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Jean-Baptiste Tavernier: *Voyages en Perse et Description de ce Royaume* by Pascal Pia; Jean-Baptiste Tavernier
Review by: V. Minorsky
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Dr. Siassi, though a Persian, has been long employed in the French Legation at Tehran, and his views on the relations of his country with foreign powers should not have been tinged with the bias that they display. The allegation that Britain was proved to have been by treaty bound to aid Persia in arms in her war with Russia in 1825, the suggestion that the British Legation at Tehran sold its favours, and the statement that Britain, in whom the constitutionalists found a warm sympathizer, systematically opposed every attempt of Persia to gain greater political or economic freedom, do not commend themselves as just comments on British policy in Persia, and British readers, at least, will not readily believe that their officials deliberately imperilled their trade in Persia by arming and encouraging predatory tribes. The author of such a slander should study the history of the control of the arms traffic in the Persian Gulf.

The account of the reactions of the Persians, as Aryans, to a Semitic religion which was forced upon them, and of the effects, political as well as economic, of European civilization on Persia, are interesting and informative, but the author is unduly optimistic regarding the progress of railway construction in Persia.

WOLSELEY HAIG.

JEAN-BAPTISTE TAVERNIER: VOYAGES EN PERSE ET DESCRIPTION DE CE ROYAUME, publiés par Pascal Pia. pp. 351. Collection Voyages et Découvertes. Aux éditions du Carrefour. Paris, 1930.

There is no need to insist on the importance of a traveller like J.-B. Tavernier who between 1632 and 1668 visited Persia six times and frequented the court of the Şafavid shāhs Şafi, ‘Abbās II and Sulaimān. Tavernier had not the education of his great contemporary Chardin, but being like the latter a sober Huguenot and a keen jeweller, he was an excellent observer well acquainted with what was passing behind the scenes.

The Şafavid epoch is still very little known. Even the ‘*Ālam-ārā*, the great chronicle of Shāh ‘Abbās I, which is a real mine of information, has never been duly exploited by the historians. But a final synthesis will be only possible when the Persian sources have been studied alongside with the works of the whole pleiad of great European travellers who visited Persia in the seventeenth century.

If Tavernier has been less quoted than Chardin, the reason is in a great measure attributable to the absence of a modern edition of his

Voyages, comparable to the one Langlès gave of Chardin (10 volumes, Paris, 1811).

The present handsome volume is an attempt at repairing this omission. It is very well printed and adorned with thirty-eight contemporary illustrations. It is a matter for regret, however, that the book does not give a complete text of Tavernier, containing as it does only Books iv (less five chapters on the Armenians) and v.

As is known, Book i contains the description of the roads from Paris to Isfāhān, through the northern provinces of Turkey ; Book ii, ditto, through the southern provinces of Turkey ; Book iii, ditto, through the northern provinces of Europe, with a description of the Caspian provinces.

Voltaire was very unjust to Tavernier when he wrote about him : “ qu'il n'apprend guère qu'à connaître les grandes routes et les diamants.” Our standards have considerably changed and we now think that perhaps the omitted part of Tavernier's travels is particularly interesting. Precisely as an explorer he had more merits than even Chardin, who gives uncomparably fewer march-routes. To quote an example, Tavernier was the first European who visited Persian Kurdistan and its capital Senna (*Sneire*, as he calls it in his usual phonetically imperfect way).

The editor has well done to add in footnotes some of the passages of the omitted part to which Tavernier alludes in Books iv and v, but it would be highly desirable to possess a full text of those books in another additional volume ; in the complete edition of 1692, the text edited now forms 265 pages, and the part omitted 424 pages.

It is regrettable that such important texts on an Oriental country are edited without the help of an Orientalist. One cannot respect such mistakes as *Neozonze* (p. 279, instead of *Naurūz* “ New Year ”), *chaté* (p. 280, instead of *tchāchta*), *Degdar* (p. 292, instead of *daddjāl* “ Antichrist ”), etc., etc., so as to leave them without corrections, be it only in footnotes.

V. MINORSKY.

LA PROSE ARABE AU IV^e SIÈCLE DE L'HÉGIRE. Par ZAKI MUBĀRAK.
pp. 288. Paris : Maisonneuve, 1931. 50 fcs.

The name and work of Dr. Muḥammad Zakī Mubārak is by no means unfamiliar to those who have interested themselves in the recent output of Arabic literary criticism. A pupil of Dr. Ṭāhā Ḥusain,