

## Analecta et Additamenta

**The Identification of New A (Mythological) Motifs in the African Collections.** — In African folklore scholarship, there has been a heavy emphasis on collecting a fairly good number of theoretical contributions, but only a few scattered attempts at classification. The logical step, after the narrative specimens of the African material have been sufficiently published, should have been an arrangement of these collections either in terms of motif classification or type classification. But, in general, this has not been the case<sup>1</sup>. Such an orderly arrangement of African folklore material could have provided a basis for comparative studies of African material. In addition, an emphasis on the classification of African material could certainly represent an appropriate attempt to stress a neglected area of African folklore scholarship.

The identification of motifs belongs to the area of folklore classification. In this area of folklore scholarship, the most significant attempts at systematizing traditional narratives and classifying them for definite identification have come from the influence of the scholars of Northern Europe. In 1886, a Finnish folklorist, KAARLE KROHN, devised a catalogue based on most of the then published European texts that introduced what has become the standard reference and classification system for Märchen and for other kinds of European folktales as well (KROHN 1886 and 1891). KROHN realized the great need for an index of European folktale types when he encountered difficulties in gathering from many countries variants of tales about the competition of a bear and a fox. He posed the problem to his student, ANTTI AARNE, who undertook to solve it, producing in 1910 a catalogue called "Verzeichnis der Märchentypen" which was translated and enlarged in 1928 by SMITH THOMPSON as "The Types of the Folktale". In its 1964 edition, the Type-Index is an essential tool for any comparative analysis of Indo-European tales.

Those who worked on these type classifications, particularly ANTTI AARNE, saw also the value of an index of the smaller parts that make up the tales. AARNE realized that it is these smaller parts that often find their parallels in unexpected places. AARNE's ideas were never translated into action in his lifetime. But during the first quarter of this century, SMITH THOMPSON became interested in making a comparison between the tales of the American Indians and those of the Europeans. His study was an attempt to find out the borrowing of whole tales on the part of the American Indians from the European settlers.

When THOMPSON later attempted to study the less obvious parallels, that is the hundreds of small items he had run across, that seemed familiar to the student of European folklore, he was faced with the problem of their obvious arrangement. He discovered that no one had brought together the narrative motifs of peoples in all parts of the

<sup>1</sup> The few studies on the classification of African folklore are BRADEN 1926; KLIPPLE 1938; CLARKE 1958; AREWA 1966; LAMBRECHT 1967.