

critique), a new, detached, and historical Bachmann image is not visible. This absence is unfortunate, because the basic elements for the creation of such an image are all present in Achberger's otherwise outstanding analysis.

Zev Vilnay

*Legends of Jerusalem*

Philadelphia: The Jewish Publication Society of America, 1973. Reissued 1996.

Pp. ix+338. \$24.95

Reviewed by Miriam Roshwald

The book is a collection of legends and tales which have grown around the city of Jerusalem. They contain what may be considered as folklore—which an ancient city with a checkered history, complex and contested, and yet hallowed, glorified and idealized, can claim. Jerusalem, being both a concrete city and a religious-spiritual symbol for Judaism, Christianity, and Islam, has given rise to a wealth of literary material. It embodies the loftiest aspirations and deepest longings of humanity, which found expression in mystical visions, intricate speculations, and untrammelled leaps of imagination. The present collection, translated from the Hebrew, is the first out of a work of three volumes dealing with the Holy Land. It includes not only Jewish, but also Christian and Muslim material, the latter translated from the Arabic. The three volumes contain about 1,200 tales, out of which 300 are included in the present one.

The sources from which Vilnay, a distinguished Israeli geographer, has drawn his material are mainly the Bible and the post-biblical literature, particularly the Talmud and the Midrash—terms carefully explained in a separate chapter, "The Ancient Sources." His examples of Christian and Muslim traditions are derived, *inter alia*, from the writings of Christian pilgrims in the Middle Ages and from Arab tales. Vilnay explains the peculiar character of the Hebrew legends, linking it to the destruction of Jerusalem by the Romans and the subsequent exile: "Hebrew folklore ... withered and shrank.... Without a land, a sound folklore cannot exist and grow ... it became destitute of the life-force vital to its existence.... In the lands of dispersion, wholesome, earthy legends took on an otherworldly air, mixed with the traditions of a messianic age and heavenly Jerusalem" (vi-vii). Thus it happened that the remnants of national folklore became incorporated in the holy writings. The compilation is divided thematically, in great detail, into twenty-nine chapters, subdivided in turn into a number of sections. The major themes are: "Jerusalem—Center of the World," "Dome of the Rock," "Moriah—the Mount of God," "The Temple in Its Glory," "Ancient Jerusalem," "The New City," etc.

As one reads through the legends, the centrality of Jerusalem in the Jewish tradition becomes clear. Every site and every place-name carries a message, a

hidden purpose, or some deeply burrowed memory. Every milestone in the long history and religious development of the Jews is magnified and reinforced by relating it to the exalted city. The popular imagination and religious fervor lavished all its creative energies on Jerusalem and its halo of sanctity. This unabating intensity of national idealization of the city turned it into a concept, a symbol and a poetic evocation.

Historically the book reaches back to the days of King David, who made Jerusalem the political and religious center of the kingdom of Israel. As is well known, the first temple was built by his son, Solomon. These two figures loom large in the people's memory and sense of identity. Ever since, Jerusalem became a focal point of reference for the Jews, stirring ancient memories and atavistic images, which the vicissitudes of long history and ages of dispersion could not erase. This collection of tales and legends testifies to this inextricable bond between a city and a people.

Jerusalem is explored in every possible way. Every stone formation, each remnant of a wall, every hill, stream, and rivulet, become monuments to some shadowy reminiscence of mysterious significance, which old sages and commentators took pains to explicate, interpret, and, if need be, reconcile with the holy text of the Bible. Thanks to the sophisticated techniques of homily and exegesis, earthly Jerusalem became a Heavenly City, was presented as the center of the world, as well as its beginning. Such perceptions can be expressed in rather bizarre ways. Thus, in the words of Rabbi Shemuel the younger, of the first century of the Christian era: "This world is like unto the human eye, for the white is the ocean which girds the earth; the iris is the earth upon which we dwell; the pupil is Jerusalem, and the image therein is the Temple of the Lord" (6-7).

Another prominent theme that seems to have fired the imagination of the legend-spinners is the Temple. Of the twenty-nine chapters of the book, one half focusses on it. Starting with the Foundation Rock, on which the Temple was built, and ending with the Temple of Heaven, the thoughts and imagination of the commentators, mystics and dreamers were drawn to the Temple, and forged it into a powerful symbol, which, in time, infiltrated also the Christian and the Muslim traditions. The mountain on which the Temple was built is alleged to have been the Mount of Moriah, associated with Abraham's intended sacrifice of Isaac, an event of pivotal importance in all three monotheistic religions, and a theme of theological discourse to date. The Foundation Stone on which the Temple was built is believed to have come from the summit of Mount Moriah. This stone plays an important role also in Muslim lore: the Dome of the Rock, or Kubbah es-Sakhra, was built on the Foundation Stone on which the Jewish Temple had stood, before being destroyed by the Romans in 70 C.E. In one Jewish legend the Foundation Stone is even believed to have been the rock from which the tablets of the Ten Commandments were hewn.

It seems that it takes the Final Judgment for the three religions to meet on a common ground. All three, in slightly different ways, wove legends linking Jerusalem and the cataclysmic event. Thus, in a Jewish legend, bridges of iron and paper, bridges described as being thin as a hair and sharp as a sword in the Arabic version, will span the Mount of Olives and Mount Moriah over the Valley of Jehoshafat. The Almighty, according to the Jewish legend, will preside over the judgment from Mount Moriah, while in the Muslim legend, Muhammad the prophet will sit on a pillar and decide who will cross the bridge and who will fall into the valley. In a note, Vilnay adds, "Christian pilgrims of the Middle Ages told the same legend, substituting Jesus for Muhammad" (264-66). The author ends his collection on a hopeful note of universal harmony, quoting from a Midrash, in which Elijah the prophet proclaims: "Peace has come to the world" (307). The book is abundantly supplied with illustrations, including some maps, drawn from ancient and modern sources.

Ewing Campbell

*Madonna Maleva*

Fredericton: York Press, 1995. Cdn. \$9.95

Reviewed by John H. Irsfeld

There are at least three voices in this short novel, published in 1995 by York Press in Canada, in a series properly called "Innovative Fiction." One is the voice of Jack Hawker, aka the Night Hawk, broadcasting from XEAD, the 100,000-watt transmitter of which is located in Saltillo, Mexico. The Night Hawk himself does his broadcasts not from Saltillo, but from Laredo, just across the Rio Grande from the Mexican city of Nuevo Laredo. His wife Sissy Hawker—Sister Love—does her broadcasts from there as well, and hers is the second of the three voices. The third is further back toward the author and serves as the narrative staple; it is back away from the stance that Hawker takes and which comes on so strong, so refreshing, and so distinctive from the very first paragraph of this approximately 50,000 word-book. Curiously, the title character's is not one of those three.

Here is a sample of the first voice: "All right, you moonshiners, long haulers, insomniacs, road cruisers, hot-wire artists, and reuniacs, that was Thelonious Monk 'Round Midnight' going out to my friends on the Tex-Mex Express somewhere in the night and you're listening to XE *Anno Domini*. That's XEAD, your clear-channel, souped-up Hawk of the Night, coming to you on a hundred thousand kilowatts of electromagnetic tide, straight up the ether chute from Saltillo, Mexico, high in the Sierra Madre" (5).

This first voice uses the mnemonic medium of a voice like Wolfman Jack's to carry new content, to say things that Wolfman Jack or any of those like him could not say, and yet the voice recalls their voices, even as it expands and improves