Postscript from the JRAS Editor

This special issue of the Journal has been given over to papers presented in September 2007 at Bilkent University, Ankara, during a workshop entitled 'Romanisation in Comparative Perspective: explaining success and failure'. These contributions explore in a number of different historical and geographical contexts – Turkey, the ex-Soviet Central Asian states, South Asia and Japan – the factors that have influenced attempts at implementing script change and what explains the relative success or failure of these ventures. As İlker Aytürk points out in his editorial introduction, little work has yet been done on the comparative aspects of these processes of (attempted) romanisation. But, as he argues, the significance of the topic calls out for a framework to enable precisely this kind of analysis to take place, and so he provides one at the end of his own article, something, it is hoped, that will stimulate further discussion in other forums.

Indeed, the history of romanisation and the various challenges associated with it represent a fitting development in the *Journal*'s own commitment to publishing articles that deal with the languages of the various regions that it covers, from the eastern Mediterranean to East Asia. It enjoys a lengthy proven track-record in providing a platform for the decipherment of ancient written languages, the recording of spoken minority languages, and the reconstruction of archaic pronunciation. In 1975, for instance, a special issue was devoted to papers presented at a 'Symposium on the Undeciphered Languages' under the chairmanship of Professor Sir Harold Bailey at the School of Oriental and African Studies on 25–27 July 1973, as part of the sesquincentenary celebrations of the Royal Asiatic Society. Among them was John Chadwick's 'Introduction to the problems of "Minoan Linear A"', complementing his well-known work on the decipherment of Linear B, the writing used by the Mycenaean civilisation of bronze-age Greece. More recently, the Journal has published articles by David Prager Branner on how to reproduce, read and teach classical Chinese ('On Early Chinese Morphology and its Intellectual History', *JRAS*, Third Series, Vol. 13, No. 1 [April 2003], pp. 45–76) and Erik John Anonby on developments relating to the Indo-Iranian language cluster known as Luri ('Update on Luri: how many languages?', *JRAS*, Third Series, Vol. 13, No. 2 [July 2003], pp. 171–197). Indeed, now that the *Journal* (from 1835 when its first issue was published) is available on JSTOR (the online digital archives), it has become much easier to search for, and locate, articles on related topics from the earliest years of the *JRAS*'s existence through to relatively recent back issues (currently 2003).

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