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*Dr. D. J. Stenning: Papers on Banyankole*

THE papers of the late Dr. D. J. Stenning, mainly on Banyankole, have been deposited in the Cambridge University Library by Mrs. Sheila Stenning.

*Dr. M. J. Field (1899–1972)*

DR. M. J. FIELD, who died on 12 June 1972, was a pioneer in ethnopsychiatry. Graduating in chemistry in 1923, she went to Ghana in 1929 to teach at the Prince of Wales College in Achimota, where her interest in anthropology led to a Ph.D. degree in 1936. She became especially concerned with studies of traditional native healers and shrine priests. This led to an emphasis on the psychology, sociology, and psychopathology involved in native treatment methods, particularly at the healing shrines, so closely linked with local religious-magical beliefs. In 1937 she was appointed as a government anthropologist in the Gold Coast and made a close study of the Ga. Her researches on their treatment of illness led her to take up the study of medicine herself and in 1951 she qualified with an M.B. from Edinburgh. She then worked for several years in mental hospitals, which gave her a most unusual and solid grounding for further work in Ghana. She returned to Africa in 1956 on a Medical Research Council grant as a senior research fellow at the Ghana Academy of Sciences. Dr. Field's many published works include *Religion and Medicine of the Ga People*, *Social Organization of the Ga People*, and, perhaps best known, *Search for Security*, a study of the suppliants at the shrines of rural Ghana and of the mental illness and possession states she observed among them. (We are indebted to Professor Edward L. Margetts for information on Dr. Field's career.)

*Report on the International Conference on Manding Studies*

THE first international Conference on Manding Studies was held from 30 June to 3 July by the Centre for African Studies at the School of Oriental and African Studies, in association with the French Société des Africanistes. On the preceding day, 29 June, a joint meeting was held at the School between members of the Société and members of the African Studies Association of the United Kingdom.

The Conference formed part of a continuing programme of education and research sponsored by the School of Oriental and African Studies, devoted to the study of the Manding civilization of West Africa. The term 'Manding' has been used to cover a number of West African peoples (including the Mandinka/Maninka, Bambara, Dyula, Dyakhanka, Khassonké, Kuranko, Kono, and Vai) who speak related forms of the same language and share similar cultures. The Manding language, in a variety of dialects, is spoken as a major language in nine West African states—The Gambia, Guinea, the Ivory Coast, Liberia, Mali, Portuguese Guinea, Senegal, Sierra Leone, and Upper Volta—and also by small minorities in Ghana, Mauritania, and elsewhere. It is thus one of the major languages of Africa, spoken across an area 1,200 miles wide. It was formerly associated with the medieval empire of Mali, governed from the Manding heartland on the Upper Niger, which flourished between the thirteenth and sixteenth centuries. At the height of its power, the Mali empire dominated a major part of West Africa, and its influence continues to pervade the culture and traditions of numerous Manding and non-Manding speaking peoples.

Despite the importance of the Manding, the co-ordinated study of their civilization had previously been hampered by modern political frontiers in West Africa, by ethnic divisions among the peoples involved, and by inadequate contact among scholars in different

disciplines. The main purpose of the Conference was therefore to create a new interdisciplinary focus on this major African civilization, by providing an opportunity for a large number of African, European, and American scholars, involved in various aspects of Manding studies, to meet together for the first time, and for the preparation and discussion of a large body of new academic material relating to this field. The Conference was attended by over 200 participants, and a total of 108 papers were presented, mainly at concurrent specialized sessions, covering the whole range of disciplines involved in the study of Manding history, society, culture, and language. (A limited number of complete sets of papers is available to libraries, and may be ordered through the Centre for African Studies at S.O.A.S. : it is also planned to publish a hard-back edition of a selection of these papers.)

The papers, made available to participants before the opening of the Conference, were discussed in the following sessions :

Plenary session on Manding civilization.

Group sessions on :

Manding Expansion: (i) The Manding in the East; (ii) Contacts with Marginal Peoples in the West (Senegambia) and in the South-west (Liberia-Sierra Leone); (iii) The State of Kabu; (iv) The Expansion of Manding Trade in the Islamic Period.

