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Book Review

Wilhelm Rau. *Kleine Schriften.* (Veröffentlichungen der Hellmuth von Glasenapp-Stiftung 46). Hrsg. von Konrad Klaus und Joachim Friedrich Sprockhoff. Teil 1–2. Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2012, xxxvi, vii + 1410 SS., ISBN 978-3-447-06613-6. Hardback EUR 188,00

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The book under review consists of two volumes that conveniently collect all Wilhelm Rau's (WR) "minor works" (in German, "Kleine Schriften", or, using Latin academic terminology, *opera minora*).¹ Wilhelm Rau (1922–1999), an outstanding German Indologist, Professor of Indology at the University Marburg in 1958–1987 (where he also obtained his PhD and Habilitation degrees in 1949 and 1952, respectively), has greatly contributed to Vedic and Sanskrit scholarship. The amazing richness of WR's scholarly heritage makes it understandable that these voluminous selected writings have been long awaited by Indologists. This laudable work has been fulfilled by two editors, Prof. Konrad Klaus (Bonn) and Prof. Joachim Friedrich Sprockhoff (Berlin).

WR has enriched classical Indology with many seminal works, foremost, in three fields: ancient Indian grammatical tradition and linguistic philosophy; philological studies of several Vedic texts as well as some Upaniṣads, critically translated by WR; and Vedic material culture or, more generally, Vedic antiquities ("indische Altertumskunde"). A few research areas that were more marginal for WR, such as Classical Sanskrit literature or studies on New Indo-Aryan languages and literatures, are also represented by a not negligible number of publications (foremost, journal reviews), demonstrating the amazing versatility and breadth of WR's scholarly interests.

The book opens with a short Preface by the editors (ix–xi), which briefly summarizes the main research areas covered by WR. It is followed by an impressive full list of WR's publications ("Vollständiges Schriftenverzeichnis", xiv–xxx), divided into six groups (A. Books; B. Articles; C. Reviews and book

¹ Including WR's short monographs, that is, his works that appeared as separate books, but (as far as I can see) are less than c. 100 pages. Accordingly, the monographs (as well as editions and translations of Sanskrit texts) that are longer than 100 p. – in particular, WR's classical monograph *Staat und Gesellschaft im alten Indien* (Wiesbaden, 1957, xi + 137 pp.) – are not reprinted here.

notices;² D. Jubilee biographical and bibliographical notices and obituaries; E. Scientific reports; F. Others) that include 224 of WR's works; the last category, G., lists six biographical notices and obituaries dedicated to WR.

WR's works proper occupy pp. 1–687 (Part I) and pp. 689–1360 (Part II). The order of works essentially follows the thematic division outlined by the editors in their Preface, although the exact grouping of works is never formulated explicitly – one of the very few minor shortcomings of this edition.

Part I includes works pertaining to non-Vedic topics. The works published in this volume are arranged, more specifically, as far as I can see, as follows. Group (i) encompasses works on Classical Sanskrit literature; this part, mostly consisting of reviews, opens with the hitherto unpublished first WR's work, his 1949 doctoral dissertation, a textcritical study of the *Māghakāvya* based on Vallabhadeva's commentary. Group (ii) includes studies on the Sanskrit grammatical tradition (mainly dealing with Patañjali's *Mahābhāṣya*) and linguistic philosophy (Bhartṛhari's *Vākyapadīya*). Group (iii) consists of two short notices on Sanskrit manuscripts. Group (iv) encompasses a few studies on New Indo-Aryan languages and literary tradition in these languages – a somewhat lesser-known part of WR's scholarly heritage. Here we find, for instance, next to a number of reviews, such as WR's important discussion of the fascicles of R.L. Turner's *A Comparative Dictionary of Indo-Aryan Languages* (1962–1975), his publication of a soldier song in Hindi. WR recorded this song during his service as army interpreter in 1943 from an Indian prisoner of war, a Hindu private who served in the British army; he offers a delicate linguistic and literary analysis of this interesting specimen of the then folklore of Hindi soldiers dedicated to the African campaign. Group (v) encompasses seven studies (including four short monographs) on a variety of artifacts and phenomena of Ancient Indian (material) culture, such as the magnet or arrow poison – their appearance in texts, historical and cultural context, chronology, exact meaning of the corresponding Sanskrit terms, etc.³

Finally, the last group, (vi), includes almost 40 reviews of books dealing with all possible areas of study of Ancient India – language and linguistics, literature and texts, art, history, and epigraphy.

² More than 130 reviews and book notices (most of which were published in *Orientalistische Literaturzeitung* and *Asiatische Studien*) cover the time span of nearly a half-century, between 1950 and 1993, representing a sort of unique chronicle and survey of research in all main areas of Indology written by an attentive and knowledgeable reader with a sharp eye.

³ Thematically, these writings might perfectly be grouped with WR's studies on the Vedic material culture collected in Part II; the only reason for publishing them in Part I must be the fact that they are not exclusively based on Vedic textual evidence, but also use the material available from Classical Sanskrit literature.

