whose center is in Israel. Two years later, in March of 1961, the Second International Congress was held in Haifa, Israel, and devoted its discussions to the subject "Elijah the Prophet in Folklore, Traditions, and Folk-life". Most of the folklore research in Israel is done outside of the academic curriculum. At the Hebrew University there is not yet a folklore program; nevertheless, Dov Noy offers folklore courses in different related departments—Hebrew Literature, Yiddish, and Comparative Literature.

Material culture objects and folk art are collected by several institutions. *The Ethnological Museum*, adjunct to the *Folklore Archives* and directed by Dov Noy, concentrates on secular material culture and has now in its possession over 2000 items. *The Acre Municipal Museum* collects and presents the material culture of the Palestinian Arabs and the *Negev Museum* in Beersheba has a collection of Bedouin objects. Other museums, like *Bezalel National Museum* and *Mishkan Le-'omanut* in kibbutz Ein Harod, although not devoted to folk art and material culture alone, have representative relevant collections of Jewish arts. In order to coordinate between all these different institutions the

<sup>38</sup> The quarterly published by the Institute is *Renanot*.

<sup>39</sup> The annual publication of the Institute is *Sephunot; Annual for Oriental Jewish Communities Research*, 1957 till the present. Among the other books with special bearing on folklore is Joseph Kafih, *Jewish Life in Sana* (Jerusalem, 1961).

*Organization of Museums for Folklore and Ethnology* was formed in 1960. Although scientific methods are employed for presentation in these museums, the research done in this field is not very rich. Aviva Lantzet, who is in charge of the Ethnological Museum, is engaged now in research on the clothing of the Yemenite Jews.

It is no wonder with such a variety of institutes and organizations dealing with folklore that it was found necessary to form *The Folklore Coordination Board*, directed by Dov Noy and operating within the Ministry for Culture and Education, the function of which is to initiate folklore research projects and to avoid duplication of labors among the different institutions. Because of the special circumstances, the Israeli folklorists do not conceive of their study as a mere pursuit of intellectual investigation in human culture but try to introduce applied folklore in the sense that the knowledge of the folklore of other ethnic groups may lead into a relativistic approach in contacts on an institutional and hopefully even personal level and will facilitate the process of integration of the culture<sup>40</sup>.

Theoretically, Folklore and Ethnology are the terms currently used in Israel. In a programmatic essay on *Problems and Tasks of Jewish Folklore and Ethnology*<sup>41</sup> Raphael Patai defines folklore as "the study of the mental equipment of the simple folk in civilized countries" and ethnology as the study of "the technical skill of the people as buildings, furnishings, clothing as well as utensils, implements, ornaments and the like". Similar distinctions between the two disciplines are made by Dov Noy and implied in the name *Ethnological Museum and Folklore Archives*, assigning the verbal expressions and customs to folklore and the material objects and artifacts to ethnology<sup>42</sup>. The concept of anthropology as primarily the study of illiterate people is still dominant in Israel and hence the term ethnology is employed for the study of the culture of literate societies, although not necessarily European.

While the Jewish European scholars study both their own and Oriental traditions, the non-European scholars concentrate in the main on the traditions of their own ethnic groups. Thus in many cases they draw the material from their own memory and serve both as informant and recorder. In other cases they have access to the better and more reliable informants of their own group. The study of their folklore and its public appreciation both by scholars and popular audiences is conceived as having a positive function in the inevitable process of

---

<sup>40</sup> Dov Noy, *Folklore in Israel* (as note 32) 35.

<sup>41</sup> Patai (as note 8) 25-39, especially 25.

<sup>42</sup> *Archiving and Presenting Folk Literature in an Ethnological Museum* (as note 32).

Westernization. It emphasizes the value and the significance of their own tradition as equal to the Western culture whose impact uproots them from their established traditions.

---

Addresses of Museums, Institutes and Societies

*Acre Municipal Museum*, Acre Old City. Director: Z. Goldman.

*Ben-Zvi Institute for Research on Jewish Communities in the Middle East*, The Hebrew University, Jerusalem. Director: M. Benayahu.

*Bezalel National Museum*, P.O. Box 398, Jerusalem. Director of archives: F. Schiff, Director of library: D. B. Bath-Hanna.

*Ethnological Institute for Oriental Jewish Music*, Hotel King David, southern wing, 3rd floor, Jerusalem. Director: E. Gerson-Kiwi.

*Ethnological Museum and Folklore Archives*, 19, Arlosoroff St., Haifa. Director: Dov Noy.

*Folklore Coordination Board*, P.O.B. 5333, Haifa. Director: Dov Noy.

*Haifa Music Museum and Library*, Rothschild House, Mount Carmel, Haifa. Director: Moshe Goral.

*Israel Society for Folklore and Ethnology*, 39 Nachmani St., P.O.B. 314, Tel-Aviv. Chairman: Yom-Tov Lewinski.

*Society for Folk Narrative Research Israel Branch*, 10, Vitkin St., Tel-Aviv. Chairman: M. Wombrand.

*World Center for Jewish Folklore Research "Yeda-'Am"*, 39, Nachmani St., P.O.B. 314, Tel-Aviv. Chairman: Yom-Tov Lewinski.