

Collections Dealing with Elyaho ha Novi

Pinchas Giller 7/25/73

Menes, Abraham, collector and editor; Fun Undzer Oytzer- Elyahu ha Novi- Agodes un Folks-Mayses
Central Yiddish Culture Organization, N.Y.
Copyright 1955

Description of Volume: A regular-sized, hard cover volume, 346 pages, including a 4 page table of contents, a 3-page preface, a 33-page introductory chapter, 302 pages of stories and 4 pages of notes and bibliography.

Description of Contents: In the preface, Menes explains his purpose in collecting tales relating to Elyahu ha Novi. He credits Y.Y. Schwartz with assisting in the job of translating many of the tales from their original Hebrew, Aramaic and Old Yiddish origins. In the introduction, Menes outlines the presentation of Elyahu ha Novi in the Bible, and describes the subsequent development of the character in the folk tradition. The table of contents is very complete, listing every tale under its generic heading. The bibliography lists the primary sources from which each tale was taken.

Nature of Collected Materials: Menes took the stories from various primary and secondary sources, ranging from his own Yiddishe Legendes (Bes-VI), and other Yiddish folklore collections, through Rabbinical and Gaonic material, and including various Kabbalistic and Chassidic folk biographies (i.e. Shivchei ha Besht; Shivchei ha Ari; etc.). The stories are edited and titled, so that in some cases complementary versions are incorporated. The titles appear to come, more or less, from the folk tradition. Conflicting versions of one tale are not presented.

Documentation: Minimal, depending on the bibliographed references.

Supplementary aids: Few, mainly in the form of notes in the bibliography.

Composition of the collection: The contents are classified in the table of contents according to the genre of fols-mayse of which they are members. Examples of generic classification: "As a Teacher and Guide", "The Helper in Times of Distress", "Elyahu Shows himself to the Tannaim and Amoraim", "Chassidic and Kabbalistic Tales". The collection consists exclusively of mayses.

Arrangement of Collection: Order of sections, and order within the sections, appears to be roughly based on temporal chronology.

Analysis: none

Tseylingold, Aharon; Ale Vunderlekhe Mayses fun Elyahu ha Novi Warsaw- not dated

Description of Volume: A ~~an~~ paperbound edition, old and in poor condition, which, although it has been rebound in a protective cover, would best be micro-filmed and withdrawn from circulation. There are 119 pages, of which 4 pages are a table of contents and 115 pages are text.

Description of contents: In addition to various mayses and transcriptions of Rabbinical material regarding Elyahu ha Novi, there is a song, several prayers and several chapters of rather low-level "musar" material. This is arranged in a rough, somewhat rambling order that attempts to utilize chronology when possible. The table of contents lists the contents of each chapter, but there is little or no generic classification.

Nature of collected materials: The collected materials range from Rabbinical and Gaonic interpretations of various aspects of Elyahu's life and character, through pure folk material and including selections from various midrashim. It is rendered in a uniform Yiddish translation, apparently under the supervision of one Aharon Tseylingold, a Prague publisher and bookseller. It is reasonable to assume that he did not tamper with the Talmudic and Midrashic material, although it seems that the folk material might have been adapted to carry more of an ethical or moral message.

(3)

Documentation: Folk material is undocumented, religious literature is identified when it is a source (example: "In Gemara Taanis 14a it is written...")

Supplementary aids: none

Composition of the collection: The publisher apparently collected and published these materials with the intention of making certain literature available, at least on a small scale, to those who were not in a position to occupy themselves with traditional learning. This book was published with a spiritual purpose, as evidenced by the inclusion of four chapters relating to "Torah V'Derech Eretz", the comportment of the individual within the community, a theme explored within much of the tradition relating to Elyahu ha Navi. The inclusion of the special prayers and the song would point to Chassidic background on the part of the editor.

Arrangement of the Collection: The material is classified in an arbitrary order, but is subdivided with reasonable precision by topic.

Analysis: Insofar as moral lessons are derived from many of the tales, there is some analysis of the material.