that remains throughout *Dragons, Demons and Wondrous Realms* stands in uneasy tension with the author's powerful arguments on the merits of interdisciplinarity in the introduction to the book.

This criticism aside, *Dragons, Demons and Wondrous Realms* offers an engaging journey through the marvellous realms of medieval Jewry. It is a rich and valuable study, whose wonders are sure to be enjoyed by scholars, students and general readers alike.

Salamon, Hagar/ Shinan, Avigdor (eds.): *Textures: Culture, Literature, Folklore for Galit Hasan-Rokem.* [Hebrew with English summaries]. 2 Vol. (Jerusalem Studies in Jewish Folklore, 28; Jerusalem Studies in Hebrew Literature, 25.) Jerusalem: Magnes Press for The Mandel Institute of Jewish Studies, Faculty of Humanities, The Hebrew University of Jerusalem, 2013. Vol. 1: xxiii [English], 382 pp. [Hebrew], Vol. 2: xxvi [English], 383–800 pp. [Hebrew].

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The *Festschrift* under review celebrates (on the occasion of her retirement) the Finnish-born, Jerusalem-based Israeli folklorist Galit Hasan-Rokem, a pupil of Dov Noy and Lauri Honko, and a founding joint editor of the journal *Jerusalem Studies in Jewish Folklore*. The word *Textures* in the title of the book under review renders the Hebrew title, *Mirkamim,* which is wordplay on the surname *Rokem* (Hebrew for 'embroiderer'). Such wordplay also occurs in the title of her book *The Web of Life: Folklore in Rabbinic Literature – The Palestinian Aggadic Midrash Eikha Rabba* (in Hebrew: *Rikmat-Ḥayyim*).[1] The very last paper in Vol. 2 in the *Festschrift* is by her husband, Freddie Rokem, a professor of drama at Tel Aviv

1 Tel-Aviv 1996. English translation by B. Stein. Stanford, California 2000. The cover of that 1996 Hebrew paperback, as well as its introductory epigraph, are cues for further interpretations of the main title. Hasan-Rokem wove the metaphor of the embroidery into the text on pp. 24, 203, and 214. In the latter two, this is at the end of a chapter. On the cover of the 1996 paperback, a badly torn ancient cloth (not a "web", *pace* the English title), red with yellow and grey stripes, is shown. This cloth is torn because it is ancient. In Jewish symbolism, torn garments stand for mourning. The Hebrew dedication page states: "In memory of Amittai Rokem, my firstborn son". Beneath, the mother added a brief quotation from Bialik, which gives the symbol another sense: "...to join torn pieces and patches into an entire shawl *tallit* (shawl)..." Cf. See Lipsker, Avidov: A Tapestry of Life, a Tapestry of Death: A Narrative Theme Transferred to European and Hebrew Poetry (in Hebrew). In: Thematology in the Literature of the Jewish People, special issue of Criticism and Interpretation / Bikkoret u-Farshanut, 30. ed. Yoav Elstein Ramat-Gan, Israel 1994, 197–217, with

University and "presents two examples of narrative that have the conditional 'if-then' structure which she has focused on in her proverb research" (2:xxv).

The editors' preface is followed with a 2005 speech by the jubilarian, her publication list, and a paper on her output as a poet. The chapters proper begin with one by Yair Zakovitch about three riddles ("Who is she that") in *Song of Songs*. Daniel Boyarin argues that Menippean satire's mixture of genres, registers, and tonalities, so typical of the *Babylonian Talmud*, is a revealing context for reading the latter, especially in relation to the "capacity to both represent its heroes as heroes and 'bring them down to earth'" (1:xi). Boyarin exemplifies this with some Talmudic passages about Rabbi Meir. Joshua Levinson is concerned with the "literary anthropology" of the rabbinic corpus. Dina Stein applies structuralist methods to Noah narratives.[2] In *The Earthquake in the Valley of Arbel*, Oded Irshai discusses a late antique Jewish Galilean apocalyptic tradition, in relation to Byzantine parallel settings. Anat Shapira discusses the parable genre in the "narrative-literary form" it takes in *Seder Eliyahu Rabba*, a midrashic text. Yehoshua Granat surveys representations of singing women in medieval Hebrew poetry of the Andalusian school. Shulamit Elizur's *Intertextual Appropriations as Code: Between Palestine and Spain* is about how Spanish Hebrew poets used biblical verses in their poetry (as opposed to hymnographers from the Land of Israel). Such appropriations are either "neutral" (seeking surprise, and the original biblical context being irrelevant), or "charged, such that the source's biblical context is significant". Elizur divides the latter kind into "contributing charged appropriation" – i. e., "one in which knowledge of the original context adds to the poem a dimension that is not inherent in the appropriated words themselves" (1:xv) – and "re-signified (or allosemic) appropriation", "with ten-

an English summary on xii–xiii; and cf. Nissan, E.: The Aggadic Midrash: An Illustration of the Importance of the Folklore Studies Approach. In Historia religionum 5 (Pisa/Rome 2013). 141–155, here 145–146.

