

The Klabautermann of the Northern Seas. An Analysis of the Protective Spirit of Ships and Sailors in the Context of Popular Belief, Christian Legend, and Indo-European Mythology. By Reinhard J. Buss.

Pp. x + 139, bibliography, index.

Berkeley, Los Angeles, Oxford: University of California Publications, Folklore Studies: 25. \$5.00 paper.

Review note by Josephine Lombardo.

This work, because it manifests both the strengths and weaknesses of such an approach, is an excellent example of the use which can be made of material long stored in archives. Because the tradition of the ship spirit is no longer vital in northern Europe the author's stance is of necessity part-oriented. The items (memorates, legends, statements) which form the basis of Buss's study were collected between 1830 and 1940 with some literary sources predating the legend collections by a decade. The work has three parts: the first deals with the names and sources of the ship spirit; the second is a typology of "Klabautermann" lore covering the origin, appearance, attributes, nature, and activities of the spirit; in the third the "Klabautermann" is compared with kindred spirits found in northern European folklore.

The method employed by the author is essentially the historic-geographic enriched by functionalism. Buss succeeds in improving over the sterile listing of variants and motifs of many of the FFC volumes by taking note of recent legend scholarship and incorporating the ideas, for example, of Lauri Honko, Gunnar Granberg, and Barbara Woods into the work. The difficulties inherent in the approach have not, however, been overcome. This is not a criticism of the author as he himself admits the shortcomings of the investigation (p. 21): the texts are lacking for the most part in contextual data; the material was geographically unevenly distributed; the researcher himself was limited since all his work was done at U.C.L.A. Nonetheless, the work is one of painstaking, careful scholarship. The treatment of literary analogues and the discussion of the name "Klabautermann" are very well done. Buss handles his topic with a great deal of precision and seriousness, but since he makes little contribution to legend theory in general, I feel he will find few readers who approach the subject with the same degree of intensity.

African Art In Cultural Perspective: An Introduction. By William Bascom. Pp. xii + 196, bibliography, index, 135 illustrations, maps. New York: W. W. Norton & Co., Inc., 1973. \$2.95 paper (also in cloth).

Reviewed by Theodore Celenko, Jr.

For a variety of reasons this book seems to have been published with the

classroom clearly in mind. It is obviously too general to have been directed to specialists and does not seem attractive enough as a physical object (for example, there are no color plates) to have been geared toward the general public. The qualities which most suit it for the classroom are its lucid organization, straightforward style, dependability as a source of information, and its low paperback cost. The work clearly establishes itself as one of the better introductions to the subject available in English at any cost and perhaps stands as the best of its kind available in paperback.

In terms of format, the first chapter provides a twenty-three page introduction which is noteworthy for its comprehensiveness. The remainder of the book is organized into fifteen chapters, each dealing with different "geographic-cultural-stylistic" areas generally following the usual north to south, west to east order. Following the text is a bibliography which because of its brevity is of limited usefulness.

Perhaps the single innovative feature of this publication is the inclusion of a specialized map of the African continent at the beginning of each chapter. Each map is delineated according to the region under discussion providing the reader with a clear geographic orientation for the chapter. (To the reviewer's knowledge, only one other writer /Tibor Bodrogi, Art in Africa, 1968 employs such a device and his is quite simplified compared to Bascom's.) Although the maps do not indicate the locations of specific ethnic groups, they are usually able to be determined by the textual information.

Whether from a pedagogical or scholarly perspective there are a number of criticisms which can be raised. The most obvious, although by no means the most critical, is the problem of the title, which should include some reference to the sub-Saharan and sculptural orientation of the book. The work is almost solely devoted to sub-Saharan Africa, with but a few paragraphs dealing with other regions. Sculpture, especially of wood, is the only art form seriously dealt with, practically excluding from consideration the other visual arts such as architecture, wall ornamentation, body art and costume. The title might also benefit from the inclusion of a word such as "traditional" in order to signal the exclusion of more recent arts sparked by Western influence, which are part of and directed to the international art market.

The author attempts to culturally integrate sculptural traditions within their respective ethnic groups. Considering the handicap of a rather minimal text (approximately half of the 187 pages of text are taken up by illustrations) some degree of success is achieved in this attempt. The text also provides an adequate discussion of sculptural styles. However, one should not search for in-depth commentary, and it is clearly evident that comprehensiveness, not depth of discussion, was the aim of the author. In truth this publication might best be characterized as an outline or handbook just as well as an introduction. The book will undoubtedly strike some readers as too superficial. Others, perhaps more

fairly judging the nature of the work, will appreciate the book's conciseness.

Even considering the minimal nature of the text, Chapters 2 and 8 cannot stand uncriticized. They are of less than two pages each and have no accompanying illustrations. Chapter 2 (Egypt, Ethiopia, North Africa, and the Sahara) includes some worthwhile qualifying comments about North and Northeast Africa which would, however, be more appropriate in the introduction. The brevity of Chapter 8 (Northeastern Nigeria) is more disturbing since it deals with one of the richer sculpture-producing areas within sub-Saharan Africa. In addition, the previous chapter (Southern Nigeria) mentions but does not discuss or illustrate the sculpture of the confluence-lower Benue Valley groups such as the Idoma, Igala and Igbira. This situation results in a serious neglect of the entire Benue Valley region. There is no doubt that in future years when the sculpture of this area is more widely known the value of this book will suffer accordingly.

A synchronic approach to cultures dominates the work, although it would be very unfair to say the author avoids historical considerations. Six pages of the introduction are concerned with this topic, and historical references are found later in the text. He cites archaeological evidence, and in some cases he touches upon examples of more recent types of evidence of tremendous importance to the historian of traditional African arts. For example, he discusses the implications which can be drawn from the centuries-old Wieckmann collection (p. 24) and the eighteenth century Baule migration (pp. 68-69). The major criticism with respect to the author's treatment of the "ancient" or "historical" arts is not a qualitative one, but rather concerns the relatively little text space and few illustrations (less than ten of the 135 illustrations fall within this category) assigned to this topic. There is clearly no meaningful attempt to deal with these older arts in terms of specifics such as style, or more importantly, conjectured cultural significance as is done with the more recent traditions. While those not involved in an intimate way with historical problems will be little concerned with this shortcoming, others will find in this deficiency a major drawback.

In summation, the work under consideration stands as a concise and dependable introduction of value to students from various disciplines -- art history, folklore, anthropology -- concerned with traditional African sculpture. It is from this perspective that the book's worth should ultimately be judged.