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## COMMENT

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### The Yuma Indians: A Comment

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The fieldwork on which Eugene J. Trippel's article on the Yuma (Quechan) was based was conducted in 1888 and 1889 (Trippel 1984). Several years earlier, in 1883, the Dutch anthropologist Herman ten Kate (1858-1931) passed through Yuma City. He had been excavating Indian graves in Baja California and was on his way to the Hopi, Zuñi, Apache, and other tribes of the American Southwest to conduct ethnographic and physical anthropological fieldwork (Hovens n.d.a). Ten Kate arrived in Yuma on April 17, 1883, and stayed there for five days, using the opportunity to do fieldwork among the local native population. A comparison of Trippel's article and ten Kate's report reveals almost complete agreement on ethnographic and ethnohistorical data. However, the notes of ten Kate provide some additional data and in one instance contradict a statement by Trippel (ten Kate 1885: 105-116; Hovens n.d.b).

Ten Kate's description of the *otoerboek* game is identical to that of Trippel (1984: 175). However, ten Kate (1885: 108) suggested that not only did a thrust of a pole through the hoop (*kaptzór*) yield points, but also that the position of the poles of the players after the hoop was stopped was of relevance. Stewart Culin's compilation of In-

dian games contains descriptions of hoop- and - pole games of the Mojave, Walapai, and Yuma (Culin 1907: 523-526). These descriptions are hardly unanimous in their explanation of scoring practice. Apparently, points were won in this game in several different ways: by a cast of the pole through the hoop, by a hit - and - stop of the rolling hoop by a pole, and by a certain position of the pole in relation to the hoop after the latter had stopped moving. It cannot be ascertained whether the Yuma used only one of these scoring practices, or more than one at the same time.

Ten Kate's academic training included ethnology, linguistics, zoology, physical anthropology, and medicine (Hovens 1984). His description of the physical type of the Yuma therefore guarantees some accuracy. As his description is also more elaborate than that of Trippel, a translation is offered:

It goes without saying that one can identify several different physical types among the Yumas; but when I try to convey an impression of their physical appearance, I concentrate on the most prevalent type. The forehead is reclining and the eyebrows are strongly developed among the men; the shape of the back of the head reminds one of the Pueblo Indians, because of its considerable flattening and the elevation of the side-bones. The Yumas are brachycephalous, just like the Pueblos, a condition that can be determined without having to resort to craniological measurements. The nose is straight, of medium length and somewhat flattened; the mouth is rather large, but without protruding lips; the chin is flat and broad [ten Kate 1885: 109-110; cf. also ten Kate 1892].

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Trippel (1984: 156) was not very clear about the health condition of the Yuma. Ten Kate (1885: 114) noted the prevalence of a mild form of syphilis and attributed this not only to interethnic sexual contact but also to the predominantly vegetable diet of the Indians and to climatic factors.

During ten Kate's fieldwork, Pasqual (*E-ki-ass*) was headchief of the Yuma, and Miguel (*Spah-got-err*) acted as his interpreter during his research. During Trippel's research, Pasqual died and was succeeded by his former protégé, Miguel. Trippel (1984: 159) wrote that Pasqual's son "would not accept the honor, for the reason that the dignity attending such an exalted position would prevent extensive commercial intercourse, and that he would be able to make more money as a private individual." In 1883, ten Kate encountered a young Yuma Indian in Pasqual's hut. The young man's body was painted from head to toe. He spoke English fluently and told ten Kate that he had achieved proficiency in that language because he had traveled around the world with a circus, earning his keep as a clown (ten Kate 1885: 113). The question is whether this young man was Pasqual's son.

Trippel (1984: 159) also wrote that Miguel "became chief by the dying request of Pasqual." However, ten Kate (1885: 113) stated that in 1883 it was already obvious that Miguel would succeed Pasqual and he pointed out that the position of chief was not hereditary in principle, but that the person most suited for the job was selected. In a 1887 letter to the Commissioner of Indian Affairs by Yuma Indian School superintendent Mary O'Neill, the latter confirms that

Pasqual's succession by Miguel was decided several years before the death of Pasqual (Bee 1981: 25).

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