2 Noah narratives and Adam narratives are still productive, e.g. in my own Hebrew *Liber animalium* (*Midrash kol ḥay*). See Nissan, E.: In the Garden and in the Ark: The *belles lettres*, Aetiological Tales, and Narrative Explanatory Trajectories. The Concept of an Architecture Combining Phono-Semantic Matching, and NLP Story-Generation. In: DSH: Digital Scholarship in the Humanities, doi: 10.1093/llc/fqw040 (Advance Access published Dec. 26, 2016); Nissan, E.: Natvised, Playfully Aetiologised Literary Zoonymy (3 parts), and Nissan, E./HaCohen-Kerner, Y.: GALLURA and the Challenge of Combining Phono-Semantic Matching with Story-Generation: Zoonomastic Illustration. In: Language, Culture, Computation: Essays Dedicated to Yaacov Choueka, Vol. 3: Computational Linguistics and Linguistics (LNCS, vol. 8003). eds. N. Dershowitz/E. Nissan. Heidelberg: Springer, 2014, 593–611, 612–641, 642–779, 780–866. Cf. Nissan, E.: Revisiting Francis Lee Utley's 1941 Study 'The One Hundred and Three Names of Noah's Wife'. In: Unconventional Anthroponyms: Formation Patterns and Discursive Function. eds. Oliviu and Daiana Felecan. Newcastle: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2014, 449–465.

sion between the biblical context and the poetic usage" (1:xv), often with a humorous effect. In the early medieval Jewish hymnographers from the Land of Israel, biblical appropations were charged, and often alluded to known midrashic interpretations. I exemplified the latter in 1998:[3]

> The most conspicuous trait of these poems is the way the *paytanim* {hymnographers} relish concatenating verse whose interpretation requires sustained riddle-solving. Couplets, each sharing a word in rhyme, and nailing down analogies between events according to schemata such as a series of "Just as… / Likewise…", or "These… / And these…", are found in a poem (pp. 167–180)[4] describing the debacle of Pharaoh's cavalry when crossing the sea during the Exodus. It is tentatively ascribed to Kalir. The erudition game keeps quizzing the audience: "Just as he [Pharaoh] replaced (*hemir*), for better speed (*himhir*), horses male with female, / Likewise [supernatural retribution] appeared [in the sky] as 'a mare in the cavalry' (*Canticles* 1,9), a horse female" (vv. 136–7). The commentary (p. 178) quotes the source in the Midrash, which has it that Pharaoh first asked for a male horse, then changed idea asking for a mare instead, the latter being more suitable for the military chase: the male would stop and pass water, whereas the mare would keep running meanwhile. (Wait a moment. My amazement at such farfetched thinking was met with parental amazement at my ignorance of such basic common sense about cavalry. It's me and my contemporaries who are odd, it seems, in being a "horse-less" generational culture: my own grandfather fought WWI on horseback, after all.) Back to Pharaoh after the Midrash. Retribution came in the form of the image of a mare appearing in the sky, fatally distracting the horses (of the rank and file: hadn't Pharaoh opted for a mare, instead?). Take it or leave it, you need to know that and summon it all at once to make sense of the verse. Then the poet and the cognoscenti could, as though, clap to themselves like Brezhnev and his Politburo.[5] Are such feats of erudition *ipso facto* poetic? These hymnists must have thought so.

Ophir Münz-Manor examines eight Jewish and Christian liturgical poems (in Syriac, Jewish Palestinian Aramaic, and Hebrew) that narrate a dispute between the body and the soul. Tamar Alexander discusses a Judaeo-Spanish narrative, by Isaac Magriso (in the volume for Numbers of *Midrash Me'am Lo'ez*, Constantinople 1764), expanding on the biblical Balaam narrative, and strongly influenced by the kabbalistic classic, the *Zohar:* Balaam reaches the fallen, chained angels Uzza and Azzael, who teach him sorcery. To Magriso, Balaam is not a

3 Nissan, E.: The Cantor-Poets. Part A: A Lifetime's Quest for Early Hymnography. Part B: Charting the Piyyutic Galaxy. In: Shofar 17.2 (1999) 119–133. My presently added braces. Brackets were in the 1999 review article.

4 In: The Fathers of Piyyut: Texts and Studies Toward a History of the Piyyut in Eretz *Israel* [Hebrew], by Shalom Spiegel. Selected from his literary estate and edited by Menahem H. Schmelzer. New York and Jerusalem 1996.

5 Shortly after the far-left Jeremy Corbyn became the Labour leader in the UK in 2015, a reader's letter in the Daily Telegraph asked why he used to clap to himself. I must avow that in 1992, at a conference I co-initiated, I distractly also clapped when the audience was clapping for me. I was *not* emulating Brezhnev.

complex seer like in the Bible; Magriso's Balaam is described in sensationalistic, emotion-wrenching fashion. Note that the tales about the ill woman and Baal Peor (1:222–223) and on "No man has ever served this idol thus" (1:223) are from *Sanhedrin* 64 a. The tale about Cozbi and Zimri (1:224) is from *Sanhedrin* 82 a; Zimri pulls Cozbi by her hair, after claiming to her that he is no lesser than Moses, because Simeon, the eponymous ancestor of Zimri's tribe, was Jacob's second-born, whereas Levi, to whose tribe Moses belonged, was only the third-born. A memorable anti-Trump image from the 2016 US presidential campaign showed an actor impersonating Trump, pulling the long hair of a woman, who lowers her head. I was reminded of the Zimri tale.

