

*Conference on Manding Studies/Congrès d'Études Manding*

AN interdisciplinary conference on Manding studies will take place from 30 June to 3 July 1972 at the University of London. The conference, sponsored by the School of Oriental and African Studies and held in collaboration with the Société des Africanistes, will be concerned with the Manding-speaking peoples of West Africa (Mandinka/Maninka, Bambara, Dyula, etc.), and with the major aspects of their study, i.e. language, literature, music, art, history, archaeology, religion and the social sciences. The central theme of the interdisciplinary discussions will be the consideration of internal relationships among the Manding (linguistic, ethnic, and cultural) and of their historical and contemporary relationships with the neighbouring peoples of West Africa.

At the introductory session of the conference, it is planned to present a corpus of reference material on the Manding, including a provisional bibliography, a provisional cartographic survey, and a review of ethnic and linguistic nomenclature. Colleagues are invited to submit other reference materials which might prove useful to the conference. It is envisaged that background papers in both English and French on the linguistic relationships of the Manding and of the Mandé group as a whole, on the prehistory and history of the Manding, and on the caste/clan-system of the Manding will be presented and discussed at this introductory session.

A series of interdisciplinary discussions is planned for the first and second days of the conference, at which consideration will be given to papers relating to the theme of internal and external relationships of the Manding. As far as practicable, papers will be discussed under a number of subsidiary topics, with contributions to each topic from a number of disciplines. Although all aspects of the main theme cannot of course be covered, it is hoped that groups of papers will be available on such subsidiary topics as: Relationships between the Malinke and the Bambara (including cultural continuities and discontinuities); The History and Role of the Dyula (including a consideration of trade-routes and of the vehicular role of the 'Dyula' language); A consideration of the Exocentric Manding (Vai, Kono, Ligbi, etc.); Relationships between the Soninke and the Manding; Relationships between the Fula and the Manding; etc. Under the first of these topics, for example, it would be relevant to have contributions from such disciplines as history, language and oral literature, musicology, art history, comparative religion, law, and cultural and social anthropology.

Opportunity will be provided on the third day for the conference to divide into disciplinary discussion groups, for the consideration of more technical papers and discussion of specialized questions, including the further development of Manding as a written language. On the final day there will be a plenary meeting to discuss the role of Manding and related cultures in modern Africa and in Western education, as well as the future development and coordination of Manding studies. It is hoped also to organize a number of cultural activities in London at the time of the conference, in close association with the West African states involved. These activities would include public lectures, performances of Manding music, and an exhibition of Bambara and other Manding art-forms.

Scholars and research students who have been involved in the study of Manding peoples, languages, or cultures are invited to submit papers to the conference. It will be helpful if each intending contributor could indicate without delay one or more titles under which he would be able to submit a paper. In the case of alternative titles being offered, an intending contributor will be invited to write under the title which may be best accommodated under one of the envisaged topics.

The finalization of the programme will be dependent on the range and number of papers involved, and it is therefore essential that *all papers intended for the conference should be received before the end of February 1972*. This will enable a detailed programme to be drawn up at a

meeting of the organizing committee in March, and will also leave time for the preparation of short 'link-papers' introducing each of the topics under which submitted papers will be considered. Papers will be distributed to intending participants by post before the conference takes place, and will therefore need only a brief verbal introduction from their authors before being discussed at the conference.

Papers, in either French or English, should be typed with double spacing, and have an optimum length of up to 4,000 words or 16 quarto pages. Papers should not in any case exceed 5,000 words or 20 quarto pages (apart from appendices of data) unless the desirability of greater length has already been agreed. It will be greatly appreciated if each paper could be accompanied by a short summary of around 250 words (for subsequent translation into French in the case of papers submitted in English, and vice versa). A selection of papers considered by the conference will be published as a volume on Manding studies, and the authors of such papers will be invited to prepare final versions for publication immediately after the conference.

Full details of the conference may be obtained from: Centre of African Studies, School of Oriental and African Studies, Malet Street, London, WC1E 7HP.

*'Marriage Laws in Africa', by Arthur Phillips and Henry F. Morris*

THE International African Institute's recently published *Marriage Laws in Africa*, makes available again part of the *Survey of African Marriage and Family Life* (1953), together with a new section covering developments over the last two decades.

Professor Arthur Phillips's 'Introductory Essay' and 'Marriage Laws in Africa', reprinted here from the original survey, present the results of a detailed inquiry into the effects of modern conditions and institutions on African customary law relating to marriage and family life. These remain an indispensable foundation for a study of the contemporary situation. Dr. Henry F. Morris has contributed a review of developments down to 1970, with a bibliography of additional sources, which will add much to the usefulness of the new volume.

*Marriage Laws in Africa* is published by the Oxford University Press, price £3 net in U.K.