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Muiraquitã

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Iadson Carvalho dos Santos

Manaus, Amazonas, Brasil

October 2018

Muiraquitã (pronounced Moy-ra-kee-tan)

Brazilian Legend (Supernatural Non-Religious)

Informant:

Iadson (pronounced Yead-son) is a native Brazilian. He lives in Manaus, Amazonas though he was born in Boa Vista, Rondônia. Rondônia is the state above Amazonas and borders Venezuela. Manaus is the capital of Amazonas and is a fairly large city though less developed than other cities in Brazil. Iadson moved to Manaus when he was 11 or 12. I met him as a missionary for the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints when I was serving in Manaus. He was baptized into the church while I was in Manaus. He is now in his early twenties and lives with his mother and step-father. He is a former soldier in the Amazonas army.

Context:

Iadson told me this legend when I asked about stories from the Amazon Rainforest. It seems to be a common legend/belief and he made a point to tell me that you can still see and find amulets, like the ones he described, in Manaus. He said he did a project for school once on things like this and he learned about various legends. He told me this particular story in his native Portuguese through voice message on an application called WhatsApp. This app is the most common way of digital communication in Brazil. From his voice recording, I transcribed and translated his words to English.

Text:

Portuguese:

Bem, como falei gosto muito da lenda do Muiraquitã. Ele é bem simples, é um amuleto que tem a lenda. Ele é feito pelos índios que moravam na beira do rio. Elas pegavam uma argila tipo de pedra que elas mergulhavam do fundo do rio para tirar essa pedra e elas moldavam com formata de animais, jacaré essas coisas, mas o principal deles é um sapo verde que eles faziam de uma argila e elas davam de presente para os seus maridos e, para eles colocaram no pescoço ou usarem como algum artigo de sorte. Enfim, eh, ela é bem rapida e simples e acredito sim que as

peessoas, algumas pessoas, acreditam até hoje que realmente esse amuleto traz sorte. É um pequeno sapinho feito de pedra, ainda existe alguns aqui no Amazonas.

English Translation:

Okay, as I said, I really like the legend of the Muiraquitã. It is really simple, it's an amulet that has a legend. It is made by the indians that lived on the river's edge. They got some clay like a rock that they dipped in the bottom of the river to get this rock and they molded it in the form of animals, alligators, these kind of things, but the main one was a green frog that they made with clay and gave as a present to their husbands and, for them to put around their necks or use as a lucky item. Anyway, um, this legend is really quick and simple and yes I believe that the people, some people, believe even today that this amulet really brings luck. It is a small little frog made from stone and there are still some here in Amazonas.

Texture:

Iadson told this story with a very objective tone and told me afterwards that he does not believe in it. He told it as a fictional story of the past. During the voice message I could hear his phone going off with notifications or messages or something of the sort and often his pauses in the story correspond with those distractions. Overall, Iadson is a soft-spoken person so he told the story without much inflection or excitement.

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Introduction to Folklore/English 2210

Dr. Lynne S. McNeill

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