

## *Reviews and Book Notices*

### **PEOPLE OF THE ELAND**

Rock paintings of the Drakensberg Bushmen as a reflection of their life and thought. By PATRICIA VINNICOMBE. (Univ. of Natal Press, 1976) R63.00.

*People of the Eland* is aptly titled. It is not just another book about rock paintings; it focuses our attention on the people who made the paintings and explores the fascinating problem of what the paintings might have meant to their original viewers.

Pat Vinnicombe, born and brought up in the Underberg district, has lived in close proximity to the paintings: there is, indeed, an intriguing painted shelter within yards of the Vinnicombe homestead. It is not, therefore, surprising that she should have developed an interest in this art; but she soon came to recognise that collecting tracings and photographs of the paintings was not enough. The work would have to be tackled in a more systematic way.

To accomplish this greater accuracy she developed a system of quantitative recording that permitted her to make objective numerical statements about the paintings. General impressions are not enough: verifiable facts should be the basis for any serious study of the art. Using a system largely of her own devising, she recorded the staggering total of 8 478 individual paintings. Before she started her work, thirty-two sites had been recorded in her research area; by the end of her survey she had located 308 sites. It is on this firm foundation that her attempts at interpretation of the paintings are based.

Before she leads the reader to consider this, the ultimate goal of the book, she places the Bushmen of the southern Drakensberg in their ethnological and historical background. The survey area is characterised by a large number of paintings of domestic animals, including 558 horses. It was some of these paintings that led her to a detailed study of the official and archival records of the nineteenth century Bushmen's stock raids. From these records she was able to trace in the field the routes taken by the fugitive Bushmen and their pursuers. In some cases she found paintings depicting groups of mounted Europeans, the details of which suggest that they might have been painted by Bushman eyewitnesses.

Apart from the pattern of interaction between the Europeans and the Bushmen, Miss Vinnicombe considers the meaning and motivation of the art. It is this, the larger part of her book, that will give rise to some controversy. In considering her work it is important that we distinguish between principles and specific points of interpretation; it should be possible for us to accept her approach to the paintings as entirely valid and still disagree on specific points.

The basis of her approach is that the paintings were not simply an aesthetic exercise, art for art's sake, but that they were associated with ritual and expressed, as Bleek suggested a century ago, 'ideas which most deeply moved the Bushman mind and filled it with religious feelings.' Miss Vinni-

combe is able to demonstrate, from her quantitative research, that the paintings do not reflect the daily pursuits and environment of the Bushmen, as is commonly supposed: certain subjects are stressed while others, known to have played a prominent part in the Bushmen's lives, are excluded. This situation she interprets in terms of modern anthropological theory as expounded by writers like Victor Turner and Radcliffe-Brown. In the light of these views Miss Vinnicombe sees the painters' emphasis on and exclusion of animal species as a reflection of a symbolic structure which gives expression to social values and relations. The evidence which she adduces to support this assessment of the rock paintings should convince those who have hitherto been reluctant to abandon the traditional standpoints. This book should establish once and for all an approach that is less naive than the one we have come to expect in books on the South African rock art and should place the study of our rock paintings on an equal footing with the work of anthropologists in other parts of the world.

Working from the premise that the paintings are (to use Turner's definition of ritual) 'a periodic restatement of the terms in which men of a particular culture must interact if there is to be any kind of coherent social life', Miss Vinnicombe examines what is known of the lore of the now-extinct painters and also the work of contemporary social anthropologists in the Kalahari in an endeavour to explicate the meaning of the art. It is to her credit that she draws a careful distinction between the facts of the paintings as revealed by her quantitative analysis and her speculations; the hypotheses, she admits, will remain untested as the artists are no longer alive to answer our questions. But this, she rightly maintains, is no reason to abandon the enquiry.

It is this section of the book that will provoke most reaction. As the title of the book suggests, a great deal of attention is given to the eland, the most frequently painted antelope. The eland, amongst other things, was, Miss Vinnicombe claims, 'the medium through which the opposition of life and death, of destruction and preservation, were resolved. . . . The eland was the focus of the Bushman's deepest aesthetic feelings and of his highest moral and intellectual speculations.' Whether one agrees with this interpretation and the interpretation of other representations or not, is not of great consequence. What is important is that Miss Vinnicombe has established a mode of discussing the paintings that will be difficult to discredit.

