

SHORT NOTICES

WINFRED P. LEHMANN, ESTHER RAIZEN
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Biblical Hebrew: an analytical introduction. San Antonio, TX: Wings
Press, 1999. \$35 (paper).

The inductive approach to teaching classical languages has been around for over a century, but it needed the post-war revolt against the grammar-translation method to win it broad support, as in the Cambridge Latin Series. Biblical Hebrew has not been so fortunate; despite William Rainey Harper's *Elements of Hebrew syntax by an inductive method* (New York, 1888), the carefully controlled grammar-translation method has continued to dominate. The work under review is a bold blow for the inductive method, but its ultimate success will depend on several other ambitious, but possibly ill-conceived, features.

The book is billed as 'a non-denominational means of access to the Old Testament in its original language, focusing on passages from the books of Genesis, Exodus, I Samuel, Isaiah, Psalms and Proverbs.' Each of its 20 chapters leads with a few verses in the original—followed by a transliteration, several pages of word-by-word linguistic parsings and explanations, and a few pages of grammar and phonology relating occasionally to the opening text, spiced with historical excursions and other tidbits.

These 220 pages are supplemented by a 100-page 'alephbetical' listing and parsing of every form encountered in the texts, standard inflectional tables, a full index and a welcome glossary of the myriad technical terms that the authors have used. The sheer scale and detailed explanation is impressive. So too, overall, is the scholarship. However, applying a grammatical 'litmus test', it is surely neither consistent nor candid to state on pp.26–7 that the Pi'el/pu'al pattern 'may indicate intensity in the action of the verb' and is 'often ... factitive ... or causative' and then on p. 50 that 'later studies point to factitive force as the basic idea underlying the pattern.' This is to read some hypothetical prehistoric 'grand plan' into what are, realistically speaking, muddy grammatical waters.

I did enjoy the informative and well-informed essays, scattered around the book, on the oral Hebrew traditions of the Jews, the various systems of *niqqud*, the shape of Israeli Hebrew and the like; such contextualization of Biblical Hebrew teaching is long overdue. My reservations are pedagogical. The book makes heavy use of transliteration: the only place one sees Hebrew script is in the opening Biblical verses and in the word listings; even the inflectional tables are entirely in transliteration. All of this, the authors state, is designed to spare the American user, whether self-taught or college student, Bible major or passing shopper, the stress of acquiring an alien script. I am sceptical as to whether the arcane

transliteration is truly an easier option than a few weeks spent learning Hebrew script. I also wonder why the authors found it necessary to go into so much technical detail with every word and grammatical feature. The inductive method already has its trade-off: it is far harder to arrive at a reasonably graded syllabus. To compensate, an introductory textbook has to look and sound light. This one does not.

LEWIS H. GLINERT

KERRY BROWN (ed.): *Sikh art and literature*. xx, 217 pp., 22 plates.
London and New York: Routledge
(in collaboration with the Sikh
Foundation), 1999. £17.99 (paper).

This attractively produced volume originated in the conference and associated exhibition entitled 'Splendors of the Punjab: art of the Sikhs' which were held in San Francisco in 1992. The occasion was a celebration of the twenty-fifth anniversary of the Sikh Foundation, whose chairman Dr Narinder Singh Kapany is well known far beyond California as a noted patron of Sikh studies and collector of Sikh art.

Published in the same year as Susan Stronge's *The arts of the Sikh kingdoms*, which accompanied the notable outstanding exhibition of that name at the Victoria and Albert Museum, this too is a book designed as much for the general reader, especially diaspora Sikhs, as for a narrowly specialist academic audience. It is therefore no surprise that much larger lettering is used on the cover for the attractive word 'Art' than for the notoriously less saleable 'Literature'.

Nor will most likely purchasers of this well edited and very reasonably priced paperback be disappointed. After a general introduction by Dr Kapany and Kerry Brown, who is the Sikh Foundation's director of programmes, the first part of the volume comprises four papers on pre-modern Sikh art, among which particular mention may be made of Robert del Bonta's excellent study of Guru Nanak in narrative art. All the papers are amply provided with well reproduced black-and-white illustrations, besides a further 42 plates in full colour, many of fine paintings from the Kapany Collection and mostly illustrating del Bonta's paper.

