

I know, which would urge him to write such a book, and in that respect he contrasts favorably with a number of his geographic colleagues. It may have been written under the same incentive that produces the majority of our text books, and I incline to regard it in the same manner, as a superior potboiler. You begin with sufficient knowledge of regional geography; you next select historical facts, in particular those concerned with changes in economy and population and relate them "genetically" to the physical environment. Though I have seen this done for a good many years, the manner of this causal association is still obscure to me. Nor does Hettner enlighten the reader as to the nature of this conditioning; he simply uses reasonable restrictions on his imagination. Without new data, without any new technique of inquiry, without original working hypothesis, without emphasis on a geographic critique of the concept of area or of cultural succession, I really know no very good reason why a student should read this book, unless it be that he provides a sufficient place for the work of Eduard Hahn's studies and a good appreciation thereof. Incidentally Hettner was one of the first to see the importance of Hahn's work. This review ends on a minor theme, suggested perhaps by the author's quaint shift, in closing denunciation of the *Schuldfrage*.

C. O. SAUER

NORTH AMERICA

An-nik-a-del. The History of the Universe as told by the Mo-des-se Indians of California. Recorded and edited by C. HART MERRIAM. (Boston: The Stratford Co., 1928.)

Dr. Merriam knows how to present Indian tales beautifully well. He has the sense of the dramatic qualities in the unwritten literature of the Indians. There is something faintly weird, distant, primeval, in the charm of the Indian stories. Grotesqueness is a strong element; so also is naïveté, a special kind of naïveté which consists in stressing the irrelevant. The sense of doom is often present, but no sentimental tears are ever shed by the Indian over fate or tragedy. All these characteristics make it very difficult to reproduce Indian tales without leaving out their charm. The great majority of the tales published by ethnologists are very dull reading. This is not the case with the myths recorded by Dr. Merriam. It is easy to see that he knows, understands, and loves the California Indians. I have never met Dr. Merriam, but wherever I have worked in the field I have always heard the Indians speak of him with warm affection, a tribute they do not often give to ethnologists.

The work under review is a small book of some hundred and fifty pages, well printed in large type, and agreeable to read. Its subject-matter, as indicated in the subtitle, is the creation myth of the Mo-des-se. The Madesi¹ are one of the local

¹ I am sorry to have to confess that I do not particularly like Dr. Merriam's way of spelling Indian words. I thoroughly agree with his principle that a technical phonetic transcription should be avoided in works intended for the general public. But a closer approxi-

groups of what is known loosely as the Pit River Indians. These people's territory stretches along some hundred miles of the Pit river, from its sources in the high plateau of northeasternmost California nearly to the point where it joins the Sacramento river. The Madesi are situated at the lower end of the territory, and were in contact with the Yana and the Shasta. For the last fifty years they have also been in contact with the advancing Wintun. In other words, they are located in a strategic position from the point of view of the diffusion of culture. For the past few years I have been engaged in studying the extremely complex language of the Pit Rivers, and while doing so, I have accumulated a certain amount of ethnographic material, especially at the eastern end of the territory. I have come to think that there are a great many more points of difference between the cultures of the eastern and western portions than has been generally assumed by ethnologists. The present creation myth would seem to bear this out. Dr. Merriam himself points out that his tales differ considerably from those published either by Jeremiah Curtin or by Roland B. Dixon. I may add that they also differ considerably from those obtained by myself.

The classical personages of Pit River mythology are indeed all there: Silver Fox, Fisher, Eagle Girl, Weasel, Cocoon-Man, Spider-Woman, etc., not to mention the ubiquitous Coyote. Their characters are very much the same as in the eastern part of the territory. A good many even of the minor incidents are alike. But the general setting is totally different. Here I come to the most interesting feature of the collection presented by Dr. Merriam: it is a connected and organized whole from end to end. It is indeed, as the author says, a systematic account of the creation of the universe. That is precisely what I have always failed to obtain. I have heard several variants of "how the world was made" from the mouths of older Indians. The accounts differ considerably. Each old man claims his to be the true account. As one young Indian exclaimed to me once in despair: "I should myself like to know how the world was really made. But you can't find out. Every man tells it differently!" Not only are the accounts different, but most of them do not relate a true creation *ab orlo*, only a re-creation *de novo*; i.e., the world has been destroyed (for one cause or another), and the story tells how and by whom it was rebuilt. Most of the Indians are aware that a primary world existed once before it was destroyed, but how this primary world came into existence appears to them an irrelevant question. Why should it not have been always? In Dr. Merriam's account, however, there is a very definite (and, incidentally, quite poetical) beginning. The origin is assigned ultimately to Tik'-a-do He-da'-che. I have never heard this person mentioned before, but I think I can understand what the words mean from his translation: "the World's Heart." I myself should have preferred to translate: "the World's Thinking,"² but the point is immaterial. The

mation to it, such as the one used for example by Dr. Kroeber in his *Handbook of California Indians*, would, I think, serve even the general public better than Dr. Merriam's adherence to the vagaries of English spelling.

² té'qá'dé-ú háy-dùtsì means literally "world-of think-ing."

conception is a grand one, and, let me add, one by no means too abstract for the Pit River type of mind. This Tik'-a-do He-da'-che, however, comes into action only a few times in the story. The bulk of the creation is referred to An-nik'-a-del, his grandson. Annikadel is back of everything. He superintends the whole creation. What he does not actually do himself he causes others to do by sending them the idea in a dream. Only on certain grave occasions does he return to his grandfather, World's Thinking, to get counsel and power. Annikadel lives in the air, always.