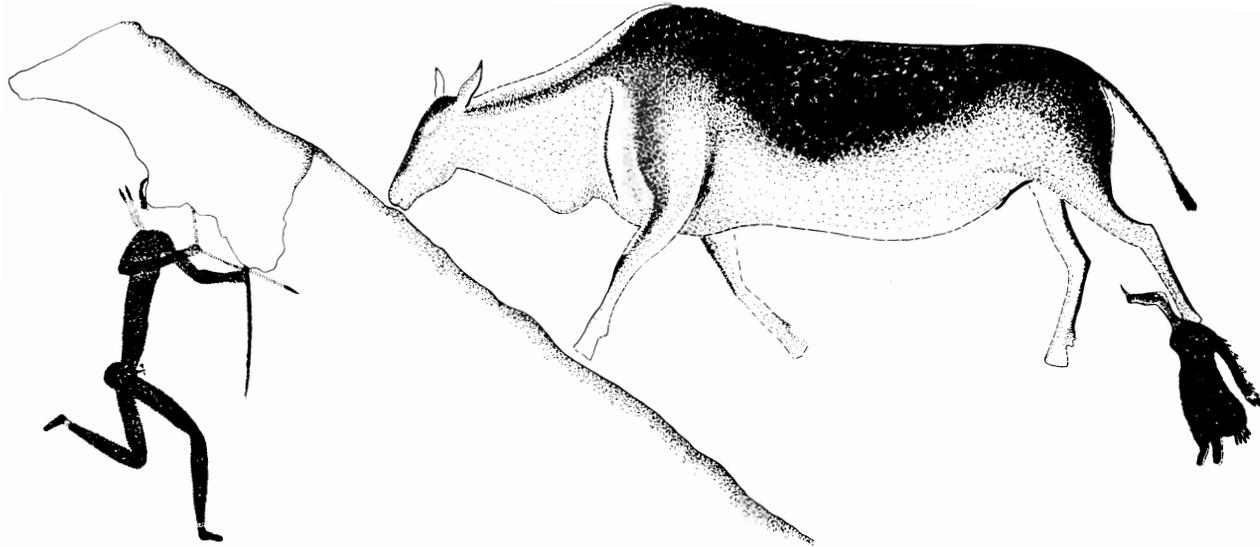
In accomplishing this significant contribution to the study of rock art, she has placed before her readers a great many of her meticulous and often exquisite tracings. The book contains over two hundred and fifty illustrations, many of which are in full colour. This collection of paintings in itself forms a notable contribution to our knowledge of the art.

D. LEWIS-WILLIAMS

### **CATHOLIC BEGINNINGS IN NATAL AND BEYOND**

By J. B. BRAIN (T. W. Griggs & Co.) R15,00

This is an account of the Natal vicariate of the Catholic Church which was established in 1850. Its boundaries were vast — the Tropic of Capricorn, the Kalahari desert, and in the South the Orange and Kei rivers. The development of the diocese is traced until its partition into more manageable proportions



The Southern Bushmen believed that their creator deity had a special relationship with eland, and that he was with them as they lay dying. The curious creature with tusked snout, feathered arms and a tuffed tail which crouches at the eland's hind leg may represent this special protecting spirit.

The hunter is painted in a slight recess in the rock. His head and part of his bow are unfortunately missing through exfoliation.

(See review: *'People of the Eland'* by Pat Vinnicombe)



This 16-boned corset of heavy grey cotton advertised in *The Natal Mercury* of September 1891 was one of Izod's special 'Long Waisted Corsets', highly regarded by women everywhere in South Africa. (See review: *Fashion in South Africa, 1652-1900* by Daphne H. Strutt.)

in 1885. The first Bishop, Allard, arrived in Durban in 1852 with a small party of the missionary order of Oblates of Mary Immaculate. From the beginning the energies of the missionaries were divided between serving the scattered and small White Catholic population, and efforts at what was considered their more important role, that of spreading the Gospel among the African tribes. Details of these two ministries are given, firstly in the difficult pioneering days under Bishop Allard, then during the period of expansion in the first ten years of office of his successor Bishop Jolivet — who had far greater resources in money, and particularly manpower.