Part II is entirely dedicated to Vedic studies. It opens with (vii) WR's works on Vedic material culture, including his five short monographs. The domains discussed in these works cover, in particular: weaving and plaiting; pottery and earthenware; metals and metal objects. In this section we also find an important study on the Vedic *pur-* traditionally translated as 'fortress, stronghold'. Some scholars (in particular, Mortimer Wheeler; see, for instance, Wheeler 1968) identified them with the fortified structures of the pre-Aryan Indus civilization: the importance of WR's monograph is that it unambiguously demonstrates that Mortimer Wheeler's theory cannot be supported by textual evidence available from the earliest Vedic texts. The monographic studies collected in this section have long become standard reference works, and all Sanskritists and, more generally, Indologists, must be grateful to the editors for making them easily available.

The following group of publications, (viii), includes WR's studies on several Vedic texts, – first of all, on the Jaiminiya-Brāhmaṇa, which was the major research interest of WR – as well as translations of a few specimens of Vedic prose, in particular, from the Yajurveda and several Brāhmaṇas. We also find here a few lexicographic studies on Vedic words and their meanings. In the same section, the editors placed WR's reviews of Louis Renou's epochal *Études védiques et pāṇinéennes* I–XVII (1955–1969), which take almost 100 pages. The last major group of publications (ix) encompasses WR's studies on the Upaniṣads, including his critical translation of four "middle" Upaniṣads: Śvetāśvatara, Muṇḍaka, Kāṭhaka, and Taittiriya.

WR's publications are followed by a list of corrections and additions (partly based on his own hand-written corrections found in personal copies and off-prints) (1361–1364); a list of Vedic texts and their editions (1365–1376); and a concordance of WR's publications, bringing the reader from the original place of each publication to its location in the present edition (1377–1380). The book is concluded with indices of names and subjects (1381–1385), words and roots (1386–1395), and text passages (1396–1410). Unfortunately, many items (roots and forms) discussed by WR in some of the articles and, especially, his reviews, are not referenced in the index by the editors. Thus, the reader will possibly miss a number of important remarks made by WR in his review of R.L. Turner's *A Comparative Dictionary of Indo-Aryan Languages* discarding non-existent forms such as *bhráśyati* 'falls' or *sadhnoti* 'accomplishes' (allegedly attested in the Ṛgveda and Jaiminiya-Brāhmaṇa, respectively) (pp. 472–473); WR's numerous corrections of mistakes or inaccuracies in translations of Sanskrit texts, such as *raghupati* 'head of the Raghu[-tribe]' (as against the incorrect 'king Raghu', p. 211), or his remark on the meaning of *samudra* in the Ṛgvedic verse 10.142.8 ('stream', rather than 'sea') (p. 278). Likewise, more than 100 Sanskrit words for

different varieties of lotus discussed on p. 266–272 are lacking from the index. Adding all these items to the index of forms would probably double its size, but could nevertheless be very helpful for the reader.

Wilhelm Rau was a scholar of minor genres, who did not publish voluminous monographs and stuck to the opinion that textual evidence is more valuable than scholarly discussion around it. According to WR's scholarly credo, very clearly formulated in the Preface to his classical work on the Vedic word *pur-*, “[m]y own remarks [accompanying citations from Sanskrit texts. – LK] have been reduced to a minimum and are intended merely to make things clearer where necessary. Unlike some of my learned friends, I still do believe that facts speak for themselves, unaided by any hypothesis” (Part II, p. 865). No need to argue that a scholar with such maxims has little chance of surviving in the contemporary scientific world based on the frenzied rush to obtain grants and scholarships, which, eventually, turns out to be the only way to a decent work position, let alone a professorship. A rush that ultimately devalues Knowledge as the main value of Science (*scientia* = knowledge, after all!), for the benefit of this endless gruelling race...

Although WR was not a linguist in the strict sense of the word, his contribution to Indian linguistics, in general, and to several areas of Sanskrit and Vedic studies (philology, lexicography, grammar and grammatical tradition), in particular, is difficult to overestimate. No research on Sanskrit as well as on Indian lexicography and etymology can go without his classical studies on Vedic material culture, his editions of Sanskrit texts as well as countless keen observations scattered throughout his ‘minor works’ – articles and reviews. Present-day and future scholars will find indispensable information about the meaning of several hundreds of Sanskrit words in a large variety of domains, such as farming and industry, weapons and agricultural utensils, state and society, reading countless keen observations scattered throughout WR's works (the index of words and roots discussed in the reprinted works by WR contains almost 700 items). Altogether, WR's studies on pottery, metals, weaving and plaiting form a true encyclopedic overview of ancient Indian life, bringing modern scholars into ancient Indian life through evidence from ancient texts and on the basis of accurate and minute philological and linguistic analysis. Of particular value also is WR's work on ancient Indian linguistics that greatly contributes to a better understanding of the foundations of one of the oldest linguistic traditions in the world, as well as to many specific issues, such as the relative chronology of Vedic and post-Vedic texts.

The editors have done excellent work, reprinting WR's writings with exemplary accuracy and carefulness, which, in general, is typical of the volumes of the series *Veröffentlichungen der Hellmuth von Glasenapp-Stiftung*.

Conveniently collecting all minor works written by an outstanding Indologist, this book will become the standard reference work, providing invaluable help to all those interested in classical Indology, Sanskrit and Vedic studies – linguists, literary scholars, historians and anthropologists, specialists in the history of languages and literatures, religions and cultures of South Asia.

Reference

Wheeler, Robert Eric Mortimer. 1968. *The Indus civilization*, 3rd edn. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.