WILEY

8. The Australian Marriage Laws.

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Source: *Man*, Vol. 8 (1908), pp. 21-22

Published by: Royal Anthropological Institute of Great Britain and Ireland

Stable URL: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/2840837>

Accessed: 28-06-2016 09:18 UTC

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seen that each of these sounding boards has a waist, owing to the natural conformation of the tortoise-shell. In this natural waist of the tortoise, the primæval sounding board of the Greeks and other people of the Mediterranean, I venture to suggest that we have the starting point of the familiar waist of the guitar and fiddle. If it be said that the waist in the fiddle is simply the outcome of an effort to obtain greater freedom for using the bow, the answer at once is that the guitar, in playing which no bow is used, has a similar waist. It may be said that the little rude instruments of Algiers and Morocco are only modern imitations of guitars, but we have just produced the strongest evidence for the use of the tortoise-shell for a sounding board in Egypt and in Greece long before the guitar and fiddle had been evolved.

We may therefore conclude that (1) in upper Europe there were instruments derived simply from the bow of the archer; (2) that below the great mountain chain in the Mediterranean basin the tortoise supplied a natural sounding board as in Greece and Italy, and that from it was evolved a musical instrument quite independent of the shooting bow; (3) that from the tortoise with its slightly indented sides has arisen the characteristic waist of the guitar and fiddle, both admittedly products of Mediterranean lands, the original tortoise-shell instrument with its strings simply stretched across the shell, as in the example from the Congo, was supplemented by a short neck, which need not have been suggested by the shooting bow, since the earliest known have very short necks (Pl. B., Fig. 6. Fragment of the roof of St. Mary's Abbey, York, from a photograph by my friend, Dr. G. Auden, of York); (4) in Africa both tortoise-shells and gourds have been widely employed since very ancient times, either independently of the shooting bow, as in the Congo specimen, or fitted on to the archer's bow to serve as resonators, as in the ancient Egyptian instrument and in the modern African *bomba*, and its developments on the Nile and on the shores of the Indian Ocean, which may have come either from a gourd or a tortoise-shell, a form familiar to us in the mandolin; (5) it is certain that the banjo with its circular resonator has been developed out of a circular gourd or the circular end of an oval one.

WILLIAM RIDGEWAY.

Australia.

Frazer.

The Australian Marriage Laws. By J. G. Frazer.

When my esteemed friend Dr. A. W. Howitt was in England a few years ago for the purpose of seeing his book, *The Native Tribes of South-East Australia*, through the press, I had the privilege of entertaining him in my house at Cambridge for several days. Our conversation naturally turned much on the Australian aborigines, and in the course of it I observed that the effect of the division of the community into two exogamous sections or classes was to prevent the marriage of brothers with sisters, and that the effect of the division of the community into four exogamous sections or sub-classes (with the characteristic rule of descent) was to prevent the marriage of parents with children. The observation seemed to me of great importance, indeed to go to the root of the Australian marriage system. But, so far as I can trust a treacherous memory at this distance of time, I was under the impression that this view of Australian exogamy was Dr. Howitt's own, and accordingly I was somewhat surprised when, on my mentioning it, he received it as one which had not occurred to him before. But with characteristic candour he welcomed it as true and recorded it with approval in his book, assigning to me the credit of the observation (*The Native Tribes of South-East Australia*, pp. 284-286). Hence I supposed that my original impression as to Dr. Howitt's view must be wrong, and since then I have flattered myself with the belief that I had made a discovery of some importance.

But to-day (January 2nd, 1908) in looking over an old paper of Dr. Howitt's (*Notes on the Australian Class Systems, Journ. Anthr. Inst.*, Vol. XX., 496 sqq.),

I find that my first impression was right, and that as far back as 1882 Dr. Howitt had clearly perceived and clearly stated that the effect and the intention of the successive bisections of an Australian tribe was to prevent, first, the marriage of brothers with sisters, and, second, the marriage of parents with children. To quote only his conclusion he suggests as "a reasonable hypothesis" that "(1) The primary division into two classes was intended to prevent brother and sister marriage in the commune. (2) The secondary divisions into sub-classes were intended to prevent the possibility of inter-marriage between parents (own and tribal) and children" (*op. cit.*, p. 504).

I have little doubt that this passage was the source of my impression that Dr. Howitt held the view so lucidly stated in it, but I may perhaps be excused for having forgotten it, since it appears that the passage had equally escaped the memory of Dr. Howitt himself. It is with sincere pleasure that I am thus able to disclaim for myself, and to assign to Dr. Howitt, the merit of having first perceived and pointed out what I firmly believe to be the truth as to the origin of exogamy in Australia. As no man has done so much as he by his writings and his influence to make known the facts of the Australian marriage system, it is fitting that to him should fall the honour also of explaining them. That his explanation will in time be universally accepted as the true one I entertain no doubt.

J. G. FRAZER.

Folklore.

Westermarck.

The Killing of the Divine King. By Professor Edward Westermarck, **9**
Ph.D.

As all anthropologists know, there are various instances recorded of man-gods or divine kings being put to death by their worshippers. Equally well known is the explanation of this custom which has been suggested by Professor J. G. Frazer. Primitive people, he observes, sometimes believe that their own safety and even that of the world is bound up with the life of one of these god-men or human incarnations of the divinity. They therefore take the utmost care of his life out of a regard for their own. But no amount of care and precaution will prevent the divine king from growing old and feeble and at last dying. And in order to avert the catastrophes which may be expected from the enfeeblement of his powers and their final extinction in death, they kill him as soon as he shows symptoms of weakness, and his soul is transferred to a vigorous successor before it has been seriously impaired by the threatened decay. But some peoples appear to have thought it unsafe to wait for even the slightest symptom of decay and have preferred to kill the divine king while he is still in the full vigour of life. Accordingly they have fixed a term beyond which he may not reign, and at the close of which he must die, the term fixed upon being short enough to exclude the probability of his degenerating physically in the interval. Thus it appears that in some places the people could not trust the king to remain in full bodily and mental vigour for more than a year; whilst in Ngoio, a province of the ancient kingdom of Congo, the rule obtains that the chief who assumes the cap of sovereignty one day shall be put to death on the next.*

Every reader of *The Golden Bough* must admire the ingenuity, skill, and learning with which Dr. Frazer has worked out his theory, even though they may fail to find the argument in every point convincing. It is obvious that the supernatural power of divine kings is frequently supposed to be influenced by the condition of their bodies. In some cases it is also obvious that they are killed on account of some illness, corporal defect, or symptom of old age, and that the ultimate reason for this lies in the supposed connection between physical deterioration and waning divinity. But, as Dr. Frazer himself observes, in the chain of his evidence a link is wanting: he can produce no

* Frazer, *Golden Bough*, ii., 5 sqq.