

book is not intended for light reading by laymen.

In recent years the increasing importance of geophysics to modern society has stimulated wide interest in this discipline. In this context there is hardly a more worthy or timely enterprise than the publishing of collected papers of noteworthy Russian geophysicists. The book is excellently printed, well bound, and indexed.

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Man in the New World

Lost Tribes and Sunken Continents.

Myth and method in the study of American Indians. Robert Wauchope. University of Chicago Press, Chicago, 1962. 155 pp. Illus. \$3.95.

Ever since his particular field of study emerged as a science, the professional anthropologist has been plagued by a constant stream of incompetent publications purporting to present the results of serious research on the always interesting subject of the origin and pre-Columbian history of the American Indian. What often has been annoying to the anthropologist is the wide acceptance by the public of what, to him, are the wildest and most absurd theories. He is frustrated by the realization that, while his own sober writings are as a rule read by only a handful besides his professional colleagues, these phrenetical productions all too frequently become best sellers, to the economic benefit of their authors and the distortion of the general reader's historical perspective.

Anthropologists have spent more time than they feel is justified in trying to argue with converts to these theories, generally with completely negative results. They will welcome Robert Wauchope's book if for no other reason than that it will give them something to which they can refer rather than attempt to provide their inquisitors with a beginning course in anthropology.

At the present time the great majority of professional anthropologists are agreed that all evidence indicates the Americas of pre-Columbian time were populated from Asia by way of the Bering Strait area through a series of infiltrations made over a long period of time, probably in excess of 20,000

years. There is not such complete agreement about whether many of the cultural traits, particularly those of the civilized areas of Middle America and Northwest South America, were of indigenous development or were the result of direct transfer from the Old World.

For a century or more anthropological scholars have been divided into two schools of thought—those who attribute the cultural traits of the Indians to diffusion and those who consider them the result of independent invention. No professional anthropologist would argue that the civilizational traits of Mexico and Peru were carried across the Bering Strait and overland to their present location. Therefore, if not of independent invention, they must be the result of direct voyages from some Old World center. The most impressive list of cultural parallels are with Southeast Asia.

The literature resulting from this controversy has grown to huge proportions. Much of it consists of serious studies by qualified writers, but the intellectual waters have been muddied by a flood of publications produced by improperly informed writers, religious propagandists, mystics, romanticists, and plain crackpots. They have their own method of presenting their accounts, most of which are highly colored by emotionalism or romanticism, a fact which contributes greatly to their popularity. Although the real story of the peopling of America, as far as it is known, is just as sensational as these imagined exploits, the typical professional anthropologist avoids putting this type of appeal into his presentations—hence his lack of contact with the general reader.

Wauchope reviews the origin and history of the favorite schools of "thought" and the ways in which they have been presented by different writers through the centuries. Among the favorite ancestral locations are the legendary lost continents of Atlantis and Mu as well as Egypt, Phoenicia, China, and India, to mention just a few. Actually, few localities, real or imagined, have failed to be mentioned, at one time or another. In most instances various combinations of these sources are used, and frequently it is suggested that they stem from Atlantis or Mu. There is no end to the variations on this theme, but a number of writers have reversed the procedure: they have man originating in the New World and spreading his anciently developed civilizations to the Old.

The scope of these presentations varies widely; some of the more ambitious ones attempt to account for the Indian and his culture *in toto*, while others picture an already existing primitive population invaded by the more civilized newcomers in pre-Columbian times. Usually these voyages account for the advanced cultures of Middle and South America, but others attempt to prove contacts made, with more moderate results, among the less advanced North American tribes, as a result of visits by such people as the Norse, the Welsh, and the Irish.

Having a lost continent in each of the oceans that border on the Americas gives the theorists a convenient stepping stone for either transatlantic or transpacific migrations—or both. It is not to be supposed, however, that all or even a majority of the off-beat theorists make use of, or even admit the existence of, Atlantis or Mu. Such writings when clothed in a scholarly dress, probably do more to mislead than the out-and-out crackpot articles.

Early in the 16th century when it was learned that America was not the Indies but a new continent, curiosity immediately developed about the origin of the inhabitants. As was customary at the time, biblical explanations were first sought, and the favorite theory was that the Americans were descendants of the Lost Tribes of Israel. To bolster this theory, a long series of comparisons were made of what, to the Europeans of that time, seemed to be exotic ethnological parallels: linguistic similarities, traits of material culture, physical resemblances, and the like. Most of the presentations were uncritical, of the "special pleading" type, with selected evidence and unsound premises. Frequently these theories were tied in with actual or legendary movements in the Old World.

One thing most of these writers have in common is a protective contempt for what they consider to be the narrow-minded and prejudiced attitude of the "fuddy-duddies," the anthropologists who have a Ph.D.

As a result of its readability, this instructive and entertaining little book could do much to orient the lay reader who is interested in such matters, and there is little doubt that it will be welcomed by the professional anthropologist and the historian.

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