Luis Landa is concerned with proverbs (both plebeian and cultivated ones) in Miguel de Cervante's *Don Quixote*. Michal Held provides a close reading of a Judaeo-Spanish folk song about Jerusalem ("Mother, I wish to go"). *Waṣf* (Arabic for 'description') is the genre of the Judaeo-Spanish song *Las prendas de la novia* ("The Gifts of the Bride"): the bride inquires about her body parts in turn, and a second voice describes it metaphorically, head to feet. Dan Amos' *The Image of the Jew in Yiddish Proverbs* is followed with a chapter in which Ruth HaCohen-Pinczower argues that Felix Mendelssohn's oratorio *Elijah* tries to provide listeners with a total experience. Shuli Barzilai connects Freud's delay in escaping Vienna in 1938, train journeys, and the topos of the Wandering Jew, the latter (but in Samuel Hirszenberg's haunting painting of 1899) also being the subject of the next chapter, by Richard I. Cohen and Mirjam Rajner, concluding Vol. 1.

Shalom Sabar's chapter, the first of Vol. 2, is on European Jews visual depictions of the "three women's commandments", from the Middle Ages to the late nineteenth century. Carmella Abdar examines the dress of a Yemeni Jewish groom; Esther Yuhasz, trousseaux of Jewish brides from Izmir, "objectifying a woman's anticipated biography" (2:xiii). Eli Yassif's *The Study of Folklore and the Process of Secularization of Modern Jewish Culture* is followed with chapters on Agnon's narrative: Havazelet (Zalk) Lorberbaum's discusses a proverb in a story; Haim Weiss, the study hall in that story; Ariel Hirshfeld, Agnon's complex relation to the concepts of the folk and the folktale; Ilana Pardes, *Agnon's Biblical Ethnographies;* Aliza Shenhar, Agnon's drawing upon "a complex array of modern and pre-modern Jewish and non-Jewish sources" (2:xvi), with diverse and multi-layered folk and literary foundations of a story. Tamar S. Hess shows how Leah Goldberg's 1949 story *The Cobbler* was influenced by Y.H. Brenner's *The Way Out*. Hannan Hever discusses a perpetrator's stunningly tragic story of 1949 by S. Yizhar, and its receptions. Nili Aryeh-Sapir compares Purim carnivals in Tel Aviv of the 1920s, 1930s, and 1980s. Ilana Rosen examines her Transylvanian-born father-in-law's life story and his use of pro-

verbs. Yoram Bilu discusses how the late Lubavitcher Rebbe's childlessness had been received in folk-messianic imagination. Haya Bar-Itzhak's *Men and Women Narrating the Myth of the Creation of Woman: Hegemonic and Subversive Messages* is followed with a chapter by Hagar Salamon on needlepoint pictures and interviews with embroidering women and their relatives. Amer Dahamshy shows how Arab toponymic discourse in Israel sometimes aetiologises a place-name in relation to a Jewish past. Nina Pinto-Abecasis and Hani Musa examine Hebrew-based nicknames used by Israeli Arabs. Yael Zerubavel is concerned with contemporarised or satirical Israeli retellings of biblical narratives. David Shulman's chapter is about a Telugu tale. Freddie Rokem looks at Walter Benjamin's use of a proverb, and a narrative from a play by Hanoch Levin. The book is a joy to delve into.[6]

Schultz, Gretchen/ Seifert, Lewis (eds., trans.): *Fairy Tales for the Disillusioned: Enchanted Stories from the French Decadent Tradition*. (Oddly Modern Fairy Tales, [6].) Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 2016. xxxiii, 255 pp.

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The blurb of this collection of 36 tales, all of them, except four, newly translated from French, begins by stating: "The wolf is tricked by Red Riding Hood into strangling her grandmother and is subsequently arrested. Sleeping Beauty and Cinderella do not live happily ever after. And the fairies are saucy, angry, and capricious". Only some of these tales are based on traditional tales, by authors who "rewrite or unwrite" them (xiv). This volume is a befitting addition for Jack Zipes' series *Oddly Modern Fairy Tales*. The tales, by 19 writers, and presented chronologically by author, are sandwiched between the volume's front matter and a 3-page bibliography of primary and secondary literature, followed by useful *Biographical Notes* of the writers, who each gets a paragraph. There are 14 illustrations in greyscale, taken from old editions.

The *Translators' Note* explains they combed "through around seventy collections of tales by nearly forty authors, some highly prolific writers of fairly tales, some who merely dabbled in them" (xiii) – "Mendès [was] by far the most prolific writer of fairy tales during this period" (xxv) – and that the editors found it easier

6 In Vol. 1, 226, fn. 6, Gramsci's book should be *Quaderni del carcere*, not *Quaderni del Carcere*.