

IN MEMORIAM

HAYA BAR-ITZHAK
(17. 8. 1946–26. 10. 2020)



Haya Bar-Itzhak, Ljubljana, June 16, 2010

Haya Bar-Itzhak, Israeli folklorist and long-time professor at the University of Haifa, was born in Berlin as Ała Goldman to Menucha (Manya) Pundik and Yosef Goldman. Her father, whose first wife and a son perished in the Holocaust, was conscripted and served in the Polish Army and then in the Red Army. In 1956, after Wladyslaw Gomułka came to power, the family immigrated from Poland to Israel. At that time, Haya was 10 and already a devoted reader of Adam Mickiewicz's *Pan Tadeusz*. She received her bachelor's and master's degrees from the University of Haifa and finished her PhD in 1987 at Hebrew University of Jerusalem with a dissertation on "The 'Saints' Legend' as a Genre in Jewish Folk Literature", under the supervision of Professor Dov Noy. Starting in 1992, Bar-Itzhak served with several intervals as chair of the Department of Hebrew and Comparative Literature and permanent Head of Folklore Studies at the University of Haifa, Israel, until her retirement. Since 1994, she also served as academic head of the Israel Folktale Archives (IFA), where she focused her research on the comparative computerized study of the folk narrative and made great effort to computerize all the IFA tales. Haya Bar-Izhak researched the folklore of Jews from various countries, including Morocco and Yemen and not just folklore from Eastern Europe. She was the editor of the first *Encyclopedia of Jewish Folklore and Traditions* in two volumes (London, England: M.E. Sharpe, 2013).

However, for Slavic folklorists, it is her research on East European Jewish folklore and folklore studies that is of utmost importance. Bar-Itzhak showed alternative Jewish perception of Polish geography and history. The geography of Poland becomes the geography of the Jewish imagination and its landscape the landscapes of Jewish desire, for example, trees with the leaves from the Gemara prescribing Po-Lin (“Poland”; in Hebrew “lodge here”). The alternative Jewish history of Poland accentuates the Jewish wife/mistress of King Casimir and the alleged Jewish upbringing of King Jan Sobieski. The perception of Israeli space in the stories of immigration told by the Polish Jews also acquires poetic reconstruction – from alienated and inhabited by monsters to domesticated and loved. Haya Bar-Itzhak contributed to the research on Jewish women as cultural heroes and practically completed her last manuscript on female narratives from Eastern Europe. Among her honours is being selected as an International Fellow of the American Folklore Society, the Lerner Foundation for Yiddish Culture Award, and the National Jewish Book Award. We extend deepest condolences to Prof. Bar-Itzhak’s family, colleagues, and students.

Here are the most relevant publications.

BOOKS:

2001. *Jewish Poland--Legends of Origin*. Detroit: Wayne State University Press.
 2005. *Israeli Folk Narratives: Settlement, Immigration, Ethnicity*. Detroit: Wayne State University, 2005.
 2010. *Pioneers of Jewish Ethnography and Folkloristics in Eastern Europe*. Ljubljana: Scientific Research Center of the Academy of Science and Arts.

PAPERS:

1998. Les Juif Polonais Face au ‘Monstre’ Israélien: Récits d’aliya en Israël des Juifs Polonais. *Cahiers de Littérature Oral*, 44:191–206.
 2004. Folklore as Expression of Intercultural Communication between Jews and Poles – King Jan III Sobieski in Jewish Legends. In: *Studia Mythologica Slavica*, 7: 91–106.
 2007. Cross-Cultural Narration in the Nineteenth Century: Jewish Folktales Transcribed by a Polish Author. *Studia Mythologica Slavica*, 10: 239–259.
 2009. The Legend of the Jewish Holy Virgin: A Folkloristic Perspective. *Journal of Folklore Research*, 46(3): 269-291.
 2009. Women in Holocaust – A Folkloristic Perspective. *Fabula*, 50(1/2): 67–78.
 2012. Women and Blood Libel: The Legend of Adil Kikinesh of Drohobycz. *Western Folklore*, 71(3/4): 279–291.

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