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The Ancient Egyptian "Tale of Two Brothers": The Oldest Fairy Tale in the World. By Susan Tower Hollis. (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1990. Pp. xii + 276, foreword, acknowledgments, introduction, appendix, abbreviations, notes, selected bibliography, index, illustrations, \$35.00, clothbound)

Susan Tower Hollis presents an interesting introduction to the story of Anubis and Bata found in the ancient Egyptian "Papyrus d'Orsiny." Her study will undoubtedly be of interest to Egyptologists, particularly those who require a thorough review of the scholarship concerning this well-known tale. Hollis' strength lies, in fact, in her ability to summarize concisely and clearly what at times is a bewildering and contradictory body of scholarship stretching back to the mid-nineteenth century.

Hollis does not content herself with this informative, albeit dry, review of earlier scholarship. Rather, she suggests that a new analysis of the tale which addresses the question of why the tale was recorded at the time it was should be attempted: "It is the aim of this study, using the tools of modern scholarship from a variety of disciplines such as folklore and anthropology, to place the narrative in its cultural and historical context and attempt to elicit the meaning and *raison d'être* of the tale for its own time" (3). Regrettably, Hollis is trained neither as a folklorist nor as an anthropologist, and her use of theoretical constructs from both disciplines is frequently naive at best and misleading at worst. All of the conclusions she draws are so qualified that one is left wondering what Hollis actually believes. Her final conclusion, "Although it is speculative to try to relate the tale as a whole to a historical situation, it is possible that the narrative was composed in response to disturbances within the royal household and the royal succession," is so tentative and general that it can hardly justify the rather complex and lengthy argumentation of the book (168). Furthermore, the conclusion seems to undermine the very premise of the work itself, namely to analyze the tale in a historic and socio-cultural context.

At the beginning of the book, Hollis provides a helpful English rendering of the "Tale of the Two Brothers" as found in the "Papyrus d'Orsiny." The first chapter "Historical Issues" contains the survey of scholarship and is the most useful for a generalist audience. The ensuing five chapters -- "The Brothers," "Rural Egypt," "The Phallus, the Valley and the Heart," "Life in the Valley," and "Royal Egypt" -- in turn take up particular elements found in this version of the tale. It is in these chapters that one finds Hollis' often thought-provoking interpretations. Hollis is obviously quite knowledgeable on matters concerning ancient Egyptian philology and the interpretation of hieroglyphics. Regrettably, her desire to

be thorough results in at times overly complex and arcane argumentation of points which seem only tangentially related to the analysis of the tale. While it is certainly interesting that "Anubis represents death and new life and Bata portrays the reborn king" (83), this simple conclusion could be made without the unnecessarily complex discussions of philological phenomena such as the section, "Biconsonantal Names Commonly Related to Bata" (52-57).

The greatest failing of Hollis' book is her general incompetence in the field of folklore, an incompetence confirmed by the paucity of folklore scholarship evident in her oddly incomplete "Selected Bibliography" (why, for example, does she cite both the Aarne-Thompson tale type index (25 et passim) and Thompson's motif index (97 et passim) but only include Thompson's *The Folktale* (1946) in her bibliography?). Her statements concerning the fairy tale are also vague and reflect only the most cursory acquaintance with the substantial scholarship on the genre. She also insists on using the terms "folk tale" and "fairy tale" interchangeably. This generic slovenliness carries over to her inarticulate and uninformed discussions of legend and myth (36) and, surprisingly, saga as well (99). Often, her comments are simply banal: "Fairy tales have delighted young and old for ages..." (3). Perhaps her most absurd comment comes in the discussion of the Potiphar's wife motif: "the . . . motif encompasses more substance than is at first apparent and is not simply a folk tale motif. . ." (102). Here, Hollis has simply misunderstood the analysis of folktales (and folk tale motifs) -- there is nothing simple about folk tale motifs.

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Te Aho Tapu: The Sacred Thread. By Mick Pendergrast. Photographs by Brian Blake. (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1987. Pp. 124, acknowledgments, preface, foreword, introduction, illustrations, glossary, references. \$19.95, paper)

This publication is a fine representative of the informative museum catalog. Its stated aim is to bring to the public a full description of a portion of a collection of Maori arts and crafts housed at Auckland Institute and Museum. This particular portion, textiles, was deemed too fragile to be included in a traveling demonstration of Maori arts and crafts; thus, the broader audience is sought through this catalog.