

BOOKS SENT TO THE EDITOR

AFRICANA

André Basset: *Articles de Dialectologie Berbère*. Vol. LVIII de la Collection Linguistique publiée par la Société de Linguistique de Paris. Paris, C. Klincksieck, 1959. 179 pp.

On n'a guère besoin de souligner l'intérêt que peut avoir pour les berbérisants et les chamito-sémitisants, aussi bien que pour les théoriciens de dialectologie, cette réimpression photomécanique d'un certain nombre des articles d'André Basset, pour la plupart d'un accès difficile aujourd'hui. D'une part André Basset restera encore pour longtemps l'autorité par excellence en matière berbère, dont il sera inévitable de connaître la conception des détails comme celle des grandes lignes. D'autre part le berbère fournit – et peut-être est-ce là une situation qui n'aura jamais été plus prononcée qu'à l'époque de l'auteur – un état dialectal, une « poussière de parlers », d'un profond intérêt théorique par l'extrémisme de ses tendances. Ceux qui étaient intimes avec André Basset sauront le plus apprécier la préface de M. E. Benveniste et la brève biographie constituée par M. L. Galand. Deux index facilitent l'emploi du recueil, que précède une liste complète des travaux de l'auteur.

Karl-G. Prasse.

SEMITICA ET ISLAMICA

The School of Oriental and African Studies in London: *Index Islamicus 1906–55: A catalogue of articles on Islamic subjects in periodicals and other collective publications, compiled by J. D. Pearson*. (Heffer & Sons, Cambridge 1958), xxvi + 897 pp., 96 sh.

Even to a skilled historian, wishing to study objects of Oriental history, it is often a difficult task to find his bearings in the special

literature. *Sauvaget's* Introduction can, indeed, yield a provisional guidance. As far as modern periodical literature is concerned, we do now, however, have a bibliography as exhaustive as possible.

This book is based on an extensive collection of titles, a work which is bound to be received with gratitude. In this particular case the arrangement of bibliographical material demands special abilities by the compiler due to the fundamental combination in Islam of religion, politics and social structure. A priori, this complexity excludes absolute consistency of arrangement. Mr. Pearson – well aware of this difficulty – has on the whole succeeded in providing a satisfying arrangement. Nevertheless some short-comings of this type occur and are indeed inevitable in as far as the arrangement often depends on a personal judgment. The editor has tried to remedy this margin of arbitrariness by his copious table of contents and his (unfortunately rather summary) cross-references. Probably an index of Arabic proper names and special topics would have remedied the shortcomings to a certain extent; the alphabetical index of authors, at least, does not fill any such function. As a whole we have, however, obtained an extremely useful manual, which, used with patience and care, will certainly prove indispensable for any student of Islamic history.

E. Ladewig Petersen.

ORIENS PROXIMUS ANTIQUUS

S. Moscati: *The Face of the Ancient Orient*. (London, Kegan Paul & Routledge and Vallentine, Mitchell & Co., 1960).
– xvi + 328 pp., ill.

The author of this book does not aim to give yet another general exposition of ancient Oriental history; instead he has preferred the undeniably far more difficult approach "of attempting a comparative study of the essentials and characteristic features of ancient Oriental civilization". On the whole he seems to have succeeded. In many respects the influence of Frankfort, Wilson, Jacobsen and Irwin's well known work on "The Intellectual

Adventure of Ancient Man" is traceable, but as a synthesis this book is wholly a product of its author's own points of view.

The book has grown out of a series of lectures on the Italian radio, and consequently, its scope is popular. On the other hand, it is fully documented and the bibliographical references provide a valuable guide to the modern special literature.

E. Ladewig Petersen.

SINICA

M. A. K. Halliday: The language of the Chinese "Secret history of the Mongols". Publications of the Philological Society XVII. Basil Blackwell, Oxford, 1959. xvi + 235 pp.

After the second world war quite a few publications have appeared treating Chinese grammar from the point of view of modern linguistics. In 1947 and 1948 Y. R. Chao gave excellent aperçus of the grammar of the two main modern dialects, Cantonese and Mandarin respectively, in his well-known Primers. H. F. Simon wrote on "Two substantival complexes in Standard Chinese" in the BSOAS 15 (1953), and M. A. K. Halliday on "Grammatical categories in Modern Chinese" in the TPS (1956). Henri Frei discussed "The ergative construction in Chinese" in the Gengo Kenkyu 21 (1956) and 22 (1957), and (also in 1956) your reviewer gave an outline of a South Chinese idiom in "The Lungtu Dialect". Most recently W. A. C. H. Dobson contributed his extensive study of "Late Archaic Chinese" (1959. Reviewed in AO 25, 1960); and his "Studies in the grammar of Early Archaic Chinese" in TP 46 (1958).

Different schools of structural linguistics were adhered to in the works mentioned. The book under review is based mainly on the linguistic theory and methodology developed by J. R. Firth at the School of Oriental and African Studies of the University of London.

Halliday's book contains a precise and exhaustive descriptive statement of the grammar of the Chinese translation of the Secret

History of the Mongols, dated probably from the late 14th century. This synchronic statement is compared in all major details to similar grammatical categories of Modern Chinese (cf. Halliday's paper from 1956, mentioned above). Methodologically this procedure is, of course, highly important, and there can be no doubt that this investigation constitutes one of the first successful attempts at comparing for diachronic purposes two synchronic stages of a language structurally described.

The method applied in the description, rather than its results, is obviously the prime concern of the author. A certain verbosity stems from a tendency to explain the obvious, which is not always matched by a similar desire to clarify the obscure. The complete grammar is stated in abstract symbols before illuminating examples are introduced in a separate chapter – an arrangement which makes heavy demands on the reader's patience and concentration.

However, the methodology, its rigid application, and the valuable results achieved render the book a very important contribution to general linguistics and to Sinology.

Soren Egerod.