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Author

Baumhoff, M. A

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REVIEWS

Karok Myths. A. L. Kroeber and E. W. Gifford. Grace Buzaljko, ed. Foreword by Theodora Kroeber, Folkloristic Commentary by Alan Dundes, and Linguistic Index by William Bright. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1980, xlv + 380 pp., \$25.00.

Reviewed by M. A. BAUMHOFF
Dept. of Anthropology
Univ. of California
Davis, CA 95616

The Karok lived (and some still do live) on the Klamath River above its confluence with the Trinity. Together with the Yurok and the Hupa, they comprise what Kroeber called a climax of Northwest California culture. The material contained in the present volume consists of 248 folk narrations and 47 formulae. The former are stories of events that have happened in the past, often accounting for the origin of something, the latter being intended for medicinal or magical purposes.

The volume is made up of two principal parts, one by Kroeber (100 pages) and the other by Gifford (222 pages). Kroeber's portion has some ethnographic notes in addition to the "myths."

In addition to the primary parts, there are several useful adjuncts. There is an admirable foreword by Theodora Kroeber who places Kroeber and Gifford in the context of their times and in relation one to the other. Alan Dundes' commentary provides a "toe in the door" of the folklore business, something those of us who are uninitiated badly need.

William Bright provides a linguistic index which transcribes the Karok orthography of Kroeber and Gifford into "more systematic notation" and also gives more literal translation where necessary. The editor, Grace Buzaljko, gives an index of parallel plot elements. The index references go not only to the material in this volume but to the other published Karok material as well, providing a beginning of the analysis of Karok literature as a whole. Thus we have new contributions to Karok studies together with all the scholarly apparatus one could expect.

This is a companion volume to Kroeber's earlier (1976) *Yurok Myths*; it is in the same format and has the same editor. In another sense, both of these can be seen as companions to the monograph on ritual of the Yurok and Karok (Kroeber and Gifford 1949). These three works, together with shorter scattered pieces, comprise a large quantity of documentation on the myth and ritual of the Klamath River region. With this in hand it is time we began working out the relationship of myth with ritual and also the relationship of both with such things as world view, economic organization, social organization, and the like. The documents of the Karok and Yurok volumes cannot be criticized for being "memory culture." They are memory culture, but then so are all literary works of this sort so they must be given full value. This is not to say such treatment will be easy. Among the difficulties are some I will enumerate in the following paragraphs. They apply to the Karok volume but most of them to the Yurok one as well.

In the first place we are given only the English texts. Thus no matter how learned anyone might be in the Karok language he will be unable to understand any nuances in the Karok version that may be important in the exegesis. Anyone familiar with the bitter arguments concerning biblical interpretation will recognize the difficulties here. Some of these problems are overcome by Bright's linguistic index.

A second difficulty comes from the plethora of sources. Here we have two anthropologists recording material from 12 separate people. All this will have to be sorted and categorized as a first step in the analysis.

Then the narratives themselves must be sorted. Some are repeats of earlier versions and are interesting for this alone. Some are origin myths of various lengths, others are tales explaining various natural and cultural phenomena, and some are formulas used in curing. Each of these categories may articulate in different ways with ritual or with other aspects of culture. Thus, the use of these and other texts is a formidable task, but there is no doubt that this area badly needs attention.

A word should also be said about the general editing of Grace Buzaljko—both of this volume and the earlier Yurok one. It is quite clear that the manuscripts she was working from were in very imperfect condition and required great skill in getting them in order. Beyond this there are innumerable footnotes by her, explaining the texts and cross referencing them to other relevant works such as the *World Renewal* monograph. Clearly, she has made herself an expert on this subject. The University of California Press is to be congratulated for having such an excellent editor.

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- From Fire to Flood: Historic Human Destruction of Sonoran Desert Riverine Oases*. Henry F. Dobyns. Socorro: Ballena Press Anthropological Papers No. 20. 222 pp., \$11.95.

Reviewed by RICHARD A. MINNICH
Dept. of Earth Sciences
Univ. of California
Riverside, CA 92521

Anthropologists have recently delved into the realm of human ecology, ethnobotany, and ethnohistory in an attempt to reconstruct the impacts of pre-Western man on the biotic and physical landscape. In this volume, Dobyns concerns himself with such impacts on the Sonoran Desert of southern Arizona and portions of southern California. In particular, he devotes considerable attention to what he calls the arroyo cutting and desertification of riverine oases in the Sonoran Desert of southern Arizona. This is not a new theme. Studies of geomorphic and vegetation change have been conducted in this region by Hastings and Turner (1965), Cooke and Reeves (1976), and Humphrey (1958). These have shown from photographic and other evidences that grassland and oak parklands on mountain slopes have declined, while mesquite has increased. Many arroyos along desert basins suffered heavy dissection during floods with concomitant deterioration in riparian vegetation. The underlying processes invoked to explain these changes are complicated and controversial. Among them are included overgrazing, cessation of wildfire, dispersal of mesquite seed by domestic stock, and climatic change. Most writers attribute these changes to Anglo-European settlement over the last