The five papers on mostly twentieth-century literary topics included in the second part are on the whole rather slighter in character, but Surjit Singh Dulai has some interesting things to say about the now rather disregarded mystical verse of the early twentieth-century poet Puran Singh. The volume closes with a spirited critique by Abdul Jabbar of the very differently conceived English short stories of Khushwant Singh, and the contrast between the two writers does serve to underline the wide

range covered by the term 'modern Sikh literature'.

CHRISTOPHER SHACKLE

ROSIE LLEWELLYN-JONES: *Engaging scoundrels: true tales of old Lucknow*. xvi, 196 pp. New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2000. Rs 595.

With this attractively unpretentious volume of miscellanea, Rosie Llewellyn-Jones provides a set of often beguiling sketches which extends the pictures of Nawabi Lucknow given more comprehensively in her first book *A fatal friendship* (1985) and in the following study of Claude Martin entitled *A very ingenious man* (1992), both also published by Oxford University Press.

The book is loosely arranged in six chapters, each accompanied by endnotes which show the range of nineteenth-century published and unpublished English sources, as well as others in Urdu, which have gone into its making. The emphasis of these sources is reflected in the opening chapter on 'Entertaining the Nawabs', which looks with some fresh details at the familiar picture of the lavish displays of the last great post-Mughal court of North India to be preserved as a puppet state by the British. The sources have less to offer in the following chapter on the poorer classes although the sinister implications of the city's famously hedonistic lifestyle are brought out in the hospital records of the treatment of prostitutes of both sexes for venereal disease.

The third chapter returns to sunnier territory with its portrait of George Derusett, the royal favourite made notorious as Barber of Lucknow in Knighton's *The private life of an Eastern king*. The newly available evidence of Derusett's own Cash Book allows an attractive picture of this truly 'engaging scoundrel' to emerge. Fresh material tracked down through personal inquiries made of their living descendants also allows engaging portraits of several visitors from Nawabi Lucknow to England to be drawn in the next chapter. Perhaps the most interesting is Helena Bennett, born the daughter of a Persian officer in Shah Alam's service who eventually retired to the environs of Horsham where she was known as 'The Black Princess' and may have met the youthful Shelley.

The book's illustrations, attractively selected if sometimes reproduced on a rather mean scale, include sketches of Iqbal ud Daula's 1838 visit to London to plead his case for accession to the throne. Descriptions of this and the equally abortive later visit by Vajid Ali Shah's mother preface a chapter on the impact of British administration in the brief interval between annexation and the outbreak of violence in 1857. After a memorable account of the quite extraordinary British precautions to safeguard the Residency flag and its tower in August 1947, the final chapter deals with the progressive encroachments of unscrupulous developers on the desirable real estate of the British cemeteries, whose current fate is summarized in a short appendix.

Some readers might have found it useful to have a chronological table or a family tree to help them distinguish the Nawabs from one another, and others may be occasionally unsettled by the various styles of spelling of Indian words and titles, not all of which are updated from nineteenth-century sources, e.g., *Ajeb-ul-Nucklau* (p.106, i.e., 'Ajā'ib al-nuqalā'), but this book may be warmly recommended as lighter reading to all those interested in the period and in the city which remains so identified with it.

CHRISTOPHER SHACKLE

DONALD HOLZMAN: *Chinese literature in transition from antiquity to the middle ages*. xii, 330 pp. (Variorum Collected Studies Series CS 605.) Aldershot, Hampshire: Ashgate Variorum, 1998. £55.

