

The study of Oriental music from a European standpoint is one which can only be undertaken profitably by those few scholars who possess a very rare combination of gifts. As a rule, Orientalists are not musicians, and musicians are not Orientalists in any sense of the word; but, apart from this fact, the scientific grasp of the principles of any foreign musical system, and still more, perhaps, its artistic appreciation, present difficulties which can only be surmounted by years of patient study and actual experience.

For the present, the most important task is to rescue from oblivion all such musical systems as are in danger of passing away without record; and from this point of view—that of providing trustworthy material for the future investigator—the present Report is most acceptable. The collection of so many traditional airs must have been a task of much patience. How truly Dom Parisot's words, explaining one of his difficulties in securing the correct reading in every case, will come home to all who have had much to do with singers!—"Là-bas, plus qu'ailleurs, celui qu'on présente comme le meilleur chanteur n'est pas toujours le plus sûr. Il peut, en effet, céder au désir de déployer son organe vocale au détriment de la fidélité de l'air à noter."

DIE ALTE LANDSCHAFT BABYLONIEN NACH DEN ARABISCHEN GEOGRAPHEN. Von Dr. M. STRECK. Theil ii. (Leiden: Brill, 1901.)

With commendable promptitude Dr. Streck has now issued the second part of his work, but with the thorough-going method that he follows at least two parts more must yet be written to complete his survey of Babylonia. The present instalment describes the course of the Tigris, with the cities on either bank, from Takrīt, the first town of 'Irāk on the river a hundred miles above Baghdad, down to Wāsiṭ, below which city the Tigris flows out into the Great Swamps. An interesting chapter (pp. 182-219) is devoted to the topography of Sāmarrā, the capital during more than half a century of the Abbasid Caliphs. Dr. Streck, following

Ya'qūbī, gives details of the many palaces which Mu'taṣim and his successors erected there, and next describes the five main thoroughfares which traversed the newly-built city. It is perhaps a pity that the writer, at this point, did not prevail on his publishers to supply a ground-plan of mediæval Sāmarrā, which could easily have been constructed from the detailed description of Ya'qūbī and other contemporaries; it would have been interesting to see how the triangulation of main streets and canals could have been worked out.

Coming down below Baghdad, Dr. Streck gives a long account of Al-Madāin, or 'the Cities,' as the Arabs named the complex of seven hamlets that stood among the ruins of Ctesiphon and Seleucia. On p. 270 our author sums up the evidence as to 'the seven,' too long to quote here, but which may be recommended to geographers interested in the subject. Passing on to Kūt-al-'Amārah, Dr. Streck points out that the Tigris during the middle ages flowed down the course now known as the Shaṭṭ-al-Ḥay, past Wāsiṭ to the Swamps, this being the all-important fact for understanding the geography of the country during the period of the 'Abbasid Caliphate. At the present day the Tigris takes a more easterly course below Kūt-al-'Amārah, but Dr. Streck makes no attempt to solve the problem as to the date when this important change of the Tigris bed took place.

The description of Wāsiṭ is all that can be desired; our author, however, implies (p. 332) that Wāsiṭ never recovered from the Mongol sack in the time of Hūlāgū, A.D. 1258. This is far from being exact; Wāsiṭ must still have been a populous city when the geographer Kaẓwīnī was Judge (Kādi) there in the latter half of the thirteenth century A.D., and Wāsiṭ continued to be the chief town of Lower Babylonia till the close of the following century, when the place was taken and sacked by the armies of Timur. In conclusion, we may note that the word *Mashra'at* can hardly be rightly translated (p. 327) as '*Strassenecke*': the very anecdote which Dr. Streck quotes—as to how the governor Ḥajjāj

having been sent an Indian elephant as a present, the great quadruped was landed from the boat at the Mashra'at-al-Fil—shows plainly that the term must be translated by 'wharf,' and this Elephant's Wharf in later times continued to be a well-known place in Wāsiṭ.

It is to be hoped that in the next instalment Dr. Streck will give us a map of Babylonia.

G. LE S.

DR. GUSTAF H. DALMAN. ARAMAEISCH-NEUHEBRAEISCHES
WOERTERBUCH ZU TARGUM, TALMUD, UND MIDRASCH.
Vol. ii. (Frankfurt a/M.: J. Kauffmann, 1901.)

After six years Professor Dalman has at last finished the Dictionary to the Targum, Talmud, and Midrash, the first part of which had been reviewed by me in this Journal in 1894. The second and concluding volume partakes of the same characteristics then briefly commented upon. It is the first attempt of a complete dictionary of this language in a concise form and at a reasonable price. It will prove indispensable to the beginner, and it is marked by the accuracy which Professor Dalman sometimes overdoes in his desire of giving a correct vocalization and in amending what he believes to be incorrect and corrupt readings in the Midrashic texts. In the first instance he follows in too slavish a manner the Yemenite tradition, adding to it his own interpretation of it. It is specially noticeable in the punctuation and in the placing of the Daggesh in many words where there is no cogent reason to assume that the letters had been pronounced as Tenues. It is a mistake to adopt the biblical tradition as a guide for post-biblical and non-Hebrew words. The rules which guided the Massorites cannot be safely applied to any book outside the sacred Canon, for as often as not the Massoretic tradition deviates from those general rules. A disjunctive accent at once changes the character of an initial letter in the following word, but where is one to look for a similar tradition in texts without accents or vowels based on ancient tradition?