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Dov Noy's *Motif-Index of Talmudic-Midrashic Literature* and the Epistemic Strategies Implemented in the Field of Slavonic Folklore and Anthropology[1]

1. At the beginning was Galicia

While preparing the final edition of his *Motif-Index of Folk-Literature*[2] (Thompson, 1955–1958), along with the expanded version of his English translation of Antti Aarne's *Verzeichnis der Märchentypen* [Catalogue of Tale-Types][3] (Aarne & Thompson, 1961),[4] Stith Thompson integrated into the corpus of his basic empirical data

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[2] The first edition was published in Helsinki in 1932–1936 by the Finnish Academy of Science and Letters as issues № 106–109 and № 116–117 of the *Folklore Fellows Communications* monograph series (Thompson, 1932–1936).

[3] The original German edition of *Verzeichnis der Märchentypen* was printed in Helsinki in 1910 (as issue № 3 of the *Folklore Fellows Communications* monograph series) (Aarne, 1910); Thompson's translation into English was published under the revised title *The Types of the Folktale* (Aarne & Thompson, 1928).

[4] Four decades later, the second revision of Aarne & Thompson's catalogue was updated and enlarged under the editorship of Hans-Jörg Uther (2004). For a critical evaluation of the Aarne–Thompson methodology, see Dundes (1997).

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the results of the doctoral thesis of his outstanding student, the Galicia-born Israeli scholar Dov Noy. At the time he was known as Dov Neuman, and his research was focused on the challenging task of preparing a comprehensive *Motif-Index of Talmudic-Midrashic Literature* (Neuman (Noy), 1954). The manuscript was submitted in 1954 to the Department of Folklore at Indiana University (Bloomington), and the dissertation was successfully defended shortly afterwards; unfortunately, it was never published.[5] Nevertheless, it impacted the explorations of generations of scholars working in the field of oral tradition, and especially the research of those studying Jewish tale-types in relation to their international counterparts.[6] Indeed, at the time when Noy completed his PhD thesis, the field of Jewish folkloristics was still at its dawn as a modern academic discipline; in fact, it gained its distinctive theoretical footing due to Noy's epistemological leadership.[7]

Applying Stith Thompson's methodology, he produced a remarkable adaptation of his supervisor's classification scheme[8] by cataloguing a vast body of rich empirical material which he extracted from Jewish parabiblical scribal heritage, and in particular from Talmudic-Midrashic sources (e.g. Bereshit Rabba; Kohelet Rabba; Wayikra Rabba; Ruth Rabba; Shir Hashirim Rabba; Midrash Hagadol; Midrash Mishle; Midrash Shemuel; Midrash Tanhuma; Midrash Tehillim; Megilat Taanit; Pesikta Rabbati; Alphabet of Rabbi Akiba; Alphabet of Ben Sira; Pirke de Rabbi Eliezer; Seder (Order of) Elijah; Seder Olam; Sefer Noah; Sefer Hayashar; Lekah Tob; Sefer Yetsira; Yalkut; Bet Hamidrash; Tosefta; Gittin; Hagiga; Baba Batra; etc.) and apocryphal writings (e.g. the Book of Jubilees; Vita Adae et Evae / the Apocalypse of Moses; 1 Enoch; 2 Enoch; the Greek/ Slavonic Apocalypse of Baruch; the Apocalypse of Abraham; the Testament of Abraham; the Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs; Joseph and Aseneth; etc.).

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[5] The present author worked on the photocopied version of the microfilm reproduced xerographically in typewriter face by University Microfilms International; see: http://folkmasa.org/motiv/noy.htm.

[6] See in this connection: Schwarzbaum (1968, 1982); Jason (1965, 1975, 1977, 1988, 1990); Haboucha (1992). A similar classificatory template is employed by Hasan M. El-Shamy in his *Folk Traditions of the Arab World: A Guide to Motif Classification* (El-Shamy, 1995), and Sita Bell in her *Anti-Semitic Folklore Motif Index* (Bell, 2009).

[7] Among the earliest seminal publications in the field is the collective volume entitled *Studies in Biblical and Jewish Folklore* (Patai et al., 1960); see also Patai (1983); Noy (2007); Alexander and Harari (2009, pp. 8–9, 11).

[8] See Neuman (Noy) (1954, pp. 8, 23); he also took into consideration the earlier comprehensive work of the Czech Slavist and folklorist Jiří Polívka and his German colleague Johannes Bolte, *Anmerkungen zu den Kinder- und Hausmärchen der Brüder Grimm* [Notes on the Childrens' and Household Tales of the Brothers Grimm] (Bolte & Polívka, 1913–1932).

Emblematic pieces of Kabbalistic literature (e.g. Zohar) and medieval chronicles of Jewish history (e.g. Josippon, or Sefer Yosippon)[9] were likewise included in Noy's database.

What is more, among his surveyed sources featured one of the masterpieces of ancient wisdom literature, the Story of Aḥiqar, the mythopoeic ancestry of which is rooted in the palaeo-folklore tradition of Babylonian origin.[10] The purported narrator is the legendary chancellor to the Assyrian kings Sennacherib and Esarhaddon, with versions of his name occurring in cuneiform tablets. The earliest extant witness to the composition (in the Imperial Aramaic) is the fifth-century BCE papyri manuscript from the Jewish military colony in Elephantine, with later recensions known to have spread not only in Demotic Egyptian, Greek, Syriac, Armenian, Georgian, Arabic, Ethiopic, and Old Turkic, but also – and most importantly for the purposes of our discussion – in Old Church Slavonic.