This volume of collected studies by Donald Holzman actually appeared shortly before his *Immortals, festival and poetry in Medieval China* (1998) in the same series, which has already been reviewed in *BSOAS* (62/2, 1999). The delay in reviewing this collection has been purely accidental: the very high standards of scholarship in Holzman's work, to which attention has already been drawn, are equally in evidence here, and in some respects the more or less exclusive concentration on literature (or, in two pieces, literary criticism) gives the volume a greater coherence than its companion. Even so, there is much here for students of medieval China with other interests: no informed discussion of the dialogues of the great Chinese Zen masters since the first publication of the first essay 'The conversational tradition in Chinese philosophy' in 1956 has failed to mention the secular literary background stretching back to the *Analec*s that Holzman illuminates here, and it is good to see this piece in print again, even if (as is not the case with the five further pieces, for which brief tables of errata are supplied) the author has found no corrections necessary. The sixth essay, on the birth of landscape poetry, is by far the longest, since it republishes a work which first appeared somewhat obscurely as a full monograph, complete with its own table of contents, index and so forth. The four-page index for the first five essays is, like that for the sixth, keyed to *pinyin*, in view of the diversity of transcriptions covered in the original publications. This fact, and the dates of publication spanning no less than 40 years, together bear witness to a long career of involvement in a number of different academic settings across the globe—all the more reason for us to be grateful to Donald Holzman for bringing these originally widely scattered studies together in one place.

T. H. BARRETT

WANG GUNGWU: *The Chinese overseas: from earthbound China to the quest*

for autonomy. 148 pp. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2000.

This short book contains the texts of the three Edwin O. Reischauer Lectures given at Harvard University in 1997. Some slight editing has been done to accommodate the intervening three years between lectures and publication. There is no more authoritative specialist on the overseas Chinese than Professor Wang, and he speaks and writes with clarity and a mastery of historical background which does not stale. The recent small flush of books on the subject gives plenty of detail and insights, but for a comprehensive overview of the nature of Chinese migrations and sojournings abroad these few pages could hardly be bettered.

Lecture One bears the title 'Seaward sweep' and drives home the message that the Chinese have always been a settled agricultural people, wedded to the soil ('earthbound'), and even while they expanded constantly southward from their heartland in the basin of the Yellow River their minds remained set on the centripetal mores and lifestyles evolved from the necessities of grain production. Their earthbound longevity as a culture is compared with the more fluid and short-term nature of Mediterranean and European cultures based on sea-power, and the indifference of their rulers and thinkers to almost everything (including Chinese people) outside China's own borders is seen both as a strength and a weakness. Lecture Two, 'The sojourners' way', shows how strongly even those who did leave China's shores felt the pull of home. Despised by the society they had deserted, despised or envied by the host cultures in which they lived, the overseas Chinese clung blindly to the one constant strength of their identification with the culture of China, only to find themselves ultimately trapped between the competing nationalisms which sprang up around the beginning of the twentieth century.

Lecture Three, 'The quest for autonomy', demonstrates the agonies and accommodations which the overseas Chinese have subsequently been through. In some ways more Chinese than the Chinese in China, and not necessarily sympathetic to the claims of either Chinese Communism or Chinese nationalism, they found it difficult to assimilate to the host cultures, and have fared rather better in the

multiculturalizing societies of the West than they have in their more traditional South-East Asian environments which have tended to demand their assimilation. Autonomy here means being Chinese in a multicultural society, but with China becoming stronger and turning finally seawards, the implications of this for the host societies in the future cannot be fathomed, and Wang Gungwu does not attempt to fathom them.

HUGH D. R. BAKER

THOMAS P. JEDELE and LUCIEN EM. RANDRIANARIVELO. *Malagasy newspaper reader and grammar*, with a concise introduction to the Malagasy language by the Rev. W. E. COUSINS. 250 pp. Kensington, MD: Dunwoody Press, 1998. \$48.00.

This book contains a variety of materials which may appear of uneven value. The most useful are undoubtedly the selection of 44 texts arranged according to their order of difficulty and reprinted from newspapers which appeared between 1885 and 1992. Translations and a short dictionary are also provided. These modern texts in the official language, have wisely been selected to illustrate many facets of the cultural, social and political life of Madagascar. They will be extremely useful in teaching Malagasy.

I am not so convinced of the necessity of reprinting with these materials Rev. W. E. Cousins's grammar. This appeared more than a century ago, and even though it was an excellent descriptive grammar in that time, one has to take into account that research performed in this field by Malagasy and foreign scholars has gone far beyond since. The listed bibliography of modern grammars of Malagasy is incomplete (p. xv) and if permission had been requested, Rajaonarimanana and Vérin would have been happy to share their recent and concise grammar (published by L'Asiathèque) translated into English.

However, this discrepancy of more than a century between the texts and the appended grammar should not discourage beginners from using this important text.

PIERRE VERIN