

## BOOK REVIEWS

THE ORIGIN OF THE KEMANAK by JAAP KUNST. In *Bijdragen tot de Taal-, Land- en Volkenkunde*, Deel 116, 2e Afl (1960). pp. 263-9, 4 plates.

In 1955 the Abbé Breuil published "*The White Lady of the Brandberg*", recounting, with illustrations, his work on the cave paintings in the Brandberg mountain situated some seventy miles from the coast of S.W. Africa, near Cape Cross. One painting shows a sort of religious procession in which there is a young man carrying a pair of what Breuil suggests are musical instruments, perhaps clappers or cymbals.

Jaap Kunst, the great expert on the music of Java and the Indonesian Archipelago, says these instruments are "unmistakably *Kemanak*". This is a very important identification, for the *Kemanak*, usually occurring in pairs, is a typical Javanese clapperless, metal slit-bell.

Kunst uses this discovery to reinforce a diffusionist review of other instruments, the Chinese plucked lute, the African xylophone, the Indian *vina*, the bar-zither, the pointed flute and the bull-roarer. But the Brandberg *Kemanaks* are the centre of his interest, for accepting Abbé Breuil's date of between 1600 and 2000 B.C., and the opinion of Breuil's collaborator, Mary Boyle, that the cave painters were men of Mediterranean origin (possibly Knossos in Crete), he believes he has found the original home of the *Kemanak*, namely in the Eastern Mediterranean.

The identification of the Brandberg objects as *Kemanaks* is, we think, likely to find general acceptance, but not the date nor the origin. Most scholars regard Breuil's date for the paintings as wrong, and would place them around 1000 A.D., i.e. some 3000 years later: and Breuil himself treats Mary Boyle's Cretan parallels with obvious reserve—to us they seem too fanciful. Much turns on the date, for the latter date rules out Knossos. No one has yet dated the paintings themselves by chemical or other objective means. The C<sub>14</sub> date on which Breuil relies is that of the *floor* of the cave and not of the paintings.

However, the occurrence of the Javanese *Kemanak* near the coast of West Africa certainly reinforces the growing opinion among ethnomusicologists that plurigenesis does not account for the detailed phenomena they observe, and that some sort of diffusion must be postulated. It is a tribute to the memory of Dr. Kunst that his keen observation should have enabled him to give us what must be one of his last but not least important monographs.

A. M. Jones.

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THE DRUM AND THE HOE—Life and Lore of the Haitian People, by HAROLD COURLANDER, University of California Press, 1960. xvi + 371 pp., 90 photographs, 109 pp. of musical transcriptions. \$10.00.

Negroes and other peoples of dark complexion have constantly been used as scapegoats to cover up some of the evil practices of European society and its colonial offshoots, and white men have projected onto black men the darker side of their own selves, as Mannoni has shown in *Prospero and Caliban*. Corrupt or crumbling authorities, reactionary know-alls, prejudiced little men and panic-stricken materialists are always ready to attribute violent and wicked characteristics to harmless people, and sinister motives to innocent pursuits.

One of the most fatuous remarks of 1960 was that of a senior South African police officer, who claimed that when Africans meet in large numbers they mean violence. To anyone who has enjoyed being with crowds of singing and dancing Africans, this theory must seem as bigoted and ill-informed as many sensational accounts of Voodoo (or *vodoun*) must appear to Mr. Courlander, who has studied the music and life of the Haitians for four years, covered by twelve trips between 1937 and 1955. After reading his accounts of *vodoun* and other religious rites and beliefs (Chapters 2-8), and studying the texts of the songs and the excellent photographs, I refuse to believe that the Haitians were ever 'blood-maddened, sex-maddened, god-maddened' negroes—and indeed Dr. Alfred Métraux's recent book, *Voodoo in Haiti*, emphasizes clearly that the myth of blood-curdling Voodoo rites was propagated by colonialists, capitalists and their apologists, and by other interested parties who searched anxiously for any excuses to justify their oppression and exploitation of the Haitians.

Mr. Courlander insists that the Haitians "are notable for their restraint from physical violence" (p.164), and a political song about a President shows how they express their dissatisfaction with a regime (p.153):

*There was a president,  
He was Tirésius Augustin Simon Sam.  
If they were all like him,  
Haiti would be finished!*

One can understand the following "humorously macabre" song of a secret society being misunderstood by an outsider just as one of the horror songs which are in vogue today, or the rhyme "Father heard his children scream . . ." might be misunderstood by a Haitian:

*Cut up or devoured, which do you prefer?  
Devoured or quartered, which do you prefer?  
I'd sooner be devoured!* (p.168).

Mr. Courlander's book, which is beautifully produced, adds a new dimension to existing studies on the people of Haiti. The texts of the songs, which are given in Creole and in English translation, and