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LUZAC'S ORIENTAL LIST

and

BOOK REVIEW.

CONTENTS:

	PAGE
I. Reviews, Notes and News	142
II. Africa and Egypt	146
III. Arabia, Islam, Iran and Turkestan	147
IV. Babylonia, Assyria, Holy Land and Judaea, Syria ...	149
V. Buddhism	150
VI. China, Japan, Central Asia and the Far East	151
VII. India, Burma and Ceylon	153
VIII. Turkey
IX. Periodicals	157

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REVIEWS, NOTES, NEWS.

“**Gate of the East and Garden of Semitic Roots.**” Arabic dictionaries usually ignore other languages and do not show the forms which in them correspond to Arabic roots and words. One modest volume does give lists of foreign words borrowed into Arabic, but that is all. Plenty of material has been collected but it is scattered in many books and journals and would be the better for criticism. Dillmann’s *Ethiopic lexicon* is notorious for the wildness of its derivation and the Oxford Hebrew dictionary quotes an Arabic word but does not notice the remark of the lexicographer: “I have only seen it in this one place and investigation is needed to prove if it really exists.” The Syriac dictionary and comparative grammars of Brockelmann and the relevant works of Noeldeke are rich in material and Burney’s commentary on Judges has interesting suggestions. Hitherto no one has tried to gather the material into one place. Further the vocabulary of Arabic has been regarded as sacrosanct; if a word appears in the native lexica, it is copied into European dictionaries and no question is asked about its connections with other words. A slight acquaintance with Arabic reveals some groups of words which are close together both in sound and meaning; the conviction is thrust upon one that these groups are not chance agglomerations but are the result of development within the language. Some of these words are dialectical forms but not by any means all. The present work sets out to supply the lack of an etymological dictionary of Arabic. As far as is possible, for every word the parallel forms in Assyrian, Hebrew, Phoenician, Samaritan, “Ras Shamra,” Aramaic, Ethiopic, and south Arabian are given. Modern dialects of Arabic are also represented, especially Maltese. Not only the normal equivalents according to the regular sound laws are recorded but also abnormal variations. The arrangement is that of the Arabic alphabet and under each letter the first item is a list of the sounds with which that letter can interchange. Loan words in Arabic from languages outside the Semitic group are included and derivatives in European tongues are given. The author believes that the Indo-Aryan and Semitic groups of languages were not originally separate and carefully notes any evidence which in his opinion supports his belief. Some of the words give rise to notes which go far beyond the subject of the book.

A. S. TRITTON.

“**Quarterly of the Department of Antiquities in Palestine,**” Vol. X, Part I, 1940. This number consists chiefly of a long account by R. W. Hamilton of five test-soundings made by him in 1937-8 against the north wall of Jerusalem, between the present Herod’s Gate and the Damascus Gate. At the latter point some fine antique drafted masonry was to be seen, apparently still in its original place, but now forming part of the Moslem flanking towers of the gate. Mr. Hamilton uncovered a lot more of this fine masonry, and came to the conclusion that it was original stonework from the walls built by Herod, but had however been relaid and placed in its present position during the reconstructions effected by the builders of Aelia, the Roman city of Jerusalem, in the second-third century A.D. Mr. Hamilton actually found a very small portion of the original Herodian wall deep down still *in situ* beneath the later reconstructions. He also found a brief and much damaged Latin dedicatory inscription mentioning Aelia. In another of the soundings an aqueduct and an inscribed gravestone, recently published, of a Roman centurion called Tiberius Claudius Fatalis, were discovered. It is unnecessary to dwell on the value and interest of these additions to our knowledge of ancient Jerusalem. It is a pity that Mr. Hamilton’s account of them is a trifle difficult to follow.

In the same number, J. Ory describes an intact burial belonging to late Bronze Age II found at Tell Jerishe, near Jaffa.

“**Mulagandhakuti Vihara Wall Paintings.**” By **Kosetsu Nosu**. With a descriptive account by **Basil Crump**. This book contains twenty-two coloured plates reproducing the wall paintings of a modern Japanese painter at the Mulagandhakuti Vihara at Sarnath. There is also a coloured photograph of the exterior of the Vihara. The paintings, admirably reproduced by the Bharat Phototype Studio, illustrate leading incidents in the life of the Buddha. They are interesting examples of a style of wall decoration which is in some respects unique, for Mr. Kosetsu Nosu, while retaining much of far-eastern convention, has obviously studied and appreciated Indian painting, and his work contains many reminiscences, not only of the Ajanta and Bagh frescoes, but of later Indian miniatures. Some of the paintings (e.g., Plates 4 and 14) which are most plainly inspired by Indian models, are, as a matter of fact, among the most successful of all. Mr. Crump’s short explanations, with many quotations from Sir Edwin Arnold’s “*Light of Asia*,” will be of great assistance to non-Buddhists in grasping the significance of the pictures.