This remarkable multilingual spectrum exhibits the magnitude of cross-cultural encounters throughout the Near and Middle East and Europe for centuries; the attempt to classify the motifs webbed in the fabric of narratives saturated in this chronologically telescoped and spatially dense intellectual landscape was a challenge which Noy certainly did not try to avoid. His impeccable knowledge of textual sources in their original (Hebrew and/or Aramaic) language, along with the excellent command of secondary literature on the topic, allowed him to systematise the material in a comprehensive way, thus expanding and enriching Thompson's *Motif-Index* with an auxiliary class of supplementary entries representing predominantly (but not only) Jewish parabiblical heritage, with its chronological scope stretching from antiquity to the Middle Ages.

One further point: Noy's database also included compositions circulating in the intellectual domain of the Greek-reading Eastern Mediterranean, such as the Hellenistic pseudepigraphic Letter of Aristeas to Philocrates (dated to the third or early second century BCE), as well as the monumental *Antiquities of the Jews* by Flavius Josephus (witness to the destruction of the Second Temple). Last but not least, among sources surveyed by Noy is the Alexander Romance, one of the ultimate "blockbusters" captivating the imagination of both men of letters and illiterate storytellers for centuries.

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[9] On the transmission and reception history of Sefer Yosippon, see Dönitz (2013).

[10] The original text was composed in Akkadian, in Mesopotamia, probably in the seventh century BCE, and later translated into Aramaic. See also the discussion in Lindenberger (1985, pp. 479–493).

2. Empirical databases and classification principles: Methodological complexities

Significantly, Noy's classification scheme further incorporated the amalgamated data presented in Moses Gaster's *The Exempla of the Rabbis* (M. Gaster, 1924),[11] Asher Feldman's *The Parables and Similes of the Rabbis* (Feldman, 1924), Simon M. Lehrman's *Jewish Customs and Folklore* (Lehrman, 1949), and, most importantly, the multi-volumed monumental compendium *The Legends of the Jews* (Ginzberg, 1909–1939),[12] produced by the renown Kovno-born American Rabbi and Talmudic scholar of Lithuanian-Jewish descent Louis Ginzberg (1873–1953). But while praising this impressive encyclopaedic survey, scholars also critically noted that, in his exhaustive annotation of "the oral traditions swirling about the Hebrew Bible", Ginzberg "disregarded as accidental the historical period of their literary articulation" (Ben-Amos, 1999, p. 152). Indeed, from the perspective of the clarification of the temporal dimensions of the reception history and textual transmission of the corpus of parabiblical writings, a methodology that allows an "ahistorical synthesis" has its inevitable flaws. But if one aims at identifying the generative mythopoeic mechanisms embedded in this corpus, then one needs to recognise and classify the "glossary" of the nuclear units (i.e. the motifs)[13] woven into its web, in which case Ginzberg's compendium would serve as an indispensable tool.[14] Furthermore, it also has advantages that potentially allow scholars to approach Jewish scribal heritage as a repository not only of literary compositions, but also of micro-narratives that are representative of parabiblical oral discourses, regardless of their time-bound characteristics. These, in any case, are virtually untraceable, as it is impossible to delineate their "genesis" with certainty, even if

[11] See also *Ma'aseh Book: Book of Jewish Tales and Legends, Translated from the Judeo-German* (M. Gaster, 1934).

[12] See also Neuman (Noy) (1954, pp. 9, 23).

[13] As rightly pointed out by the Russian folklorist Sergeĭ Nekliudov, the "fund of motifs" (*фонд мотивов*) constitutes "the lexicon of tradition" (*словарь традиции*) and "the matter-of-fact existence of folklore composition" (*реальная данность фольклорного произведения*); moreover, "thinking in motifs" (*мотивное мышление*) is one of the immanent characteristics of oral tradition (Nekliudov, 1984, p. 224).

[14] In their critical evaluation of Ginzberg's compendium, some scholars note that he did not include in his database some important Greek Byzantine medieval sources (such as the *Historical Palaea*); see Flusser (1971).

they appear in written records dated by the scribes responsible for the production of the actual manuscripts; indeed, the time when a manuscript copy is made hardly ever coincides with the *terminus post quem* of the *Vorlagen* of the actual work. It may be argued, therefore, that any parabiblical composition has its manifold stratigraphy, with layers representing various "snap-shots" of archaic discourses that merge within the harmonised storylines produced *ad hoc* in a bricolage manner. What can be identified through the analysis of the "syntax" of the types of the narrative units building them, however, are the patterned structures in which they appear; as noted by specialists, such formulaic stock-bricks happen to be the most resilient features of the corpus of parabiblical folklore heritage.[15] In some cases, such types of paradigmatic sequences of motifs may be regarded as witnesses to the palaeo-biblical orality preceding the written phase of the scriptural text.[16]

Then again, processing Louis Ginzberg's empirical database, Dov Noy also included in his catalogue a number of apocryphal writings extant in Old Church Slavonic (e.g. Vita Adae et Evae, or the Apocalypse of Moses; The Second Apocalypse of Enoch, or 2 Enoch; the Apocalypse of Abraham; the Testament of Abraham; the Apocalypse of Baruch, or 3 Baruch; etc.),[17] thus *de facto* incorporating them

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[15] Foundational for the "oral-formulaic theory" is the work of Albert Lord, *The Singer of Tales* (Lord, 1960); see also Foley (1992, 1995). For "Babylonian orality and the formula", see Elman (1999, pp. 81–93).

[16] See in this connection the seminal discussion in Ben-Amos (1991); Dundes (1999); Niditch (1993, 1996, 2000); Hasan-Rokem (2000, 2009); Yassif (2009). Consult also Kirkpatrick (1988).

