

## Notes and News

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### '*African Abstracts*'—Cessation of Publication

THE International African Institute greatly regrets that *African Abstracts* will cease publication with vol. 23, no. 4, October 1972. That number will include the title-page and index for the year. Back numbers and complete sets from vol. 1, 1950, will continue to be available from Wm. Dawson & Sons Ltd., Cannon House, Folkestone, Kent.

The great and continuing expansion in the number of periodicals and articles relating to African studies together with sharply rising overhead costs has, unfortunately, outrun both the present and prospective resources of the International African Institute for preparing and publishing *African Abstracts*. It has for some time been apparent that it was no longer proving possible, within the limitations of staff and funds, to provide the prompt and comprehensive publication of abstracts of all the relevant periodicals that should be covered. The Institute has, unfortunately, been unable to obtain the considerable and assured funds that would be needed to support a larger and more costly operation.

The circulation of *African Abstracts* has reached a plateau at around 1,100 copies, the great majority of subscriptions being from libraries of universities and other institutions from which little further expansion could be expected, and there has from the outset been a disappointingly small number of personal subscriptions. The Institute has therefore been most reluctantly forced to the conclusion that it cannot continue publication after this year.

It is to be hoped that, as the scholarly periodical publication in African studies continues to grow, means may be found to provide in some other form a systematic review of this literature. Meanwhile our thanks are due to those who have supported *African Abstracts* over its twenty-three years of publication. We are indebted to the subscribers, to the Ford Foundation, and especially to the International Council for the Humanities and Philosophy (CIPSH) which has contributed a supporting grant over so many years.

### *University of York: Centre for Southern African Studies*

THE University of York, which already has links with Southern Africa and a core of teachers with special interest in the area, has set up a Centre for Southern African Studies under the Directorship of Christopher R. Hill, Lecturer in Politics at the University.

There has hitherto been no centre in the United Kingdom devoted to the study of Southern Africa as a whole though there are of course individual researches being carried out in a number of universities. Southern Africa, which is taken to include Malawi, Zambia, Rhodesia, Angola, Mozambique, South-West Africa, Botswana, Lesotho, Swaziland, and South Africa, has had a long connection with the United Kingdom and presents unique problems which will continue to be of great importance and which concern other countries as well as other states on the African continent. The Centre at York hopes to build up its teaching and research to provide a natural focus for scholars from continental Europe and all parts of Southern Africa as well as for those based in the United Kingdom. The Director of the Centre is appointed by a standing committee of professors closely associated with the project, representing economics, politics, sociology, and history. An active fund-raising campaign is being greatly assisted by the Southern African Studies Trust, which is being formed to raise funds on the Centre's behalf. The Centre is envisaged at first as a teaching

institution, which will quickly develop a research potential as students are attracted to York for higher degrees in Southern African Studies and as the research material available in the library expands. The Politics Department started a B.Phil. in Southern African Politics in October 1971; it is hoped to start similar postgraduate degrees in other disciplines in October 1973. Modern archives are being collected and a number of generous gifts have already been made or promised, of which the most important is the records of the Capricorn Africa Society. It is hoped that in due course the Centre will be able to offer visiting Fellowships (and a neutral meeting ground) to scholars from all parts of Southern Africa.

*Colloque International sur les Méthodes d'Enquête et de Description des Langues sans Tradition Écrite: Nice, juin-juillet 1971.*

L'ÉQUIPE de Recherche 74 'Recherche et étude de méthodes d'enquête et de description des langues sans écriture avec application aux langues des plateaux d'Afrique Centrale' du Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique, a organisé, du 28 juin au 2 juillet 1971, un colloque international sur les méthodes d'enquête et de description des langues sans tradition écrite, sous la présidence de Jacqueline Thomas et de Gabriel Manessy.

La nécessité de disposer au départ de questionnaires d'enquête rédigés dans une saine perspective méthodologique s'est fait sentir chez un grand nombre de chercheurs, non seulement dans le domaine de la linguistique, mais aussi dans des domaines connexes (ethno-botanique, -zoologie, -musicologie, -technologie). D'autre part, il serait souhaitable, principalement pour les besoins de la comparaison, de posséder des descriptions d'un grand nombre de langues, rédigées suivant des principes et, si possible, suivant un modèle identique.

Le colloque avait été préparé pendant plus de quinze mois et les grandes lignes en avaient été abordées au cours des séminaires bi-mensuels de l'*Er 74*.

Les principaux thèmes abordés s'inscrivent dans les rubriques suivantes:

1. Préliminaires à l'enquête. Élaboration des questionnaires.
2. Techniques d'information.
3. Problèmes de comparaison généalogique.
4. Constitution des corpus et méthodes de description.
5. Organisation et fonctionnement des équipes de recherche. Programmes et travaux en cours.

Une trentaine de participants, originaires de onze pays différents, ont présenté des communications, dont la plupart se réfèrent à des langues d'Afrique Noire. Leur publication interviendra dans le courant de l'année 1972 et comprendra, outre le texte de celles-ci, les interventions des participants, les rapports des présidents de séance et une préface des organisateurs, J. Thomas et G. Manessy.

A l'occasion de ce colloque, l'*Er 74* a publié un ouvrage collectif constitué de cinq fascicules rangés en un coffret de 21 x 27 cm. L'ensemble, couvrant 750 pages et illustré de nombreuses figures, est intitulé: *Enquête et Description des langues à tradition orale*. Ce manuel du linguiste de terrain comprend:

- I. Introduction, qui se distribue elle-même en deux volets: 1. l'enquête de terrain; 2. les notions d'analyse grammaticale pour la description.
- II. Questionnaires grammaticaux (de l'enquête extensive aux types d'énoncés, en passant par la phonologie, la morphologie, les phénomènes de dérivation et de composition, le syntagme verbal et le syntagme nominal); l'ensemble est précédé d'instructions d'enregistrement.
- III. Questionnaire de 6 400 phrases qui constitue une exploitation du lexique de la langue étudiée à partir du français.