New ground is broken in this book. Not only is it the first detailed work on the Catholic Church in Natal, but also the author draws from sources hitherto untapped in the writing of Natal history, such as the Arch-diocesan Archives of Durban and Cape Town, the Vatican Library, and the archives of the Oblates of Mary Immaculate and the Holy Family Sisters in Rome.

This is a scholarly work with an extensive bibliography and numerous footnotes. It is well illustrated with both photographs and maps, and will be appreciated by both the researcher and the general reader.

S.P.M.S.

### FASHION IN SOUTH AFRICA 1652-1900

An illustrated history of styles and materials for men, women and children, with notes on footwear, hairdressing, accessories, and jewellery.

By DAPHNE H. STRUTT (Balkema, 1975). R28,50.

In our last issue of *Natalia* we mentioned that this study of South African costume over three centuries was about to appear. Now that it has come into the bookshops we realise what an important work it is. It contains 411 pages, eight colour plates, hundreds of photographs and sketches, and took six years of research and writing. Mrs. Strutt has traced the development of costume in South Africa as it appears in early sketches and paintings and as described in written or printed records such as letters, diaries, newspapers, advertisements, etc. Naturally, fashions came from Europe in the first place but as the South Africans spread and colonised from the Cape eastward and their numbers increased by immigration and population growth, they evolved styles in footwear, clothing, and headgear that were their own. The *veldschoen* and the *kappie* are examples. The author shows, for instance, how the *kappie* evolved from the plain white linen hood of the first Cape women into a quilted decorative cap fit to be worn by the finest ladies. As a cursory glance will reveal, this is not merely a picture book of costume but a scholarly examination of the social dynamics of clothing. The Cavalier poet Robert Herrick understood clothes very well:

Whenas in silks my Julia goes  
Then, then (methinks) how sweetly flows  
That liquefaction of her clothes.

On the other hand, Thomas Carlyle, that grim Scot, felt no great love for clothes, as witness his bitter taunt against the aristocracy of his time — “Idlers, game preservers, and mere human clothes-horses . . .”

Despite Carlyle, clothes are among the most important things in life and Mrs. Strutt has done well to make us reflect on their significance in human affairs.

### DICTIONARY OF ENGLISH USAGE IN SOUTHERN AFRICA

Edited by D. R. BEETON and HELEN DORNER. (O.U.P. 1975) R3,70.

As English is the first language of most of the White and Indian inhabitants of Natal, and the second language of most of the rest of the Province's population, we may expect the recently-published *Dictionary of English Usage in Southern Africa* to be welcomed and well-used in Natal. It is disappointing, therefore, to find that the editors have dealt inadequately with some Natal words and usages.

For a start, we believe that their explanation of the term *Indians* is so inaccurate that it will give people in South Africa and overseas, a completely false picture of this sector of our population.

The dictionary entry is quoted in full:

#### *Indian*

the majority of the Indians in S Afr are descendants of indentured Hindu labourers brought fr India in 1860 to work for the sugar industry in Natal: many of the descendants of these immigrants are today still in the sugar industry, others have found employment as laundrymen, market gardeners & waiters; many Hindu & Moslem Indians are merchants & quite a number of these have settled in the Transvaal; in Amer & Canadian E Indian = Red Indian, the Indian fr India is referred to as an East Indian.

This account might have been largely true seventy or eighty years ago, but to ignore the part played by Indians today in industry, commerce and the professions is, to say the least, misleading.

We should have thought the fact that most Indians speak English as their first language was worth mentioning, since this is undoubtedly one of the factors affecting English usage in South Africa and contributing to the emergence of a South African English that is different from, but not necessarily inferior to, Standard British English.

The *Dictionary* lists hundreds of Afrikaans, Bantu, Hottentot and Portuguese words for which there are no English equivalents and this liberal borrowing from other languages is nothing to be ashamed of. It is surprising, then, to find no mention of either *sambals* or *samoosas*, dishes which are just as much part of the South African way of life as *biltong* and *bredie*.

A glaring example of the editors' lack of knowledge of Natal usages can be found in the definition of *togt boy*. Again, we quote the entry in full:

#### *togt boy*

Afr in Natal who works in urban areas & is licensed as a labourer & messenger; a badge & number indicate his status.

We have consulted a number of fellow-Natalians about this term and there is unanimous rejection of this definition. *Togt* labour is universally under-

stood in Natal as casual, daily labour, and the word probably comes from the German, *Tag* meaning day.

