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Bertold Spuler, *Gesammelte Aufsätze*

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BOOK REVIEWS

MONGOLS AND EUROPE

Bertold Spuler, *Gesammelte Aufsätze* (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1980), 415 pps. Maps. Indexes. Corrigenda.

This collection of thirty-six articles, including three obituary notices—for Brockelmann (pp. 371–375), Strothmann (pp. 375–377) and Siggel (pp. 378–379) with an appended bibliography of Siggel's works by Ewald Wagner (pp. 380–385)—and a book review, is a rather curious collection of essays published over a span of thirty-six years, from 1941 to 1977. Of the essays collected here, most are in German with three in French and two in English. In many cases these essays spring from years of accumulated, wide-spread reading as opposed to well-documented, scholarly research; nearly half of the essays are either totally without sources or with only very minimal indication of materials used. Some of the essays originally appeared in *Festschriften*, congress reports or otherwise not readily available journals—hence one value of this collection.

There is no central theme to the collection as in the excellent Variorum Reprint series on the Middle Ages. And it is, perhaps, superfluous to wonder why some essays were chosen while others were excluded. On the one hand, Spuler's clear summary of "Die Mordwinen, vom Lebenslauf eines wolgafinnischen Volkes" (*ZDMG*, 100, 1950, pp. 90–111) has not been reprinted. One of his English essays, on the other hand—"The Arab Expansion and the Crusades" (pp. 63–70)—was drastically in need of good editorial work before it first appeared in the *Journal of the Pakistan Historical Society*; to reprint it without editing was, perhaps, not the wisest decision, particularly in light of considerable duplication with the first essay, "Islamisches Selbstbewusstsein" (pp. 1–12), and others in the collection. Most of Spuler's essays concern religion and its impact on society: the Middle Ages and the rise of Islam with its effects on various cultures—Iran, Afghanistan, and the West. Essays on Iran such as "Iran und der Islam" (pp. 269–274) or "Iranische Einflüsse auf das abbasidische Chalifat" (pp. 280–285) or on "Afghanische Geschichte und Verwaltung in früh-islamischer Zeit" (pp. 305–313) all contribute to a summary of the impact of Islam on indigenous cultures. This concern for religion continues with discussions on the Crusades ("Geistige Einflüsse des Islams auf das Abendland bis zum Beginn der Kreuzzüge 1096", pp. 41–62), on eastern orthodoxy, and on the Coptic church of today ("Die koptische Kirche in der Gegenwart", pp. 228–233). There are also brief excursions into Inner Asia: "Gemeinsamkeiten der (west-)innerasiatischen Entwicklung seit 1600" (pp. 192–198), "Die Religionspolitik der Mongolen" (pp. 138–149), "Chwarizms (Chorosmiens) Kulture nach S. P. Tolstovs Forschungen" (pp. 150–164), a summary of Ibn Battuta's travels (pp. 77–80) plus material on the foreign relations of the Turks in the 11th–13th centuries (pp. 295–304) and the 17th–18th centuries (pp. 243–268) as well as a discussion of the fate of the Golden Horde (pp. 81–90). Add to this essays on literature ("Die historische Literatur Persiens bis zum 13. Jahrhundert als Spiegel seiner geistigen

Entwicklung", pp. 337–354) and modern power politics ("Iran im Spiel der Weltmächte in 20. Jahrhundert", pp. 324–336) and one can see the broad range of Spuler's interests. Yet precisely because Spuler is capable of handling many languages and is well-read, his summaries and observations are useful not only as glimpses in the development of a scholar but also as an impetus for further study and research to fill in the details.

The crust of the earth came into being long before the birth of comparative civilizations or the contrast between "civilized" and "barbarian." It is here that one must begin—with the rivers, the mountains, the deserts and the fertile plains where the seeds of societies were nurtured and set apart from other societies, where boundaries were fixed and eventually transcended. The Oxus—the Amu Darya is not such an odd place to begin. In the oikoumene of the Old World, as Toynbee places it (Arnold J. Toynbee, *Between Oxus and Jumna*, Oxford University Press, 1961), the Oxus was one of the edges of the eastern "roundabout" where routes "converge from" and "radiate out to" all directions. The importance of such an area in the migration of peoples and the transmission of culture and ideas, be it religious, economic or political, cannot be underestimated. In one of Spuler's best documented and most serious essays, "Der Amu Darja. Eine Fluss-Monographie" (pp. 165–182), the background is provided that can, when used, lead to the philosophical travel essay of Toynbee. When such material is ignored, it leads to a kind of adventurism most recently, and quite unexpectedly, exhibited by Sir Edmund Hillary in his challenge to the Ganges. It was a "race to the sky" in fast moving boats (frequently at speeds of forty or more miles per hour) to go up the Ganges as far (and it would seem as quickly) as possible before the river won, forcing man onto land to proceed to the source on foot. Little attention was paid to the river's historical role or the people who survive beside it today. It was one man's challenge to nature, oblivious of time or value.

