

RECENT LITERATURE.

BY JOSEPH OFFORD.

THE fourth volume of the *Mélanges de la Faculté Orientale of the University of Saint Joseph of Beyrouth* (Luzac and Co., London) gives in some 550 pages an excellent proof of the energy and erudition of the Fathers at that Institution in their researches concerning the history and art of Western Asia and Egypt. Wherever photographs could add to the information of the printed matter these have been provided, and Hebrew, Arabic, Coptic, and Ethiopic types are employed. The essays are so valuable and instructive that it is impossible to do them justice here, because only a short summary of their contents can be given, but they are all worthy of the attention either of Semitic, or of classical scholars. Father Sebastian Ronzevalle provides a considerable addition to the corpus of Palmyrene inscriptions, supplementing those published by him eight and ten years ago. He transliterates them all into Hebrew characters. As usual with these records from the city of Zenobia, they are all of funerary character, but they add to the Palmyrene Onomasticon a number of names, and clear up difficulties in several previously imperfectly understood fragmentary inscriptions. One lady bore the name of Tadmor, identical with Palmyra, a similar assumption by a personage of a city's title to the instances of Babylonian names given recently by Ranke, such as Mar-Uru and Mar-Babili. The longest text in Père Ronzevalle's series is one of fifteen lines, which has been edited before, but, by means of a squeeze of the inscription, it is now made much clearer. To illustrate the intimate connection between the various branches of Semitic studies, it may be mentioned that Père Ronzevalle explains words in this memorial by comparison with Babylonian theophoric names, and by a passage in one of the newly found Aramaic papyri from Elephantine in Egypt. The name B'els(h)amin, for a deity, occurs, as in previously known Palmyrene inscriptions: this "lord (or Bel-Baal) of the heavens" is the same concept as the one in the Bod Astart text from Sidon of the Phoenician period. It also occurs as the name of a god in the Syriac version of the story of "Ahikar the Sage"; whether it will reappear in the fragments of

the Aramaic-Hebrew version of that work in a papyrus from Elephantine, which is now being edited by Dr. Sachau, remains to be seen.

Another interesting article by Père Ronzevalle is that upon the representations by Hittite, and later Syrian, artists in Persian and Roman times of the humped cattle: a species allied to the Zebu of India, the sacred kine of the Hindoos. The learned father appends photographs of several bronze statuettes and also of a few reliefs depicting these humped cattle, some of them he thinks dating from between 2000 and 1000 B.C.; and in one case the object is certainly Hittite work, for the ox it represented once possessed an erect figure of a god, or hero, standing upon its back, this being shown by the sockets for the feet of the rider recessed into the bronze casting of the back. This standing upon an animal is the specially favourite attitude of the Hittites, as shown in their rock-cut reliefs, cylinder seals, and by the remarkable bronze statuette of a female deity erect upon a lioness, published by Offord in the *Liverpool Annals of Archaeology*. The presence of this peculiar type of cattle among some of the peoples of Syria, during the second millennium B.C., is very curious if taken into consideration with the discovery of names of several Aryan-Vedic gods as being adored by the Mittanian Hittites, as proved by the cuneiform tablets found by Dr. Winckler at Boghaz Keuoi, and by the representation of such species of cattle upon numerous Hittite cylinders. The frequently found figures of Zebu cattle upon Persian and, subsequently, Graeco-Syrian and Roman reliefs and gems is a separate incident in the history of the domesticated fauna of Western Asia, because such animals were probably reintroduced there by the Persian successors of Cyrus and the Hellenic princes following Alexander the Great. As also of course by the Sassanian and Parthian kings, for the Avesta, like the Veda, presupposes the knowledge of the Zebu type of cattle. If, as now appears to have probably been the case, some of the Hittite tribes delineated the Zebu cattle upon their reliefs on cylinders and on statuettes, it shows that they possessed a knowledge of this animal—a creature it is believed not indigenous to the Taurus, or the North Syrian Plain, and so probably brought in by them when they settled in these districts—thus connecting them with the Hindoo-Aryan tribes as do the names of some of their gods.

M. l'Abbé Louis Jalabert continues his corpus of the Greek and Latin inscriptions of Syria. His explanation of a series of Latin

texts, found in the Lebanon, prove that they marked the boundaries of the Imperial forests there in the time of Hadrian, and were notices prohibiting the felling of trees within certain areas that were reserved for the Emperor. Incidentally these inscriptions afford further proof of how the country has been ruined by deforestation, these warnings being found upon sites which have the territory for miles around them absolutely denuded of trees now. These inscriptions, in some cases, specially forbid the cutting down of four species of trees, and a passage in Vegetius illustrates the meaning of this edict by mentioning that they were those used for the construction of galleys for the Imperial Navy. Another series of these inscriptions reveal the date for the separation of the vast province of Syria, *circa* A.D. 194-198, when it was divided into Syria Coele and Syria Phoenices, and also throw light upon the status of the governors of this subdivided Syrian Consulate.

The new record giving reason for these remarks is a memorial concerning Venidius Rufus, the Augustan Legate, who was known previously from inscriptions found at Sidon and elsewhere. A short Greek text illustrates from only two words the manner in which ancient Semitic theophoric names were transformed into Greek. Baal, or Beelbarakos, being obviously "Baal has blessed."

Father Mallon gives a summary of the Coptic Scalae in the *Bibliothèque Nationale*. Among other things in these manuscripts is a long list enumerating the titles and names of personages connected with the Egyptian government and administration, including princes, ministers, officials, officers, and others, evidently a direct descendant of the famous ancient Egyptian papyrus edited by Sir Gaston Maspero, as *L'Hierarchie en l'Égypte Ancienne*. The Mohammedan articles in this volume of the *Mélanges* are mostly by Père H. Lammens, who treats of the Triumvirate, consisting of Abou Bakr, Omar, and Abou Obaida who succeeded the Prophet. Also of the Caliphate of Yazid I, whilst Père Cheiko edits some Islamic Apochrypha, and also publishes in Arabic, with criticism of and notes upon the text, the Hamāsa of Duhturi. For Hebrew scholars there are articles by Père Jouin upon Hebrew lexicography, and on the text of the Old Testament.

The reviews and notices of books frequently contain valuable additions or corrections to epigraphical texts, or comments adding to the information given by the works considered.