

au siècle précédent à la sœur du héros. Il resterait évidemment, nous l'avons dit, à exhumer la source dont s'est inspiré Saint-Martin ou son informateur ; celle-ci aurait d'autant plus d'importance qu'elle serait la seule version du XVIII^e siècle spécifiquement française ; en effet, *Le Crime de Corbeil* est mentionné en 1727 dans un journal allemand et *Le Crime de Marseille* est relaté dans une feuille volante italienne de 1732 ; des deux autres variantes du même temps citées par Maria Kosko, l'une est anglaise, l'autre italienne. On comprend mieux désormais l'attention qu'il faut porter au texte du *Philosophe Inconnu* ; il constitue très certainement l'indispensable jalon qui pourrait nous permettre de retrouver la trace d'un récit de langue française qui circulait vraisemblablement dans le val de Loire à la fin du XVIII^e siècle.

Reims, Février 1968.

Jean-Luc Faivre

M b i t i, John S. *Akamba Stories*, The Oxford Library of African Literatur. Oxford, at The Clarendon Press, 1966. Pp. 240.

It is possible to distinguish three groups of writers on African folklore: first, amateurs, like missionaries, government officials, and African traditiophiles; second, non-African professional scholars, mainly anthropologists and linguists, and, third, their African colleagues. The main difference between these last two groups is that the Africans automatically have the inside view of their culture. They know the answers even before posing the research questions. At the same time, like their fellow anthropologists and linguists, they are equipped with the analytical concepts and methods which enable them to discuss and present this knowledge in a systematic form. Their works are potential eye-openers as far as the function, usage, and meaning of African folklore are concerned.

This book of Reverend John S. Mbiti lives up to the expectations we have of professional African writers. Mbiti himself is a Mukamba—a member of the Akamba tribe of the Eastern Region of Kenya—who absorbed many of these tales as a child listening to his relatives. As a result of this intimate acquaintance with his traditions, Mbiti can comment with no difficulty about such a complicated problem as the esthetics of story-telling. According to him, the choice of words, the usage of imagery, the clarity of pronunciation, and the vocal modulations are the critical tests for a good story-teller. The measure of the success of the narrator is his ability to effect his audience. "If he succeeds in making his listeners cry, laugh, feel afraid, or rejoice according to the story, he is an excellent story-teller" (p. 26). Furthermore, in *An Analysis of Story 47* (pp. 36—40) Mbiti describes, step by step, the reaction of the listeners to the narrative. He points out the humorous elements in it and provides the associations the audience has with various terms and metaphors used in the story. He also describes the gestures and non-verbal sounds the story-teller employs in the actual narration and which cannot be transferred to the written page.

The atmosphere of the story-telling situation is reflected in the organization of the stories in the book as well. The seventy-eight narratives (a selection from 1500 texts, the recording of which was completed in 1959) include animal tales, ogre stories and Märchen. However, since no good reciter would tell more than three stories of the same kind consecutively, there is no attempt to divide these tales into distinct categories in the book itself. In that sense, reading the book becomes almost as delightful an experience as participating in an evening session of story-telling.

While the introduction to the tales, written from the subjective point of view of a member of the group, is most illuminating, any objective information concerning this collection is completely absent. First of all, there is lacking any documentation regarding the writing down of the tales, such as dates of recording and names of informants and collectors. This makes any evaluation of the relationships between these particular tales and the general Akamba tradition almost impossible. Secondly,

there are also lacking any comparative notes whatsoever. There is reference neither to international tale types nor to African collections of oral literature. This is due, of course, not to the uniqueness of Akamba tradition, but to neglect on the part of the author. This collection of tales includes such Types as 1074 "Race Won by Deception: Relative Helpers," (tale 32), 563 "The Table, the Ass and the Stick" (tale 11), which are commonly reported from Africa, and others like Types 49 "The Bear and the Honey" (tale 5), 408 "The Three Oranges" (tale 61), and 425 M "Bathing Girl's Garment Kept" (tale 8), for which Aarne-Thompson *The Types of the Folktale* does not include any African reference. Thus, there is no attempt to view the tales in terms of international perspectives.

Moreover, Mbiti has not even tried to compare his texts with narratives that were previously recorded among the Akamba. Back in 1911–1912 Gerhard Lindblom collected Akamba folktales and subsequently published them both in the original Kikamba and in English translation in *Kamba Folklore I. Tales of Animals*, II. *Tales of Supernatural Beings and Adventures*, Archives D'Etudes Orientales Vol. 20:1–2 (Lund, 1928–1935). By omitting any direct reference to Lindblom's collection, Mbiti by-passed a rare opportunity to closely examine the changes that have taken place in a single African oral literature over a span of forty years during some of the most crucial periods in African history. We can only hope that he will utilize some of his unpublished texts for that purpose.

Philadelphia

Dan Ben-Amos

Merkelbach, Valentin: Der Grabhügel. Phil. Diss., Mainz 1964. 269 S. (In Kommission bei Rudolf Habelt Verlag, Bonn).

Valentin Merkelbach, ein Schüler Lutz Röhrichs, behandelt in seiner Dissertation die Erzählungen AT 815 und AT 1130, die in KHM 195 „Der Grabhügel“ miteinander kontaminiert sind. Daher auch der in seiner Kargheit etwas mißverständliche Titel der Arbeit.

In KHM 195 begegnen zwei unterschiedliche Volkserzählungsgattungen, die Sage vom Teufel, der eine Leiche schindet, und der Schwank vom bodenlosen, vergeblich zu füllen gesuchten Gefäß. Entsprechend mußten zwei selbständige Monographien angefertigt werden. Diese Hauptteile der Dissertation werden von einer kritischen Betrachtung der Fassung der Brüder Grimm sowie deren Vorlage und einer abschließenden Untersuchung der Kontaminationsform, kurz Grabhügelgeschichte genannt, und ihrer Varianten eingerahmt.

Wilhelm Grimm behandelte die Grabhügelgeschichte aufgrund einer literarischen Vorlage, die ein hessischer Pfarrer 1847 erstmals veröffentlichte. Der Verf., der mehr der Forderung Jacob Grimms nach historischer Treue gegenüber der Volkspoesie zuneigt, kritisiert den Bruder Wilhelm immer dann sehr hart, wenn dieser, aus Eigenem schöpfend, die Bahn eines Volkserzählers verläßt. Zum synoptischen Vergleich von Vorlage und Bearbeitung wird noch eine weitere, diesmal volkstümliche Aufzeichnung herangezogen, wodurch die literarisch umgeformten und erweiterten Stellen sowohl bei Grimm wie in der Vorlage überzeugend herausgearbeitet werden. Vielleicht sollte aber auch das literarische Anliegen und der einführende Stil Wilhelms mehr gewürdigt werden, der bei der Grabhügelgeschichte noch der besonderen und vom Verf. erwähnten Absicht dient, die Diskrepanz zwischen Sage und Schwank, den „inneren Bruch“ der Grabhügelgeschichte zu mildern. Der Verf. betont, daß dieser innere Bruch bestehen bleibt, da die beiden miteinander kontaminierten Gattungsformen zwei ganz verschiedene Teufelsvorstellungen aufweisen, die Sage den in Distanz zum Menschen befindlichen, gefährlichen Jenseitigen, der Schwank den vom Menschen betrügbaren Dummkopf. Beide Vorstellungen werden aber dennoch einander angenähert, indem ein wesentliches Motiv der Sage einfach fortfällt. Der schwankhafte Schluß,