[17] Cf. the following entries in the *Motif-Index of Talmudic-Midrashic Literature* (Neuman (Noy), 1954): A101.1. (Supreme God as Creator: Apocalypse of Abraham); A106.2.2.3. (Satan's fall due to jealousy of God: 2 Enoch); A106.2.3. (Fallen angels live in second heaven: 2 Enoch); A175.4. (God gives daily radiance to moon and stars: Apocalypse of Abraham); A189.7. (God obscures light of moon: Slavonic Apocalypse of Baruch); A651.1.1. (Seven heavens: 2 Enoch); A651.1.1.2. (Second heaven has fallen angels as its inhabitants: 2 Enoch); A651.1.8. (Ten heavens: 2 Enoch); A710. (Creation of the sun on fourth day: Apocalypse of Abraham); A724.2. (Chariot of sun accompanied by angels: 2 Enoch); A724.2.3. (Fifteen myriads of angels attend sun during day; thousand at night: 2 Enoch); A755+ (Moon's phases punishment for having laughed at punishment of Adam and Eve; is thus born and reborn: Slavonic Apocalypse of Baruch); A759.10. (Moon uses gate to leave his abode: 2 Enoch); A769.1.1. (Stars guided by 200 angels: 2 Enoch); A1210.4. (Man created by God's hand (all others by his word): 2 Enoch); A1260.0.3. (Seven substances employed in composition of human body: 2 Enoch); A1331.0.2. (Adam and Eve seven years in Paradise: 2 Enoch); A2425+ (Origin of birds' morning-songs (from singing angels): 2 Enoch); B31.7+ (Sun birds: Apocalypse of Baruch; 2 Enoch); B32+ (Enoch's description of Phoenix bird: feet and tails of lion; heads of crocodile; rainbow color; measures 900 (measures); 12 wings: 2 Enoch); B32+ (Phoenix and Chalkadri on Sun's chariot; catch fiery rays of Sun: Apocalypse of Baruch; 2 Enoch);

B38. (Chalkidri: mythical bird, companion of Phoenix: 2 Enoch); B91+ ("Azazelas" – serpent with hands and feet like a man and with twelve wings: Apocalypse of Abraham); B91+ (Serpent causing Man' s fall Satan's servant: Apocalypse of Moses); B 211.9.3+ (Cock admonishes man not to forget to chant praise to God: Apocalypse of Baruch); B275+ (Animals punished or rewarded: 2 Enoch); D46+ (Transformation of man (pious) to angel: 2 Enoch); D475.4+ (Transformation of tears to jewels: Testament of Abraham); D950. (Magic trees: 2 Enoch); D1083. (Magic knife: 2 Enoch); D1346.8+ (Oil of life: 2 Enoch); D1454.4.2. (Jewels from tears [cf. D475.4+]: Testament of Abraham); E33+ (Resuscitation of eaten goat: Testament of Abraham); E576. (Dead intercede before God in favor of mortals: 2 Enoch); E751. (Souls at Judgment Day: Testament of Abraham); E754.2.2. (Souls carried to heavens by angels: Testament of Abraham); E755.0.3. (Two gates for souls: narrow to Paradise, broad to eternal punishment in hell: Testament of Abraham); F11. (Journey and visit to heaven (upper-world paradise): 2 Enoch; Vita Adae); F11+ (Man taken up to upper world sees all that happens on earth: Testament of Abraham); F59.3+ (Narrow gate to heaven accommodates both stout and thin: Testament of Abraham); F63+ (Man carried to heaven by two angels: 2 Enoch); F63+ (Man carried to upper world by an angel-guide: Testament of Abraham; Apocalypse of Abraham; 12 Testament of Levi; etc.); F69+ (Man carried to heaven in fiery chariot drawn by fiery chargers (cherubim–angels): Testament of Abraham); F162.2.6. (Rivers of honey, wine, milk and oil in otherworld: 2 Enoch); F162.3.1+ (Tree of Life shades (covers) entire Paradise: 2 Enoch); F173. (No trouble, nor grief, nor sighing, but peace and rejoicing and life unending in otherworld: Testament of Abraham); F819+ (Fragrant herbs of paradise strewed over mortal house: Testament of Abraham); F962.2. (Fire from heaven burns and freezes: 2 Enoch); F962.2+ (Fire from heaven consumes food offered to angels: Testament of Abraham); F979+ (Speaking trees: Testament of Abraham); F1041+ (Woman dies of grief: Testament of Abraham); F1099+ (Man writes each year of his life a book, altogether writes 365 books: 2 Enoch); H49+ (Recognition by unique sound of voice: Testament of Abraham); H79+ (Recognition by unique feet: Testament of Abraham); H120+ (Recognition of man's acceptability to God: knife leaps into his hand: 2 Enoch); H120+ (Identification of pious and acceptance of prayer by shaking of altar: 2 Enoch); H1540+ (Test: remaining in water without speaking for thirty-one days: Vita Adae); J1960+ (Idol set to watch fire burns too: Apocalypse of Abraham); J2050+ (God's mercy contrasted with man's short-sightedness: Testament of Abraham); K315. (Thief enters treasury through secret passage: Testament of Abraham); M302.5+ (Eve sees in dream blood of Abel flow into mouth of Cain: Vita Adae; Apocalypse of Moses); M369+ (Prophecy: duration of world will be seven hundred thousand years: 2 Enoch); N127+ (Death of heroes on the same date as their birth: 2 Enoch); Q221+ (Satan thrown down to earth for disobeying creator's orders: Vita Adae); Q552.2.3. (Earth swallowing as punishment: Testament of Abraham); Q552.13. (Fire from heaven as punishment: Testament of Abraham); T8. (Sexual desire [and] original sin: Apocalypse of Abraham); T10.3. (Sexual desire injected by serpent into fruit given to Eve: Apocalypse of Moses); T585+ (Child stands upon his feet and runs off at birth: Vita Adae); U110+ (Cinnamon used by kings and princes from excrement of worm: Apocalypse of Baruch); V6.1. (Discovering true faith by meditating on nature: Apocalypse of Abraham); V73+ (Forty days of continuous fasting: Vita Adae); V230.1+ (Ten ranks (classes) of angels surrounding the Divine Throne: 2 Enoch); V230.1+ (Michael chieftain of angels: 2 Enoch); V230.2+ (Angels take up man's soul to heaven: Testament of Abraham); V230.2.0.1. (An angel "over each single blade of grass": 2 Enoch); V231.2. (Giant angels: 2 Enoch); V231.3+ (Number

into the "classical thesaurus" of parabiblical narratives attested worldwide. Regrettably, the *Historical Palaea* remained outside the scope of Noy's research database.[18]

