

## Books Briefly Noted\*

Complementing *Museum Anthropology Review*'s "Book Reviews" section, "Books Briefly Noted" offers non-evaluative overviews of recent books in the fields of museum anthropology and interdisciplinary material culture studies.

### ***A Culture of Stone: Inka Perspectives on Rock.* Carolyn Dean. Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2010. 320 pp.**

In this book, art historian Carolyn Dean interprets the meanings that rocks had to the pre-Hispanic Inka (Inca) and contrasts these with "non-Andean notions that have shaped current understandings of Inka rockwork" (1). The complexity of the Inka meanings is evident in her observation that, in the 15th and early 16th centuries, Inka people of the South American Andes "framed, carved, sat on, built with, revered, fed, clothed, and talked to certain rocks" (1). She argues that through knowledge of the words and practices of these pre-Hispanic Andeans, "we can attempt to understand rocks other than in Western ways. Moreover, we can approximate ancient Andean perspectives" (176). Dean's "Concluding Note" reiterates her themes, a main focus "on what can be discerned of Inka visuality, that is, specifically indigenous ways of seeing," and a secondary theme of "aspects of non-Andean visualities that have circulated around Inka rockwork since Spanish colonization" (176). Her work is amply illustrated with 15 color and 53 black-and-white photographs. Notes: 78 pages. Bibliography: 32 pages. [TCK]

### ***Prince Twins Seven-Seven: His Art, His Life in Nigeria, His Exile in America.* Henry Glassie. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2010. 477 pp.**

In this ethnographic and biographical work, folklorist Henry Glassie documents and interprets the art of Prince Twins Seven-Seven (1944-2011), a Nigerian who moved in international circles and who lived for part of his life in Philadelphia, USA. Prince worked in ink, watercolor, oil, pastel, and acrylic on canvas, wood, and brown paper, and also made sculptures, reliefs, and murals. His works were in some 92 exhibitions in numerous countries between 1965 and 2008 (423-426, 450). In the 1970s, some American art historians represented him as "a young artist who was reshaping the Yoruba tradition into modern masterpieces" (3). In this title in the IU Press's African Expressive Cultures series, Glassie quotes Twins Seven-Seven extensively, describes him at work and in social situations, and addresses themes of traditional expressive material culture and worldview as expressed in Twins Seven-Seven's works of art. Numerous photographs document Prince's life; some 65 high-quality color images represent his art from about 1966 to 2007. Notes: 24 pages. Bibliography: 18 pages. [TCK]

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***In the Forest: Visual and Material Worlds of Andamanese History (1858-2006).* Vishvajit Pandya. Lanham, MD: University Press of America. 2009. 540 pp.**

In this work, anthropologist Vishvajit Pandya uses historical and material culture studies approaches to enhance ethnographic fieldwork that he performed from 1983 to 2003 with indigenous people of the Andaman Islands (viii). Most of the islands are part of India (to their west), but they lie closer to Burma (to their east). Pandya examines the history of contact between tribal people and Westerners, representing both of their perspectives. The visuality section “looks at how the ‘Other’ is incorporated into an organized knowledge-system,” through discussions of “Ongee myths about outsiders” and of “early photographs of tribal people by British settlers and ethnographers” (1-2). The materiality section is concerned with how tribal people and settlers invest in objects and with “how these are transacted between cultures” (2). The history section looks at “actual encounters” between these groups (2). Figures (all black and white) include many photographs by the author as well as images by earlier ethnographers such as A. R. Radcliffe-Brown (201, 232, for example), 19th-century sources (140, 154, 161, 164, for example), and private collections (165, for example). Bibliography: 22 pages. [TCK]

***Vagri Material Culture: A Resource Book for the Vagri Community.* S. Bhakthavatsala Bharathi in collaboration with Pudukkottai Ilavenil, G. Srinivasa Varma, L. Raja, L. Manickam. Nungambakkam, Chennai, India: National Folklore Support Centre. 2009. 131 pp.**

