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note on page 209

48. Valid traditions can sometimes go very far back into the past. F. Boas, 'The Folklore of the Eskimo', p. 512, cites the example of the Eskimos of Greenland who remember wars they fought against the Normans (1379-1450), and the Eskimos of southern Baffinland, who still retain memories of the visit of Frobisher (1576-8). E. Meyerowitz, pp. 29-32, shows that in the state of Takyiman some traditions go back to 1295. In the case of certain South African tribes, M. Wilson, 'The early history...', pp. 173-8, shows that there too tribal traditions enable us to trace the course of history back until about 1300. Finally, I myself have been able to provide proof that the Kuba of the Kasai still remember the coats of mail worn by the Portuguese on the Congolese coast before 1525.

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Some time ago, Jousse, in an article that aroused a great deal of interest, maintained that the whole of oral literature was subjected to formal laws--mainly syntactical--which made it clearly distinguishable from written literature. Whatever the oral text might be, and from whatever culture it came from, it would be found to obey formal rules of some kind. His thesis, which was mainly based on biblical texts, is by no means convincing. The only marked difference between written and oral literature of fairly regular occurrence is that repetition is more frequently employed in oral literature. But there is no special form belonging to oral literature alone.