As for contemporary Jewish (Sephardi and Ashkenazi) folklore data, it is only partially represented in Noy's catalogue, although he occasionally includes in his survey accounts published in James Edward Hanauer's *Folk-lore of the Holy Land* (Hanauer, 1907), Angelo Solomon Rappoport's *The Folklore of the Jews* (Rappoport, 1937/2007), Nathan Ausubel's *Treasury of Jewish Folklore* (Ausubel, 1948),[19] and other related sources, occasionally supplemented with references to Oskar Dähnhardt's *Natursagen* [Nature Legends] (Dähnhardt, 1907–1912).[20] To a certain extent, this hiatus in relation to Jewish folklore data was most probably due to the practical ramifications of Noy's PhD research agenda, which was supposed to be carried out according to the strict definition of the topic of the thesis (that is, Talmudic-Midrashic literature); hence the objectively imposed limitations on the scope of the empirical database incorporated into the content of the *Index*. At the same time, it may be argued that the absence of contemporary Jewish folklore material from Noy's catalogue also reflects the scarcity of the publications of relevant source material (e.g. traditional oral folk narratives and songs in Yiddish, Judeo-Spanish/Ladino, Judeo-Arabic, etc.) prior to the 1950s.

The brief survey of folklore compendia containing data gathered among Sephardic communities[21] shows that Noy may have had at his disposal only a few

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of angels' wings: 2 Enoch); V231.4+ (Angels appear as snow; their hands like ice: 2 Enoch); V233.4+ (Angel-herald of the Angel of Death: Testament of Abraham); V235+ (Devouring spirit sent with angel to accommodate man's hospitality: Testament of Abraham); V238+ (Guardian angels accompanying man testify before God concerning his acts: 2 Enoch); V241+ (Angels take men from earth to heaven: Testament of Abraham); V241+ (Angels bury mortal's body: Apocalypse of Moses); V246+ (Angel-teacher (instructor) of man: 2 Enoch); V249+ (Satan disguised as angel: Vita Adae; Apocalypse of Moses); Z111+ (Death wears crown of glory when he comes for righteous: Testament of Abraham); Z111+ (Death wears crown of sins of person he fetches: Testament of Abraham); Z111+ (Death is two-headed: one with face of serpent; other like a sword: Testament of Abraham); Z111+ (Sickle of death: Testament of Abraham).

[18] See note 14 above.

[19] There is also an abridged edition (with a new introduction by Alan Mintz) (Ausubel, 1980).

[20] Dähnhardt's *Natursagen*, however, is missing from the list of Noy's bibliography (perhaps an oversight).

[21] See the general discussion in Alexander (2017); see also Alexander-Frizer (2008); Díaz-Mas (2009). For the folklore tradition of Mizrahi Jews (i.e. Oriental Jews), as attested in Hebrew, Assyrian Neo-Aramaic, Bukharian, Judeo-Arabic, Judeo-Berber, Judeo-Aramaic, Judeo-Malayalam, Judeo-Marathi, Judeo-Georgian, Judeo-Tat, Judeo-Iranian (Judeo-Persian), Judeo-Urdu, and Syriac, see Tobi (2017).

sources. Among them should be mentioned Max Luria's collection of Ladino folklore, *A Study of the Monastir Dialect of Judeo Spanish Based on Oral Material Collected in Monastir, Yugo-Slavia* (Luria, 1930),[22] and Yosef Meyuhas's *Ma'asiyot 'am li-venei qedem* [Folktales of Ancient Times] (Meyuhas, 1938);[23] neither of these sources[24] were consulted, however, probably due to Noy's specific research agenda.[25]

Meanwhile, ongoing studies in the field of Sephardic culture, conducted since the second half of the nineteenth century, have elucidated the complexity of Jewish-Christian-Muslim encounters within the context of the former Ottoman Empire and beyond.[26] Furthermore, they also illuminated the parallel linguistic processes taking place in the Balkans as a *sui generis* multilingual "contact zone" between speakers of vernacular Ladino and Yiddish on the one hand, and Slavonic, Greek and Turkish languages on the other.

Understudied, however, remain the processes of cross-cultural and inter-faith transmission of Bible-related narrative traditions between the local representatives of the three Abrahamic religions in the Balkans: Jewish (Sephardim and Ashkenazim), Christians (Eastern Orthodox and Catholics), and Muslims (Sunnis and Shia, but also Sufis, Qizilbash/Kizilbaş, and Bektashi). The unfinished thesaurus

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[22] See also the discussion in Cohen (2003); Grandakovska (2020). For a general overview of Judeo-Spanish scribal conventions and traditional folklore culture of Sephardic communities in Thessaloniki and Sarajevo, see also Crews (1979). On the Judeo-Spanish compendia of religious law and moral teachings within the context of common Ottoman culture, with special emphasis on the heritage of Rabbi Eliezer ben Shem Tov Papo (Sarajevo, ? – Jerusalem, 1898), see Šmid (2013). Further on religious works written by Ladino-speaking Sephardic rabbis and published in localities with Jewish populations in the Ottoman Empire and the Mediterranean, see also Šmid (2015).