This book documenting the culture of the historically nomadic Vagri community of the Tamil region of India consists of color photographs with captions in English and Vagri (written in Tamil script). It is a product of one of the National Folklore Support Centre’s Community Digital Archive projects, which operate at six sites in India. The center is a “non-governmental, non-profit organisation, registered in Chennai dedicated to the promotion of Indian folklore research, education, training, networking, and publications” (<http://indianfolklore.org/home.htm>). Among its goals are “to integrate scholarship with activism, aesthetic appreciation with community development...” Co-author S. Bhakthavatsala Bharathi writes that the digital archive projects in particular aim “to help historically disadvantaged and marginalized communities to preserve, conserve, and use their intangible cultural heritage and language with the help of digital technologies” (v). Chapter headings are: Habitations, Tents and Houses; Dress and Ornaments; Ethnicity, Lore and Materials; Women and Materials; Men and Materials; Band and Camp Organisation; Economic Organisation; Gears and Implements; Indigenous Medicine; Household Materials; Children and Materials; and Belief System and Rituals. [TCK]

***Jewel of the Railroad Era: Albuquerque’s Alvarado Hotel.* Deborah C. Slaney. Albuquerque: Albuquerque Museum. 2009. 124 pp.**

This exhibition catalog commemorates the life and times of a Mission-style depot-hotel-museum complex that operated from 1902 to 1970 in Albuquerque, on the Chicago-to-California line of the Atchison, Topeka and Santa Fe Railroad. New Mexico’s constitution was ratified in its dining room in 1911 (46). Historical preservation efforts failed to save the structure, but this

book shows that it lives on in the memories of its users and in the many parts of it that local residents and collectors salvaged. Deborah C. Slaney, Albuquerque Museum of Art and History curator of history, presents “details of the Alvarado Hotel’s architectural history, renovations, and furnishings” that illustrate “its architectural magnificence;” but also aims, “more importantly, to repopulate it with the memories of its employees, residents, celebrities, and guests” (x). Designed by Charles Whittlesey and operated by the Fred Harvey Company, the complex took up two blocks and served the railroad company’s broader goal to “promote the ‘exotic’ American West and encourage passengers to travel via railroad to experience its landscape and cultures” (ix, 9-10). Notes (including references): about 14 pp. [TCK]

***Masques d’Angola.* Manuel Laranjeira Rodrigues de Areia and Roland Kaehr. Switzerland: Musée d’ethnographie, Neuchâtel. 2009. 240 pp.**

Written in French, this catalog presents 55 masks and four pieces of clothing from the Angolan collection of the Musée d’ethnographie, Neuchâtel (MEN), as well as a preface (9 pp.) and essays (54 pp.) that give historical and scholarly context to the collection. The book also presents Angolan masks and clothing in other Swiss collections and in Rotterdam: five masks in the Bâle [Basel] Museum der Kulturen, five in the Genève Musée d’ethnographie, one (unconfirmed provenance) in the Bernisches Historisches Museum, three in Zürich’s Völkerkundemuseum der Universität, one in the Wereldmuseum Rotterdam, and three masks and one dance shirt in La Chaux-de-Fonds Collection d’ethnographie. The about 4,000 objects in the MEN’s Angolan collection were acquired during Swiss scientific missions in Angola between the first and second World Wars (7). This volume is the seventh in the series “Collections du MEN,” the second that focuses on Angola. Appendixes: about 15 pp. Bibliography: 7 pp. [TCK]

***New Museums in China.* Clare Jacobson. New York: Princeton Architectural Press. 2013. 256 pp.**

Focusing on the architecture of recently constructed museums in the People’s Republic of China, *New Museums in China* derives its special interest from the incredible rate at which museums are being established and constructed in China. Focusing on the design work of international architects and firms and featuring clear and dramatic photography, detailed drawings, and text based on interviews with architects the volume will be of relevance and interest (as intended) to those studying and practicing in the field of museum architecture. For those less interested in elite architecture, the volume holds relevance as an instructive data point on the incredible rise of the museum field in contemporary China. The volume’s introduction in particular provides valuable information on the Chinese museum scene. Indicative of the state of the field in China, the author cites statistics showing that, during 2011, 395 new museums were opened—more than one per day (ix). The museum buildings profiled in the volume span a reasonable diversity of Chinese geography and there is some measure of topical diversity in institutional focus, although art museums are numerous among the museum’s whose edifices are featured. Notes (including references): 4 pp. [JBJ]