

control of the western hemisphere. When that time arrives, Brazil will have the industrial muscle necessary to back up their challenge.

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BACKGROUND AND RELATED TOPICS

*Pre-Columbian Jade from Costa Rica.* By ELIZABETH KENNEDY EASBY. Foreword by ANDRÉ EMMERICH. Photographs by LEE BOLTIN. New York, 1968. André Emmerich. Illustrations. Map. Notes. Bibliography. Pp. 103. Paper. \$5.00.

The magnificent jades of Costa Rica have at last received a study worthy of their artistic excellence. The problems faced by the author, an outstanding authority on New World jades, were formidable, for of the thousands of such objects known, only a handful have been recovered under controlled archaeological conditions. Per square kilometer, Costa Rica must be the most archaeologically looted country in the world; symptomatic of this disgraceful situation is the unhappy fact that one of its highest archaeological officials has been for many years the principal purveyor of Costa Rican antiquities to the international art market. Thus, to construct any kind of workable chronology for these jades would be a major achievement.

Mrs. Easby has done just that. She presents excellent reasons for believing that many of the jades, particularly the somewhat Olmecoid "axe-gods," belong to the Zoned Bichrome Period of northwest Costa Rica, around the time of Christ. More importantly, she feels that the Olmec themselves in an earlier time came to the Nicoya region to obtain the lovely blue-green and imperial jade for which they are famous. This source had not yet been located, but I have been informed by Mr. Charles Woram, who operates a manganese mine in the region, that jade outcrops have recently been identified on the Santa Elena peninsula, within the general Nicoya zone. If this turns out to be the blue-green variety, then a source for Olmec jade has been established for the first time. The Olmec trading network, as Mrs. Easby points out, would most likely have been by sea between the Mexican state of Guerrero and Costa Rica.

In addition to the above, this monograph deals with jade-working techniques and with a classification of Costa Rican jades. But beyond all this it is a beautiful piece of book production. The color photographs by Lee Boltin are so good in themselves and so excellently

printed that all the qualities of these cool, translucent objects from the Pre-Columbian past may be immediately appreciated.

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*Tarascan Myths & Legends. A Rich and Imaginative "History" of the Tarascans.* By MAURICE BOYD. Fort Worth, 1969. Texas Christian University Press. Illustrations. Maps. Index. Pp. xviii, 82. Paper. \$3.50.

This is an expansion of the author's *Eight Tarascan Legends* published in 1958 by the University of Florida State Museum. The subtitle, "Rich and Imaginative 'History'" says more than the author probably intended; certainly imagination takes precedence over history, and folklore too as far as that goes. *Tarascan Myths & Legends* is an attractively gotten up "popular" volume for the non-professional aficionado. If this were all that it intended to be, the following criticism would be unjustified. It is, however, presented as No. 4 in Texas Christian University's series, "Monographs in History and Culture," which suggests some pretensions to scholarship. Professor Boyd says that he "chose the most sophisticated and excitingly literate rendition available where a choice presented itself." The problem is he doesn't tell us when he had a choice, or even the source of the legends. In checking *Eight Tarascan Legends* I find credits to a Morelia housemaid, a mestizo of Capula (misspelled Copula, which in any event has not been Tarascan for generations), another "collective" effort of several "natives" of Cuitzeo, likewise long since mestizo, and a former tourist guide in Tzintzuntzan who had a "uniquely exciting, urbane style." Only one of the eight came from a Tarascan informant.

The legend "The Birth of Cueróhperi," which introduces the new collection, is presented in such fashion that the *Relación de Michoacán* appears to be the source. However, the identical version in the earlier work is attributed to the Morelia housemaid. "Just as the Birds," which by a process of exclusion must be assigned to the tourist guide is, in fact, a near-literal translation of "Como las Aves," pp. 15-19 in Jesús Romero Flores, *Michoacán histórico y legendario*, published in Mexico City in 1936, nowhere cited in the present work. "Forever Feliz" sounds very much like the sort of thing a tourist guide would relate, and, though badly garbled, it is in fact a well-known Tzintzuntzan legend. However, the family name, to which the legend is purported to give rise, is *Felices*, not *Feliz*, as Boyd states.

In his brief historical summary of the Tarascan area, Professor