[23] Of particular importance for our subject of study is his earlier work *Bible Tales in Arab Folk-Lore* (Meyuhas, 1928).

[24] Another potentially valuable source that regrettably remained outside of Noy's explorations is the cycle of Judeo-Spanish folksongs rendering Bible-related tales, which were recorded in Jerusalem in the period 1930–1940 from four singers from Salonika and Larissa; see Attias (1957).

[25] Meanwhile, these types of sources contain important information about inter-confessional and inter-ethnic encounters between Jews and Muslims within the context of certain religious rites and ceremonies, such as the Festival of Sacrifice (*Kurḇán Bayram*, also known as *Eid al-Adha*, or Greater Eid); in fact, the explanation of Rabbi Eliezer ben Shem Tov Papo aims at preventing any participation in Islamic sacrificial offerings on behalf of the local Jews. Furthermore, he instructs the members of the community that: "Gentiles who celebrate the Festival of Sacrifice in which they slaughter lambs, Jews are not allowed to buy lambs and sell them to Gentiles for this ritual slaughter" (as cited in Šmid, 2013, p. 66).

[26] One of the earliest publications in the field is that of Isidore Loeb, *La situation des israelites en Turquie en Serbie et en Roumanie* [The Situation of the Jews in Turkey, Serbia and Romania] (Loeb, 1877).

of motifs in Dov Noy's classification scheme is certainly a good starting point for these types of future folklore and anthropological explorations.

As for Ashkenazi oral tradition in Central and Eastern Europe,[27] it is virtually absent from Noy's catalogue, although at the time when he prepared his PhD manuscript, Yiddish folklore was represented by a significant number of publications, among which should be mentioned J. Y. L. Cahan's *Yiddish Folksongs with Their Original Airs* (Kohen, 1912) and *Yidishe folksmayses* [Yiddish Folktales] (Cahan, 1931); Micha Josef bin-Gorion's (Micha Josef Berdyczewski, or Mica Joseph Berdichevsky) *Der Born Judas: Legenden, Märchen und Erzählungen* [The Well of Judah: Legends, Fairy Tales and Narratives] (bin Gorion, 1916–1923) and *Die Sagen der Juden* [Jewish Legends] (bin Gorion, 1913–1927);[28] Moses Gaster's *Yidishe mayselekh* [Yiddish Yarns] (M. Gaster, 1931), the *Ma'aseh Book: Book of Jewish Tales and Legends, Translated from the Judeo-German* (M. Gaster, 1934), and so forth.[29]

Of particular importance are also the fieldwork explorations of some Jewish intellectuals, folklorists and ethnographers working within the former Russian Empire, such as Isaac Leib (Yitskhok Leybush) Peretz,[30] Shloyme Zanvl Rappoport (pseudonym Solomon An-Ski),[31] and others.[32]

However, in contrast to the Sephardic communities in the Balkans,[33] where the vernacular Judeo-Spanish (Ladino)[34] was in contact with the local Slavonic

[27] See the general discussion in Tohar (2017).

[28] Consult also Alexander and Harari (2009, p. 7).

[29] For an historiographical survey of folklore studies on collections of tales in Old Yiddish (with special emphasis on the *Mayse-bukh* [Book of Stories], the *editio princeps* of which was published in Basel in 1602), see Rosenzweig (2020, p. 122, notes 4 and 5). As emphasised in the front page of the Basel edition, one of the three main clusters building the *Mayse-bukh* contains stories based on the Talmud.

[30] Consult Cahan (1952); Wisse (1991).

[31] Among Russian intellectual circles his pen-name was Семён Акимович Ан-ский; he was also known as Шлиом Аронович Рапопорт (birth name Шлоймэ-Занвл (Соломон) Рапопорт). In Western sources his name is given as Shloyme (var. Shlomo/Salomon) Zanvl (var. Sanwel/Seinwil) Rappoport. For folklore and ethnographic expeditions carried out by him, see Anskiĭ (1908/1995); see also An-Ski (2010); Gonen (1994); Alexander and Harari (2009, p. 6). For the impact of Solomon An-Ski on the study of Jewish folklore, see Kugelmass (2006); Safran (2010); Zipperstein (2006).

[32] For further data on the subject, see Bar-Itzhak (2018).

[33] Needless to say, there were also Ashkenazi enclaves on the territories of Greece, Bulgaria, and former Yugoslavia, but the prevailing majority of Jewish diaspora in the Balkans was represented by the Sephardic communities.

[34] On the characteristic features of Sephardic (Jewish-Spanish) in the Balkans, see Gabinskiĭ (1992); Bunis (2013); August-Zarębska (2020).

(Bulgarian,[35] Serbian,[36] Croatian, Bosnian,[37] etc.), along with Greek, Romanian and Turkish, in the territories inhabited by Ashkenazim (including the Ashkenazi Hasidim and Misnagdim) there was a linguistic encounter between Yiddish as "common tongue" on the one hand, and Slavonic[38] (Russian, Belarusian,[39] Ukrainian,[40] Polish,[41] Czech,[42] Slovak), Lithuanian,[43] Hungarian,[44] Romanian and German on the other.[45] Recent explorations in the field of historical linguistics and textual criticism, and in particular on the subject of the Slavonic-Jewish language contacts in the medieval period have also intensified,[46] accompanied by increasing attention to frontier topics in humanities and social studies.

[35] Cf. Paunovski (2005); Fay and Davcheva (2014).

[36] Cf. Vučina-Simović (2013).

[37] Cf. Vidaković-Petrov (1990). For the Sephardi and Ashkenazi communities of Bosnia and Hercegovina, see Pinto (1987). A useful discussion on the subject is offered in Francine Friedman's recent monograph, *Like Salt for Bread: The Jews of Bosnia and Herzegovina* (Friedman, 2022).

