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ALFONSO FANJUL PERAZA, *Deserts Stories & Bedouin Legends*. Charleston, Pigafetta Collection, 2015. 122 pp. ISBN 978-84-606-6277-8. € 10.

This book compiles a collection of stories showing local folklore and Egyptian Bedouin culture through oral tradition. Thanks to this book, this story, only known by locals, is now documented and accessible through these pages. Through this book one accesses a world of mythology of the Bedouin tribes of the Egyptian desert. These histories had not been documented and were conserved through the oral tradition of the local tribes and related with some archaeological discoveries. Gods, phantasms, ghouls, pilgrims, bandits and magical worlds weave the history more ancestral of these towns of the Egyptian desert.

The archaeologist A. Fanjul Peraza, has traveled through Egypt, living with the local tribes and documented archaeological sites related with his work collecting firsthand these stories by which all that inexplicable that can occur in the day to day of the tribes of the desert is justified. This monography allows the preservation of this oral treasure of the Bedouin culture, which, as the author indicates, is nothing more than the fruit of the hospitality of the inhabitants of the desert. The interview of the local people is collected and an English translation of the Arabic itself is offered. The work consists of 35 short stories from 2 to 5 pages, preceded by an introduction on “Al Badiya,” which explains the origins of Bedouins and their socio-economic connection;

and a second chapter about Bedouin mythology. The books end with a brief bibliography used by the author to offer a more detailed view of some aspects about the Bedouins who are mentioned in any of the stories described.

The Bedouin mythology has been influenced by the Greek, Roman and Babylonian one, showing itself as supernatural with a clearly religious origin, of a culture with pre-Islamic origins. The concept of spirituality in Arabic mythology is related to the ancient tradition of the “Ka” of the ancient Egyptians, where the spirit separates from the soul in search of other human bodies, always harmless spirits, known as “Jinn.”

In the chapter about “Bedouin Mythology” the author makes a parallel to the sacred mountains of the desert with the sacred mountains of the Spanish Northwest, an area where the author has specialized in the study of pre-Roman occupation. Thus, it offers examples and shows the spiritual perspectives that in themselves have nothing to do neither geographically nor historically.

These stories are not shown in the book as the local speaker counts them, but are reflected in the book interpreted and accompanied by pertinent explanations that allow the reader to better contextualize each mythological story. These are short narratives, in which for example four of them refer to the aforementioned “Jinn:” “Jinns of Bahariya and Dackla,” and “The Jinn Fisherman,” “The Jinn of Deir Hagan” and “Men who marry Jinns.”

For example, one of those histories is about “Adventures of Hasan El Basri;” he represents, like influenced by the Greek mythology, “the Arab Ulysses” from the “Iraqi Iliad.” Hasan is a young man sent to Egypt by his family from Iraq. Hasan discovered a magic oasis. There is a mage that order him to create a fence at that magical place. He should use a camel’s skin to protect himself. But, after doing it, the camel left away and Hasan is abandoned in the middle of that magic king. He walked to a palace occupied by seven Devils. He lived there being forbidden to him, just open one of the palace doors. One day Hasan opened it and he discovered water and a group of beautiful girls. Soon, he fell in love with one of the. Hasan and the devils raped her. She lived with him at the palace and gave him two children. After that, she was free to come back to the “forbidden door.”

Hasan returned to Iraq of Uagled only with the promise of not opening his eyes during the trip. On the way he met two guys with a magical turban and a magical brooch. He took both and using the turban he was invisible. He entered in all the city houses and saw her sister. She was in problems,

so he uses the magical brooch to save her and leave the magical kingdom. After that they came back to his house, and he presents his new family to his old mother.

This is one of the stories that this book collects with great details about ghouls, mummies, spirits, tombs, or phantoms, most of them related with the religion. All these stories had a moment in the Egypt history, making more enriching the Egyptian tradition and folklore. Thank to this book this oral stories remaining that has been immortalized and accessible to the public, making easier to understand the recent changes and ancient traditions of the Bedouin culture, and all that peoples that crossed from the Arabic areas to the African deserts.

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ROXANA FLAMMINI & JUAN MANUEL TEBES (eds.), *Interrelaciones e identidades culturales en el Cercano Oriente Antiguo*. Buenos Aires, Instituto Multidisciplinario de Historia y Ciencias Humanas – Consejo Nacional de Investigaciones Científicas y Técnicas, 2016. 280 pp. ISBN 978–987–46360–1–0. <http://www.imhicihu-conicet.gob.ar/html/Publ_Libros/Interrelaciones_identicidades_culturales.pdf>

Si todavía podemos pensar en algún tipo de unidad para la historia de las antiguas sociedades del Próximo Oriente, esta sólo podrá serlo a título conceptual, esto es, a partir de la posibilidad de considerar como problema histórico la interpretación de espacios y tiempos compartidos por sociedades con modos de vida diferentes, pero afincados en muy intensas relaciones que conectaron a ese conjunto heterogéneo de pueblos y los convirtieron en coproductores de una trama histórica común a la vez que diversa. Hubo contactos continuos, permanentes y, en ocasiones, muy intensos, pero también contactos leves y coyunturales. En efecto, dichas sociedades, independientemente de que vivieran en áreas contiguas, se hallaban conectadas por un conjunto complejo y heterogéneo de relaciones y experiencias que sufrieron los vaivenes de los grandes procesos históricos a lo largo de los milenios y que se generaron, fundamentalmente, a partir de los intercambios de bienes, de los desplazamientos transitorios o permanentes de grupos dentro de la región, de los intereses compartidos entre las elites que gobiernan las diferentes entida-