The explanations of the terms *KwaZulu* and *Zulu* are also unsatisfactory. Anyone who looks at a map showing the boundaries of the homeland can see that it includes more territory than the former Zululand. Similarly, to define *Zulu* as *an African tribe in north Natal . . .* and as *the language spoken by these people* is far too limited.

In his review of the *Dictionary* in the *Times Literary Supplement* (21 May 1976) Anthony Delius doubts the use of the term *meter maid*, questioning whether 'a nation of angry and ruthless motorists would ever seriously call a female traffic warden anything so sucrosely whimsical'. Here we find ourselves at one with the editors of the *Dictionary* and in disagreement with the reviewer. Generally, however, we share Delius' view that this publication is a 'useful, rough beginning'.

We have been told that one cannot buy a ticket for the *Pullman* in the Cape or Transvaal; there the S.A.R. officials will happily sell you a seat on the *railway bus*. We would be interested to hear of other Natal words and usages and readers' comments on the *Dictionary*.

## THE BENT PINE

The trial of Chief Langalibalele. By NORMAN HERD  
(Ravan Press, 1976). R6,95.

John Shedden Dobie, the Scottish traveller and expert on sheep, described Langalibalele as a big pudding-headed beast — 'as like a king as any lout of a porter'. Bishop Colenso, a friend and defender, saw him as a tall man in good physical trim, 'with that dignity and grace in his actions which so commonly, amid the most savage nations, proclaim the king'.

Langalibalele was also a distinguished rain-maker, a semi-sacred person in tribal society. In addition he challenged the authority of Theophilus Shepstone, the Diplomatic Agent for the native tribes, and that was an unheard-of thing.

The results of the rebellion that came about in the Natal of 1873 were manifold: Sir Benjamin Pine, the governor of Natal, was recalled by the home government and never employed again; the friendly relationship between Cetewayo and Shepstone was damaged; Bishop Colenso and his strong-minded womenfolk entered black politics with a vengeance; Shepstone moved into the twilight phase of his great career, and so on.

A curse even rested on the disposal of the amaHlubi cattle confiscated and auctioned off cheaply to the white farmers — they infected the herds of their new owners with various diseases.

The trial of Langalibalele (chapter four in the book) as seen by the author is a most interesting section. For the first time the average reader begins to understand the carelessness and folly of Sir Benjamin Pine, governor of Natal, in presiding as the judge in a trial conducted according to Native Law. Yet Pine was a legal man himself and should have known the procedure. For example, the accused was not allowed a defence lawyer until the third day of the trial. Again, further evidence was led after the trial had reached its end.

All this was grist to Colenso's mill. He sent pamphlets and letters to the home government, the newspapers, and influential public figures. It was a publicity campaign mounted with an efficiency that could not be bettered today.

It ruined Pine and some of his friends but it did not help Langalibalele — he served his sentence in prison-exile at the Cape for 13 years, returned to Natal in 1887, and died in 1889. But some of the injustices done to the amaHlubi tribe were annulled, thanks to Colenso and his friend Anthony Durnford.

Mr. Norman Herd is a professional writer and consequently the book has a narrative drive unusual in academic biographical writing. It is readable to the last page. Considerable research has gone into the book and has been used in trenchant style to illustrate the argument. Mr. Herd's skill in the selection and arrangement of his material has given the work not only unity but considerable impact. Illustrations are unusually good and interesting.

The intriguing title refers to Pine's palpable injustice in handling the trial of Langalibalele and in destroying the amaHlubi and their kindred-neighbours the amaPutini.

J.C.

### THE HISTORIAN OF VICTORIAN NATAL — ALAN FREDERICK HATTERSLEY

With the death of Professor Hattersley in July this year at the age of 83, Natal has lost the doyen of its historians. For 60 years he lived in Natal and of the 23 books which he wrote during this period most deal with its history, particularly the British settlement.

He was born in Leeds of good Yorkshire stock in the year 1893. One of his forebears, great-grandfather George Hattersley, was a manufacturer of machinery and was commissioned to build a power loom in the early 1830s, a dangerous time when the handloom weavers regarded the mechanisation of their craft as certain ruin. The completed machine was transported from Keighley to Bradford in a horse-drawn cart but never reached its destination, for a gang of weavers with hammers and cudgels waylaid the cart, drove off the carter, and smashed the machine to pieces. However, the Hattersley firm continued the manufacture of looms and other textile machinery and is still in existence today.