[38] For a comprehensive discussion on the subject, see Katz (2004); see also the collective monograph by Ewa Geller, Michał Gajek, and Agata Reibach (with a contribution by Anna Pilarski), *Yiddish as a Mixed Language: Yiddish-Slavic Language Contact and Its Linguistic Outcome* (Geller et al., 2022).

[39] Cf. Weinreich (1969); Wexler (1973, pp. 41–43, 45–46); Greenbaum (2000).

[40] Cf. Herzog (1969); Swoboda (1979–1980); Polian (2012).

[41] Cf. Geller (1994, 2021); Gajek (2016). See also Geller and Polit (2008). The literature on the history of Polish Jewry is overwhelming, but the following should be mentioned: *Jews in Poland* (Abramsky et al., 1988); *New Directions in the History of the Jews in the Polish Lands* (Polonsky et al., 2018).

[42] Cf. the general discussion in Kestenberg-Gladstein (1969); Kieval (1988, 2000); Pěkný (1993).

[43] For the situation of the Jews in Lithuania prior to the Soviet period, see Polonsky (2013, pp. 253–273); see also Šiaučiūnaitė-Verbickienė (2007).

[44] See Komoróczy (2018).

[45] Included in this territory are today's Czech Republic, Slovakia, Hungary, Romania, Poland, the Baltic states (Lithuania, Latvia, and Estonia), as well as Finland, along with Moldova, Ukraine, Belarus, and Russia. Of particular importance for the study of population mobility and social history of Jewish diaspora in Central and Eastern Europe is Ezra Mendelsohn's monograph *The Jews of East Central Europe Between the World Wars* (Mendelsohn, 1983). For Jewish settlement patterns on the frontier territories between Poland and the Russian Empire (with special emphasis on Lwów, Kiev, etc.), see Bałaban (1906). See also Kalik (2009); Kulik (2014); Kulik and Kalik (2021); Taube (2023).

[46] See in this connection Grishchenko (2021).

3. Epistemic challenges and interdisciplinary conundrums: Current state of affairs

There appear to be two frontier territorial entities that can be recognised as the historical epicentres of Judeo-Slavonic co-existence. The southern one is embedded within the lands of the former Ottoman Empire[47] and parts of the Austro-Hungarian Empire, while the northern is circumscribed within the overlapping volatile borders between a number of state entities fighting each other for centuries, e.g. the Polish–Lithuanian Commonwealth (1569–1795),[48] the Kingdom of Prussia (as the predecessor of Imperial Germany), the Austro-Hungarian Empire, and the Russian Empire[49] (and its successor, the Soviet Union).[50]

While there exists an abundant corpus of academic publications in the field of the studies on Jewish folklore *per se*,[51] with some of the works going back to the nineteenth century,[52] research on the subject of the interface between Jewish and Slavonic storytelling and singing from comparative perspective has been somewhat neglected; only now it gradually begins to attract the attention of specialists.

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[47] For a socio-economic history of Sephardi and oriental Jewry in the Ottoman Empire and Turkey prior to WWII, see the brief discussion in Rubinstein et al. (2002, pp. 92–101). See also Boškov et al. (1990).

[48] On the social history of the Jews in the Polish–Lithuanian Commonwealth, see Polonsky (2013, pp. 3–39); see also Weeks (2005).

[49] One of the earliest publications in the field is that of Ernst von der Bruggen, *Russland und die Juden*: *Kulturstudien* [Russia and the Jews: Cultural Studies] (von der Brüggen, 1882). On the Jews of the Russian Empire in the period between 1772–1917, see Rubinstein et al. (2002, pp. 64–86); Petrovsky-Shtern (2014).

[50] The political geography of the former Russian Empire designates the eastern border of this contact zone as "the Pale of Settlement" (*черта оседлости*); see the discussion in Deutsch (2011). During the last decades, the literature on Jewish settlements on the territory of Central and Eastern Europe has grown greatly; see in this connection the general information (including cartography) presented in *The YIVO Encyclopedia of Jews in Eastern Europe* (Hundert, 2008).

[51] For a bibliographic survey of the most significant (hitherto published) research on the subject, see Ben-Amos (2015); Noy (2007); Hasan-Rokem (2002); Alexander and Harari (2009); Rosenzweig (2020, p. 122, note 4); etc. On Judaised versions of some international tales, see Idelson-Shein (2020). For a comprehensive bibliography of hitherto published anthologies of Jewish folklore, see Patai and Bar-Itzhak (2013, pp. 585–593).

[52] Cf. *Mitteilungen der Gesellschaft für jüdische Volkskunde* [Transactions of the Jewish Folklore Society] 1–23 (1898–1922) under the editorship of M. Grunwald; see also Berger (1938, 1939). For further discussion on the matter, see T. H. Gaster (1950, 1969). See also the formative discourse in Noy (2007).

Further explorations into Dov Noy's catalogue will facilitate the work in this direction, as it will help the process of detecting and identifying common motifs employed in both Jewish and Slavonic oral sources, as attested in the contact zones of the coexistence of the respective communities. As already pointed out, at the time when Noy produced his catalogue, this type of survey was outside the scope of his research agenda. Therefore, a comprehensive study in this direction is most needed, since it will add important details to our knowledge concerning the intellectual landscape against the background of which some specific narrative templates were employed in Jewish parabiblical literature and Slavonic oral tradition, as well as the mechanisms of their trans-ethnic transmission.[53] Besides, the parallel attestations of some common tale-types reveal the depth of an undercurrent, both cross-cultural and inter-confessional, at vernacular level. Such encounters between Jews and Slavs have hitherto remained, to a certain extent,[54] under the radar of modern folkloristics, ethnology, and cultural anthropology, despite the earlier works in the field by the Russian scholar Aleksandr Veselovskiĭ[55] and others.[56] So far, the focal point of research has been the ethnic and confessional stereotypes[57] (with a special emphasis on the "Blood libel" motif,[58] etc.), as well as family-oriented

[53] The present author has carried out studies in this direction, with some specific narrative units being the centre of the analysis (e.g. parallels between anthropogonic motifs attested in *Targum Pseudo-Jonathan* and Slavonic folklore); see Badalanova Geller (2017b, pp. 370–371); see also the discussion in Badalanova Geller (2017a, p. 275).