“**K’ang Hsi, Emperor of China.**” By **Eloise Talcott Hibbert**. The Emperor K’ang Hsi is admittedly one of the greatest rulers that China has ever had, and it is passing strange that no complete biography of him has yet been attempted. For this to be done in a satisfactory manner a good knowledge of Chinese would be necessary, in order that native sources might be consulted. It cannot be claimed for Mrs. Hibbert that she possesses this qualification in spite of her publisher’s assertion that she is “an accomplished Chinese scholar.” To take a single instance: it is by no means correct to say (page 71) that in the Chinese written language “there was no character to signify an eclipse.” Such a character has been in common use from time immemorial; it is a phonetic compound made up of the characters for “eating” and “insect,” and its primary meaning is very appropriately “to nibble.” All the same, it is possible to compile quite a presentable account of

K'ang Hsi by utilising the considerable existing literature in European languages which deals with the events of his life. This is what Mrs. Hibbert has done, and the result is a well written and very interesting book. It is true that the Jesuit missionaries play a rather more prominent part in it than historical perspective would warrant; but their activities in China during the seventeenth century were undoubtedly of importance, and students of this period will be grateful for the excellent portraits here given of such men as Fathers Schall, Verbiest and Gerbillon. Their amazing success in gaining the affection and confidence of an emperor who, though kindly, was always inclined to be suspicious, seemed for many years to augur well for the eventual Christianisation of the Middle Kingdom. We may read in these pages how this dream was dispelled by the jealousy of other religious orders and the shortsightedness of the Church in Rome. K'ang Hsi himself was then growing old and tired; one can understand that he lost patience when confronted with what appeared to him a petty ecclesiastical quarrel. But his deep regard for the Jesuits persisted until the end, a regard which will be shared by the more enlightened people of to-day. Had their views prevailed, much of the unhappy history of the nineteenth century might have been avoided.

LIONEL GILES.

“**Japan's Continental Adventure.**” This volume contains nineteen studies of the Far Eastern conflict in the form of articles and letters written at different times between 1932 and the present year by the well known publicist, Dr. Wang Ching-Chun (who must not be confused with the traitor Wang Ching-wei, now at the head of the puppet government in Nanking). Taken together, they provide a fairly coherent account of the successive stages leading to war as well as the progress of the war itself. The trouble, of course, began with the wholly unjustifiable invasion of Manchuria in 1931 and the pitiful failure of the League of Nations to do anything but feebly protest. Seeing that over ninety-five per cent of the population of Manchuria are Chinese, and that it is an integral part of the Chinese nation, it is clear that such aggression on the part of Japan, however deftly it might be cloaked by high-sounding phrases, was bound sooner or later to lead to war. For the Chinese have acquired a strong sense of national unity, and are not minded any more than ourselves to submit tamely to the domination of an ambitious neighbour. Dr. Wang, it must be said, is far from taking a one-sided view of the situation as a whole. He examines the Japanese case quite dispassionately, and discusses the question in all its aspects. For some of the horrors, such as the sack of Nanking, it must be confessed that there is nothing at all to be urged in extenuation. The book is well indexed, and should be found useful for reference by the future historian

LIONEL GILES.

“**Selections from the Three Hundred Poems of the T'ang Dynasty.**” Translated by Soame Jenyns. In the long history of Chinese literature there is one period, that of the T'ang, which has always been renowned for its poets. In certain other respects it may have been surpassed by the later dynasty of Sung, but the verdict of the Chinese themselves gives it the first place in the arts of poetry and painting. T'ang poetry, as the author of this fascinating little volume remarks, “breathes the sadness of a full-blown civilisation haunted by the impermanence of its own existence. It is the poetry of middle age, not youth; of autumn, not of the spring.” There has been a tendency of late among some European critics (not all of whom are competent to judge) to compare it unfavourably on that account with the fresher, less

sophisticated verse of earlier ages. This is largely a matter of individual taste; but it is safe to say that no other period can boast of so large and varied an output of genius, as exemplified above all in the great names of Li Po, Tu Fu, and Po Chu-i. The present selection includes many charming specimens of these poets and others of almost equal eminence. They have been arranged according to subject under ten different heads, of which those "On Drinking Wine" and "Separation and Exile" are perhaps most characteristic of the spirit of that time. Mr. Soame Jenyns has a gift of expression and a sensitive ear. He acknowledges his great indebtedness to two scholars whose published work does not do justice to their undoubted attainments, the late Sir Reginald Johnston and Mr. A. E. Wood. A considerable success may be predicted for this new addition to the "Wisdom of the East" series.

LIONEL GILES.

Sir Percy Sykes's "History of Persia" is now a standard work. He has now produced a "**History of Afghanistan**" as a companion volume on a similar scale which is intended to give the general reader information about the history of this now important state. Afghanistan really only dates from the time of Ahmad Shah Durrani's successful revolt from Persia towards the middle of the eighteenth century, but Sir Percy Sykes traces the history of the region from the earliest times. It is in this sense no doubt that the book claims to be the first complete history of Afghanistan, for there are already the works of Raverty, Bellew and Tate covering what is generally understood by the history of Afghanistan.

The greater part of the first volume is useful to the general reader for the amount of information concisely given. It is really a series of sketches of Central Asia history cut down, not always critically, from standard works on the various dynasties that have ruled in Central Asia and cannot claim the originality which marks the second volume. The Durrani dynasty is also scantily treated in only forty pages at the end of the first volume. In view of the scale of the second volume, the first volume of a history of Afghanistan should have been devoted to Ahmad Shah and his successors. It is when we get to the nineteenth century in the second volume that Sir Percy Sykes is able to write with authority and on the last fifty years with first hand knowledge. He has had the opportunity of discussing the principal campaigns and political negotiations with the principal actors and of many events he can say "*pars magna fui*." The second volume then will long remain of permanent value for the history of Anglo-Afghan relations from the time of Dost Muhammad onwards. The book, which is well illustrated and has excellent maps, is likely to be a most useful one to the non-orientalist who wants a general knowledge of the history of Afghanistan and an authoritative account of its relations with India in modern times. The orientalist will be disappointed to note that little, if any use, seems to have been made of the Afghan historians and other sources such as Whitehead's admirable work on the coinage of the Darranis which no historian can omit. The bibliography is a most unscholarly compilation, not even arranged under authors' names. It contains many books having no connection with the subject and omits others that have, while no bibliographical details are given to help the student.

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