It is on this question of boundaries—barriers—borders, at first determined by geographical/geological features of the land with later additions of social, political, economic and religious nuances, that much work needs to be done. Along this track two other Spuler articles proceed: "Mittelalterliche Grenzen in Osteuropa" (pp. 119–137, supplemented by a large fold-out map of the various boundaries under discussion) which first appeared in 1941 to be followed by "Die Ostgrenze des Abendlandes und die orthodoxe Kirche" (pp. 99–108) which was published in 1952. With the rise of such concepts as Wittfogel's hydraulic societies (Karl A. Wittfogel, *Oriental Despotism. A Comparative Study of Total Power*, New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1957), Lattimore's Inner Asian frontiers (*Inner Asian Frontiers of China*, New York: American Geographical Society, 1940; *Studies in Frontier History. Collected Papers 1929–1958*, Oxford University Press, 1962), or fluid borders, much needed research is beginning to be carried out on border studies not only in terms of historical development but also for more accurate assessments of modern border relations, violations and conflict. The importance and limitations of such geographical factors have, more recently, been pursued by Françoise Aubin in "Géographie administrative et défense nationale en Chine: l'exemple des dernières années des Chin (Kin)" which appears in *Studia Mongolica: Festschrift für Herbert Franke* as edited by Wolfgang Bauer (Wiesbaden: Franz Steiner Verlag, 1979), pp. 83–88. It has, similarly, attracted archeological and archival interest in recent years. Crusader boundary stones have been found, for example, in kibbutz

Shomut in Israel as well as new material on the boundaries of the Latin Kingdom of Jerusalem, or on the Saracens and the defense of the Arabian frontier. As the actual physical evidence mounts, whether in the West or in the East—and particularly with the vast finds now being excavated in China and published, partially, in such journals as *Wen Wu*, *Kao Guo*, and *Kao Guo Xuei Pao*, scholars will be able to deal on a much more precise basis with the actual impact of borders on the socio-psychological aspects of man and his society. Is it true, as Grousset maintained (*The Empire of the Steppes*, English edition, Rutgers University Press, 1970, pp. 230–231) that the Mongols “lacked all conception of the life of sedentary peoples, of urban conditions or farming culture, or anything alien to their native steppe” to such a degree that when they encountered sedentary man, the death and destruction which they unleashed came not from cruelty but from bewildered perplexity? What are the real effects of these barriers, naturally or artificially imposed, on man and society?

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JEWES IN CHINA

Joseph Dehergne, S.J., and Donald D. Leslie. *Juifs de Chine à travers la correspondance inédite des Jésuites du dix-huitième siècle*. Roma: Institutum Historicum S.I. and Paris: Les Belles Lettres, 1980. Pp. XVII +250.

Michael Pollak. *Mandarins, Jews and Missionaries: The Jewish Experience in the Chinese Empire*. Philadelphia: The Jewish Publication Society of America, 1980. Pp. XVIII +436.

In 1605, shortly after his establishment in Peking, Matteo Ricci, S.J., the founder of the Christian mission in China, had a visit from an elderly man named Ai T'ien. This man, who was a member of a small Jewish community flourishing in the city of K'ai Feng (Kaifeng) in the province of Honan, had heard about newly arrived Westerners in Peking who believed in One God. The strange conversation between these two men seems to have been full of ambiguity, but Ricci convinced himself that Ai T'ien was a Jew, and Ai T'ien realized that Ricci was not a Jew but adhered to another faith he had never heard about. Ricci sent two convert Chinese to K'ai Feng to look into the matter and they reported back to him what they had seen. In Ricci's "Journals," published in Europe after his death by Trigault (*De Christiana Expeditione apud Sinas suscepta ab Societate Jesu*, Ausburg 1615) there are a few pages about his meeting with Ai T'ien and about the synagogue visited by the Chinese converts. This is how Western readers first heard the strange news about Jews in China.

During the next 100 years there was very little contact between the K'ai Feng Jews and the Christian missionaries, but about the year 1700 the situation changed—all of a sudden the Jesuits seemed to have become deeply interested in the Chinese Jews and reports about them streamed back to Europe in the following 20 to 30 years. This change was due, as suggested by Jacques Gernet in his Preface to Dehergne and Leslie's book, to events occurring in Paris.

The Rites- and Term-controversy, splitting the Jesuits from the other China missionaries and raging even inside the rank of the Jesuit order, had been smoul-