[54] There are, however, some rare exceptions; among the earliest cases is the collection of articles under the general title *От Бытия к Исходу: Отражение библейских сюжетов в славянской и еврейской народной культуре* [From Genesis to Exodus: The Reflection of Biblical Plots in Slavonic and Jewish Popular Culture] (Petrukhin, 1998). See also Zowczak (2000).

[55] Cf. his monograph, *Славянские сказания о Соломоне и Китоврасе и западные легенды о Морольфе и Мерлине* [Slavonic Tales about Solomon and Kitovras and the Western Legends of Morolf and Merlin] (Veselovskiĭ, 1872). The Jewish parabiblical tales about Solomon and Kitovras, as rendered in the Slavonic *Palaea Interpretata*, recently became a subject of cross-cultural studies in the publications of Reuven Kiperwasser (2021, 2023).

[56] See in this connection the comparative analysis of the Biblical Flood story (with emphasis on abundant Slavonic data) by Francis Lee Utley (1945, 1960, 1968, 1988); see also in this connection Alekseev (2016). See also Moshe Taube's discussion on the Slavonic parabiblical legendary saga of Moses (Taube, 1993).

[57] A typical representative of this epistemic approach is the monograph of Olga Belova and Vladimir Petrukhin, entitled *Еврейский миф в славянской культуре* [The Jewish Myth in Slavonic Culture] (Belova & Petrukhin, 2008). See also the discussion in Zowczak (2000, pp. 159–187). Consult also Jasiewicz (2017); Wiślicz (2020).

[58] See in this connection Bar-Itzhak (2017); Klein (1974/1991); Kostrzewska (2003). Consult also Teter (2020).

customs (related to childbirth, marriage, and death)[59] and ritual practices performed during calendrical festivities of the Jewish diaspora in various Slavonic vernacular environments (e.g. Pesach/Passover, Rosh Hashanah, Yom Kippur, Purim).[60] Future research, based on earlier publications in the field,[61] will contribute to the fuller appreciation of the folklore heritage of *Pax Slavia Judaica* alongside with that of *Pax Slavia Christiana* and *Pax Slavia Islamica*. This, in turn, will benefit the epistemic strategies of a philological anthropology as one of the innovative methodological inventories on the edge between humanities and social sciences, focusing on the study of societies and cultures through the prism of a philological lens. The current article offers some initial observations and considerations in this direction.

[59] Cf. Noy (1998).

[60] See the general discussion in Cała (2005); Banasiewicz-Ossowska (2007); Kaspina (2011); Wojtyczek (2012); Blagojević (2016); Nalewajko-Kulikov (2020).

[61] For the ethnography of the Jewish diaspora in Eastern Europe in general and Poland in particular, the following publications (apart from the hitherto quoted) may be consulted: Weinryb (1962, 1973); Goldberg-Mulkiewicz (1989).

Fig. 1. Dov Noy as a young scholar completing his PhD. Photo courtesy of Amos Noy.

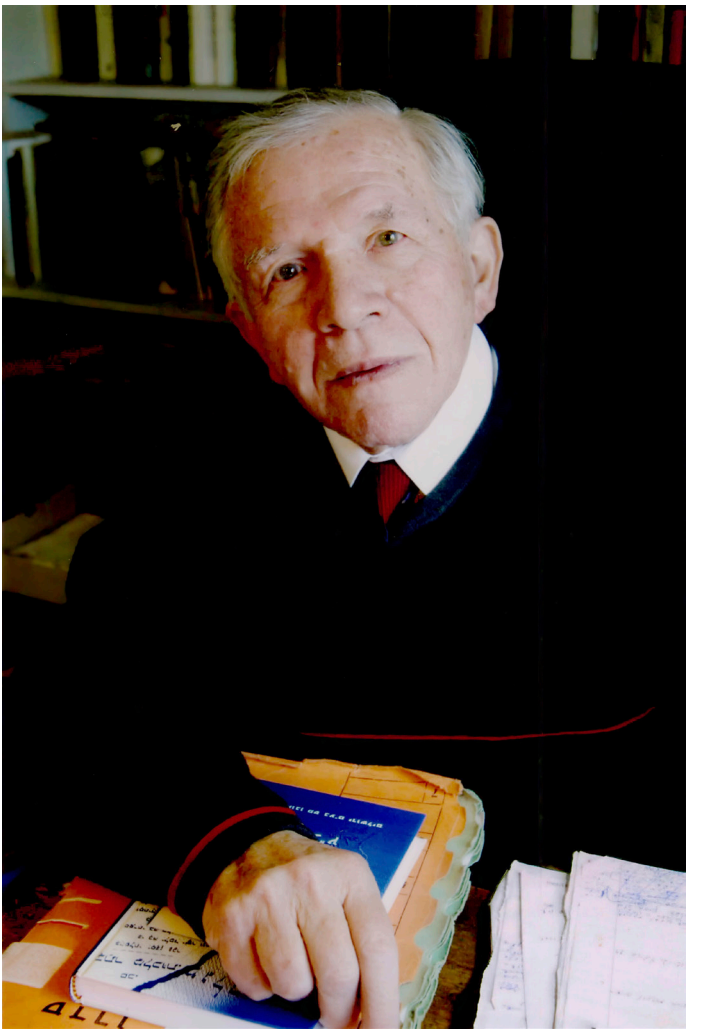

Fig. 2. Dov Noy in his later years. Photo courtesy of Amos Noy.