Alan Hattersley attended Leeds Grammar School, one of the great English grammar schools, and came under Cyril Norwood, who taught him Latin. Norwood was later knighted and became head of Harrow. In his final year (1910) the young Hattersley carried off the Henderson history prize, three volumes of Bishop Stubbs's *Constitutional History of England*, a highly regarded work in its day.

#### FIRST PUBLICATION

Thereafter he went to Downing College, Cambridge, where he studied under a number of well-known professors of history. One of them was J. Holland-Rose, an authority on Napoleon and Reader in Modern History.



The late Prof. A. F. Hattersley, well-known historian of the British settlement of Natal. He is looking at an oil-painting of the ship *Haidee* which brought about 246 settlers to Natal under the 1850 Boast emigration scheme. They settled at York. The ship was later lost at sea.

(Photo: John Clark)

However, it was another tutor, G. E. Green, who suggested that Hattersley should submit a rather good essay to a magazine called *History* edited by H. F. B. Wheeler. The article, entitled *The real position of the Duke of Norfolk in 1529-30*, appeared in the issue of October-December 1914, but made little or no impact on a world more concerned with the outbreak of World War I than with the political career of Ann Boleyn's uncle. However, it was his first published piece and no doubt played its part in obtaining his first teaching post at Natal University College in 1916. Another success was that he graduated with a double-first in history.

In lieu of something better to do, he had already started studying law at Cambridge when the Natal post was offered, and so in April 1916 he sailed for Durban to teach history. The entire staff of the College, situated in Pietermaritzburg, consisted of ten people who ministered to 36 students. It was not until the war ended that lecturers and students returned in a flood to the College. In 1923, when the Chair of History and Political Science was established, Alan Hattersley became the first head of that department, a post he retained until his retirement in 1953.

One of the first things he did on arrival in Pietermaritzburg was to join all available libraries. For a historian the Natal Society library was the nearest and best. It contained useful items like the records of the Cape Colony, the printed catalogues of the British Museum, the W. J. Irons letter-book (1849-50), the Kit Bird collection of settler narratives (1896), Donald Moodie's rare works, the Bishop Colenso collection of pamphlets and school texts printed at Ekukanyeni, etc. There were files of the early Natal newspapers rescued from the Colonial Office and runs of valuable periodicals like *Punch*, the *Illustrated London News*, the *Graphic*, *Vanity Fair*, etc. Later on he was to discover hundreds of scarce volumes of Nataliana, books by G. H. Mason, Charles Barter, George Russell, the Colenso daughters, the Shepstones, Dr R. J. Mann, W. C. Holden, Aldin Grout, etc., etc., many of which were to provide him with material for his work on the early British settlers. Of vital importance, too, was the fact that the Natal Society library is one of the five great copyright libraries of South Africa. By law a copy of every book published in the Republic must be sent to these libraries. This cherished privilege makes a library immensely useful to researchers, students, and members of the public. All in all, Prof. Hattersley regarded the Natal Society library as holding 'the most valuable collection of Nataliana in the Republic'.

## EARLY BOOKS

In due course his early books began to reach the public. One was his *Short History of Western Civilisation* (Cambridge, 1926), which went into a number of editions, also appearing in a Spanish edition and an American reprint. As a textbook it had the largest sale during his lifetime of any of his books. Gradually there followed *More Annals of Natal* (1936) and *Later Annals of Natal* (1938) which were an extension in a much more interesting and modern form of John Bird's *Annals of Natal* (1888). The second of these books, the *Later Annals*, is scarce because the bulk of the edition was destroyed during World War II when immense stocks of books stored in

warehouses in Paternoster Row went up in flames after a German fire-bomb raid. Only the consignment of *Later Annals* sent previously to Natal survived.

Then followed *Portrait of a Colony* (1940), which is one of his best works on Victorian Natal. That and *Oliver the Spy* (1959) were his favourite pieces. With these two books he knew that his own gift lay in the evocation of the Victorian era. A book which cost him a great deal of labour and expense was *The British Settlement of Natal* (1950) in which he drew together threads of information concerning the individual settlers, the emigration-schemes, the ships, the trades and skills which they brought, and the contribution they made to the Colony in following years. In its fine detail it is one of the best reference books for the student of Natal settler history.