Historical Sources on the Manding: (i) Oral Tradition; (ii) Arabic Sources.

Linguistic Studies: (i) Manding as a Written Language; (ii) Linguistic Interaction; (iii) Structural and Comparative Studies.

Cultural Studies: (i) Masks and Masquerades, Weaving and Dyeing; (ii) Verbal Art and Music; (iii) Religion.

Discussion groups were also held on the following subjects: Museums and Exhibitions Relating to West Africa; West African Studies and the School Curriculum; Gold-working in the Manding Area; Documentation on the Manding; Cultural Tourism in the Manding Area; Implications of Manding Studies for Black America.

The opening session of the Conference was held at the Senate House of the University of London on 30 June, when President Léopold Sédar Senghor delivered an address, 'Le mandingue dans la civilisation soudano-sahélienne'. President Senghor, honorary president of the Conference, was welcomed on behalf of the University of London by the late Prince William of Gloucester, and was presented with the honorary fellowship of the School of Oriental and African Studies. After the opening session President Senghor and a small number of participants were entertained to lunch by the Queen.

The closing session of the Conference on 3 July was chaired by Dr. Davidson Nicol, High Commissioner for the Republic of Sierra Leone, and the Conference accepted his proposal that a second Conference on Manding Studies should be held at Dakar in 1975 (the year of an important Manding cultural ceremony, held every seventh year at Kangaba in Mali). It was agreed that S.O.A.S. should collaborate with the University of Dakar in the preparations for this second Conference, and that the setting-up of a Society of Manding Studies should be discussed on that occasion.

The major conclusion of the Conference was that the synthesis of existing knowledge on the Manding and the stimulation of new research in the area should be advanced by all available means of collaboration among the many individual scholars and institutions involved. Recommendations put forward by the Conference, and by its specialized discussion groups, included the following :

1. That co-ordinated efforts should be made for the raising of adequate funds to facilitate the advancement of Manding studies, including the provision of scholarships for the inter-university exchange of staff and students.

2. That centres, or programmes, of Manding studies should be established wherever possible at relevant university and research institutions in West Africa.
3. That close liaison should be established among institutions in different countries concerned with the collection and preservation of tape-recordings, manuscripts, and ephemeral publications, relating to the Manding, with a view to the acquisition, copying, and storage of these materials in more than one place.
4. That comprehensive bibliographies of Manding studies should be finalized and published, based on the present draft bibliography prepared at S.O.A.S. and on the specialized bibliographies presented to the Conference; and that the IFAN series of Ethno-demographic Maps for western West Africa should also be completed, with special emphasis on the Ivory Coast.
5. That international collaboration should be directed to the written development of the Manding language, and of other major languages of the area, with a view to arriving at a common orthography for Manding in all the countries involved, and to accelerating the preparation and publication of vernacular texts.
6. That West African governments should endeavour to halt the flow of original art objects to the outside world, and—where these do not already exist—should establish national museums with a high level of curatorship.
7. That priority should be given to the excavation and preservation of historical sites in the West African area.
8. That a co-ordinated policy should be established among the countries concerned for the controlled development of cultural and educational tourism in western West Africa.

The School of Oriental and African Studies, through its Extra-mural Department, is concerned also with the role of Manding culture as a medium for presenting an African civilization to a Western audience, and with the preparation of teaching materials relating to the Manding and other African peoples. Before the Conference, a workshop on the introduction of Manding studies into American secondary schools was held at Norfolk, Virginia, in association with the School of Oriental and African Studies, under the direction of Dr. Lansiné Kaba and Dr. Herman Bell. At the Conference itself the recommendations of the discussion group on West African Studies and the School Curriculum included the following:

1. That educational programmes relating to Africa should be planned on an interdisciplinary basis across the whole of the school age range, including the primary level, and that special attention should be given to the in-service training of teachers.
2. That arrangements should be made for the exchange of information and teaching materials among institutions in different countries working in the field of school education relating to Africa.

It was recognized by the Conference that the realization of its recommendations will depend on actions to be taken by the various governments and institutions involved, and that the content of these resolutions should therefore be circulated as widely as possible.

*(Communicated by Dr. David Dalby)*