This article makes use of the following periodicals under the editorship of M. Grunwald: *Mitteilungen der Gesellschaft für Jüdische Volkskunde* (Hamburg: Ges. Nr. 1.1898 – 14.1904); *Mitteilungen zur jüdischen Volkskunde: Organ d. Gesellschaft für Jüdische Volkskunde in Hamburg u. d. Gesellschaft für Sammlung und Konservierung von Kunst- und Historischen Denkmälern des Judentums in Wien* (Wien N. F. 1.1905 – 3.1907 = H. 15–24 11.1908 – 31/32.1929).

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Dov Noy's *Motif-Index of Talmudic-Midrashic Literature* and the Epistemic Strategies Implemented in the Field of Slavonic Folklore and Anthropology

Summary

The article focuses on the formative role played by the Jewish scholar of Polish descent Dov Noy (1920–2013) in the development of innovative research methodologies implemented in folklore studies in the USA and elsewhere in the second half of the twentieth and beginning of the twenty-first century. The focal point of discussion is the impact of his doctoral dissertation, *Motif-Index of Talmudic-Midrashic Literature* (the results of which were incorporated into the final edition of the *Motif-Index of Folk-Literature* produced by Stith Thompson), upon contemporary scholarship in the fields of humanities and social sciences. Apart from successfully completing the mammoth task of selecting and extracting empirical data from the vast corpus of Talmudic-Midrashic literature, Dov Noy created innovative classification models in cataloguing motifs attested in them. This has triggered a significant advancement in epistemic strategies employed in the comparative and contrastive assessment of the vernacular patrimonies of *Slavia Judaica*, *Slavia Christiana* and *Slavia Islamica*, and in theory of folk narratology in general. Furthermore, it has augmented new investigative perspectives in research on Ashkenazic and Sephardic folklore heritage in Slavonic ethnoconfessional landscapes. It also has amplified new methodological horizons in studying Yiddish and Judeo-Spanish (Ladino) in multilingual environments of Central and Eastern Europe, within the general linguistic methodological frame-

work of languages in contact, further outlining the borders between their contact zones. Future research, based on ongoing explorations in the field, will contribute to a fuller appreciation of the folklore heritage of *Pax Slavia Judaica* alongside that of *Pax Slavia Christiana* and *Pax Slavia Islamica*. This, in turn, will benefit the epistemic strategies of philological anthropology as an innovative discipline on the threshold between humanities and social sciences, focusing on the study of societies and cultures through the prism of a philological lens.

Indeks motywów literatury talmudyczno-midraszowej Dova Noya i strategie epistemiczne stosowane w dziedzinie folkloru i antropologii Słowian

Streszczenie

Niniejszy artykuł skupia się na doniosłej roli, jaką odegrał żydowski badacz polskiego pochodzenia Dov Noy (1920–2013) w rozwoju innowacyjnych metodologii badawczych wprowadzanych w badaniach folklorystycznych w Stanach Zjednoczonych i innych krajach w drugiej połowie XX i na początku XXI wieku. Głównym przedmiotem refleksji jest wpływ jego rozprawy doktorskiej, *Motif-Index of Talmudic-Midrashic Literature* [Indeks motywów literatury talmudyczno-midraszowej] (której wyniki zostały włączone do ostatecznego wydania kompendium *Motif-Index of Folk-Literature* [Indeks motywów literatury ludowej] w opracowaniu Stitha Thompsona), na współczesne badania w dziedzinie nauk humanistycznych i społecznych. Noy nie tylko pomyślnie ukończył gigantyczne zadanie selekcji i ekscerpcji danych empirycznych z ogromnego korpusu literatury talmudyczno-midraszowej, ale również stworzył innowacyjne modele klasyfikacyjne w katalogowaniu poświadczonych w nim motywów. Przyniosło to znaczący postęp w zakresie strategii epistemicznych stosowanych w analizie porównawczej i kontrastywnej dziedzictwa wernakularnego *Slavia Judaica*, *Slavia Christiana* i *Slavia Islamica* oraz w rozwoju teorii narracji folklorystycznej. Jego praca rozwinęła nowe perspektywy badawcze w studiach nad dziedzictwem folkloru aszkenazyjskiego i sefardyjskiego w etniczno-wyznaniowych krajobrazach słowiańszczyzny.

Poszerzyła również horyzonty metodologiczne w badaniach nad językami jidysz i ladino (judeohiszpańskim) w wielojęzycznych środowiskach Europy Środkowej i Wschodniej, dokładniej nakreślając granice obszarów kontaktu między nimi w metodologicznych ramach teorii kontaktów językowych. Przyszłe badania, oparte na ciągłych poszukiwaniach w terenie, przyczynią się do pełniejszego docenienia dziedzictwa folklorystycznego *Pax Slavia Judaica*, podobnie jak *Pax Slavia Christiana* i *Pax Slavia Islamica*. To z kolei będzie sprzyjało rozwojowi strategii epistemicznych antropologii filologicznej jako innowacyjnej dyscypliny z pogranicza nauk humanistycznych i społecznych, skupiającej się na badaniu społeczeństw i kultur przez pryzmat filologii.

Keywords: Dov Noy; *Motif-Index of Talmudic-Midrashic Literature*; Jewish (Ashkenazic and Sephardic) oral heritage in Slavonic ethno-confessional landscapes; philological anthropology

Słowa kluczowe: Dov Noy; *Motif-Index of Talmudic-Midrashic Literature*; żydowskie (aszkenazyjskie i sefardyjskie) dziedzictwo kultury mówionej w etniczno-wyznaniowych krajobrazach słowiańszczyzny; antropologia filologiczna

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