A great deal of the material for this book came from the professor's last visit to Britain in 1947. It was a particularly bad winter, with the worst snowstorms for many years, but he persisted in travelling by train and bus to county record offices, parish churches, and local archives for details of people who had emigrated in the late 1840s and 1850s. He had to read thick files of provincial newspapers in order to trace references to people whose origins were so humble that often only the briefest mention was made of them. In speaking of this time, Prof. Hattersley said, "In fact, I should think that historical research is sometimes very close to the work done by the criminal investigation department".

#### AN OIL PAINTING

Two interesting things happened on this trip. First, he found a man who had in his possession an oil-painting of the emigrant-ship *Haidee*. This was the replacement vessel for the *Pallas* which the Hull emigration-officer found unseaworthy for the transportation of 246 settlers organised under a co-operative scheme by Henry Boast and Benjamin Lund. The party arrived safely in 1850 and settled in York, Natal. The professor bought the painting, thus ensuring it for Natal.

The second discovery arose from a lecture on the York settlers which he delivered at Beverley in the East Riding. A lady stayed behind to talk with him about the passengers on the *Haidee*. Apparently her grandparents emigrated with their four eldest children, leaving behind a child of two years and a baby. They were brought up by relatives. The child of two was the lady's mother. Bitterness arose in the family because of the abandonment of the young children. The lady wanted to know why such a thing had been done. The professor then explained that owing to the mortality among very young children on the ships the authorities laid down the condition that where there were more than four children in a family, those under the age of fourteen were prohibited from accompanying their parents until they were older. Measles, especially, was the cause of many deaths among the youngest children. The lady was glad to have this explanation — it helped a little in understanding what at first seemed a callous action. For himself the professor felt cheered that his lectures on the 1850 emigration were still relevant in 1947.

The capital city of Natal and its environs remained of great interest to him — he dwelt there for 60 years — and in a number of books he documented its growth. *Pietermaritzburg Panorama* (1938), a centennial publication, traced its history from the Voortrekker period and *Portrait of a City* (1951) took the story up to recent times. In 1955 appeared *A Hospital Century: Grey's Hospital, Pietermaritzburg*, an excellent account of the foundation and growth of this great institution. He wrote *Hilton Portrait* (1945), which was the first history of this famous boys' school, and also a history of Merchiston School (1953) which will serve as a foundation for a later and fuller account. The Victoria Club, too, was the subject of an interesting monograph (1959). All of these works showed the writer's careful research, familiarity with the period, and professional arrangement of his material. In September 1972 the City of Pietermaritzburg recognised the years of patient research that he had given to the writing of its history and conferred on him the Freedom of the city.

#### HONOURED BY NATAL SOCIETY

Another honour came to him in connection with the Natal Society, the 121-years-old cultural institution to which he gave much of his time and interest. He served on the council from 1926 to 1953 and was president from 1930 to 1933. He was also vice-president from 1954 to 1976. In November 1970 the council elected him first Fellow of the Natal Society, an honour which particularly pleased him. It is believed that, according to his wish, a part of his valuable library will be given to the Society, to be kept separately as the Hattersley Collection.

His last work was *An Illustrated Social History of South Africa*, which took many years to write. One difficulty here was the research and collection of illustrations, since a great part of the book's value lay in meaningful pictures, but with the help of the publisher and his own friends he was able to gather enough good material to supplement the text. By this time, he was gravely incapacitated in his walking.

The book, published by A. A. Balkema, appeared in 1969 and was favourably received. It covers three centuries of South African social life. On every page are facts that could only have been obtained during a lifetime of historical study in books, diaries, letters, early newspapers, and other sources. It would seem that as he read, he recorded in separate notes the facts of everyday life at different periods. Over the years he must have built up a considerable body of facts, with the idea that some day he would incorporate them in a book. In due course he classified his notes so that he could achieve a continuity of narrative. Thus it came about that he could tell when water-closets were introduced, how the cricket bat evolved in shape, how emigrants were treated by brutal ships' officers, and why young men everywhere in South Africa dropped their work to go to the diamond fields and the gold-diggings. It is indeed a great legacy of South African social life that he has left behind.

But this is true of the majority of the books he has written. They are the starting-point for scholars yet to come. Meticulously researched, they should wear well, serving as signposts for future generations.