His underparts were blue and white—the colour of the sky, so no one in looking up could see him. The most that anyone ever saw of him was a glint of light.

Annikadel recurs from one end of the book to the other. He has all the characteristics of a Transformer Hero. This Annikadel is an entirely new personage to me. I have never heard of him before, and I cannot think to what he corresponds in the Pit River mythology with which I am familiar. Dr. Merriam does not give any translation of his name. I have a suspicion (not more than a suspicion) that he is a phonetic corruption of Erikanner, the Transformer Hero of the Shasta.

An important part of the story concerns Moon-Man and Sun-Woman. The tale of how they are discovered beyond the limits of the world in the west, then transported back to far-away ice of the eastern end of the world, and finally shot up into the sky, is a beautiful one. It also is an entirely new one to me, as a Pit River myth. I have never seen any of my Indians show the least mythological interest in either sun or moon. On the other hand, some of the incidents of the story are familiar to me as forming part of the mythology of the north-central California tribes;³ such are, for instance, Moon-Man's attempt to kill his son-in-law, or the occurrence in pairs of certain characters (the Mice Brothers, the Lightning Brothers, the Thunder Brothers, the Raven Brothers, etc.). The work on Sun and Moon is performed at the risk of many dangers by Fisher and his younger brother Weasel. These are two well-known characters of Pit River mythology. Their exploits as recounted in this tale, however, are entirely different from what I have heard before. On the other hand, many incidents are identical with the Shasta story of Erikanner and Erihutiki recorded by Roland B. Dixon. Finally, the Dragon here called Kwillah is perhaps the famous Kilak of the Pomo. On the whole, I have a strong feeling that the present creation myth is a synthesis of the folklore of the Pit Rivers, of the Shasta, and of the north-central Californians.

It is evident that Dr. Merriam was very fortunate in discovering such a good informant as William Hulsey. Dr. Merriam speaks of him as a very remarkable man with a rare bent for speculation and philosophizing. I had already heard a good deal about Hulsey's knowledge from his friend, William Ralganal Benson, the Pomo chief whom so many of us have known. Benson's is another example of the speculating and philosophical type of mind among Indians. Men of this type are not satisfied with disparate chunks of information. They cannot help organizing their knowledge into a whole. Try as they may to preserve intact the traditional lore, they unconsciously inject into it the knowledge they have acquired from

³ By Jaime de Angulo and L. Freeland, *Miwok and Pomo Myths*. Journ. Am. Folk-Lore, 232-252, 1928.

contact with other tribes, from contact also with the whites. It is possible that we have here an example of the product of one talented mind working under special circumstances of cultural diffusion on the raw material of primitive literature.

Be that as it may, we have to thank Dr. Merriam for having preserved, and presented in most readable form, a real work of primitive art. This little book can be recommended to any lay reader who wishes to acquire a real feeling for the unwritten literature of the California Indians.

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AFRICA

Les Bas-Reliefs des Bâtiments royaux d'Abomey (Dahomey). EM. G. WATERLOT. (Université de Paris: Travaux et Mémoires de l'Institut d'Ethnologie 1: vi, 1-10, 23 pls., 1926. 70 fr. outside of France.)

This small and interesting volume is the first of the series issued by the Institut d'Ethnologie of the University of Paris. It is of convenient size, well printed, and well bound.

This number is devoted to the reproduction and interpretation of thirty-six bas-reliefs which among others adorned the ancient palaces of the Dahomey kings. Models and photographs of the reliefs were obtained by M. Waterlot in 1911. Their meanings were explained to him by a son of Gbèhanzin, who reigned 1889-94, by a minister of the latter, and by an old palace guardian. The subject and author are introduced by Professor L. Lévy-Bruhl. The text is annotated by Messrs. Maurice Delafosse and Le Hérisse.

Following a brief account of the history and extent of the Dahomey kingdom, and a list of the Dahomey kings, the author describes the construction of the palaces. The "*grand palais d'Abomey*" consists of groups of dwellings, altars, and tombs, each group having been built by a reigning king next to that of his predecessor. In the walls of the buildings, which are of earth, oil, and kaolin construction, are imbedded the bas-reliefs (pls. 1, 3, 4*b*), raised modellings which represent important events relative to the various rulers. Those pictured in this volume are from the palaces of Agadja, 1708-1728 (pls. 3, 4*b*-8*a*); Ghèzò, 1818-1858 (pls. 8*b*-15); and Glèlé, 1858-1889 (pls. 16-22).

The subjects pictured are allegorical, historical, and personal in reference. Though the stylistic treatment may be characterized as primarily realistic it possesses a marked convention. There are but one or two figures in each picture; these are executed with a pleasing clumsiness and simplicity. Graphic essentials are emphasized, merely decorative details omitted. The Dahomey artists were not prey to the "fear of vacant space" of which primitive artists are so often accused; each relief stands as a well balanced but by no means symmetrical unit against an absolutely plain background. As to color, little may be said since its accuracy is uncertain. The bas-reliefs from the palace of Agadja are plain due to weathering, the others, restored, are in two to five pure colors. Red, blue, green, yellow, tan, grey, and black are variously employed. The walls and background appear in a neutral yellow-grey.

That the decorations of Agadja's palace actually antedate those of Ghèzò and Glèlé by one hundred years is uncertain. Whether this is so or not, there are no