

On manuscripts and letters from Rudolf von Roth's legacy

Vortrag

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I. Introduction on Rudolf von Roth

Even during his lifetime Rudolf von Roth was viewed as the "grand old man" of Indology, as Stein mentioned in a letter to him dated 11th of November 1884, relating a meeting at Dr and Mrs West's house : "Ich wurde von ihm und Mrs West sehr liebenswürdig aufgenommen und freute mich von Herzen zu sehen, wie lebhaft bei ihnen die Erinnerung an Ihren Besuch fortlebt; ein Epitheton das Mrs West Ihnen gab, traf zu sehr mein innerstes Gefühl, als dass ich diesen glücklichen Ausdruck Ihnen verheimlichen könnte; Sie haben den Titel Grand old man wohl nur mit Gladstone zu theilen, aber..."

Born 1821 to a Protestant middle-class family in Stuttgart his beginning career was typical in this region and time. Educated in Urach and at the Tübinger Stift he was supposed to become a Protestant clergyman. But as he was learning the languages of the Bible he plunged deeper and deeper into philological studies. He was quite lucky having Heinrich Ewald as his teacher, who encouraged him to learn Sanskrit and Persian, besides Hebrew and Arabic.

In 1843 Roth obtained his PhD from Tübingen University with a dissertation on Semitic linguistics. Then he spent two years in Paris, London and Oxford to read and copy Sanskrit manuscripts, and to meet people having the same interests. At Oxford H.H. Wilson was his tutor, to whom he dedicated his first publication: "Zur Litteratur und Geschichte des Weda" (= On the Literature and History of the Veda, outlines the aim of his entire life as a scholar)

He came back to Tübingen in 1845 and three years later, in 1848, he received an extraordinary professorship and from 1856 on he occupied the first chair for Sanskrit in Tübingen. He stayed at this University his whole life (private journeys never took him beyond Europe), and he died in Tübingen in June, 1895.

For some decades "Rudolf Roth" and "Vedic studies" were almost synonymes. He gained international fame through his collaboration with Otto von Böhtlingk in publishing a Sanskrit-German dictionary. This enormous work was started in 1852 and published from 1855 until 1875, and many contemporary scholars contributed to it. The main portions of work had fallen upon Böhtlingk himself, who covered classical Sanskrit literature and was the official representative of the whole opus, which was sponsored by the Imperial Academy in St. Petersburg. Roth's task was to cover Vedic literature, Āyurveda and botanical literature.

Long before that, in 1852, Roth had published Yāska's Nirukta and the Nighantavas, and in 1855, he published together with Whitney, a critical edition of the Atharvaveda. Since then, he had been publishing articles on Vedic culture, on questions about cultural history, about medicine, botany and lexicographical problems. Many of these articles have recently been collected by Dr Konrad Meisig, and appeared as 'Rudolf von Roth: Kleine Schriften / hrsg. Konrad Meisig. Stuttgart, 1994 (Glasenapp-Stiftung; Bd 36)'.

Since the edition of the Atharvaveda Roth's eye was especially attracted to this Veda. It was he who suggested to search for a further recension in Kashmir, which was then found there in 1875. It was the first copy of an Atharvaveda Paippalada-manuscript ever brought to Europe, and later it was to him, that Stein sent the original manuscript from the library of the Maharaja of Kashmir, where he had at last succeeded in purchasing it.

Throughout his long academic life, Roth had attracted a large number of students and colleagues. They stayed in Tübingen for a while to attend his famous "Veda-Kolleg" (that was a sort of doctoral and post-doctoral colloquium) - and beside all that: He was head of the University Library in Tübingen

II Collection of books

Roth was head of the library from 1856 until his death, in 1895 in total 39 years. He was the last non-professional-librarian in Tübingen, carrying out this responsibility along with his full-time professorship, but, considering his collection building for the library, the outcome of his work was very professional indeed.

His collection of books in and on Oriental languages, and especially on Indian languages, forms the solid basis for the special area and subject collection programme of the German Research Foundation on South Asia. That programme was originally established in 1920, and re-started in 1949. It distributes the task of collecting foreign academic literature in all subjects between 20 different German libraries. Each of these libraries is expected to build up its special collection along their normal collection.

There never had been any doubt, in which German library the South Asian languages and literatures were to be collected as such a focus-collection. Meanwhile, Tübingen University library has become one of the leading libraries for South Asian research material in Europe, along with the India Office Library, (now amalgamated into the British Library). Books and periodicals in all Indian languages, on all facets of Indian life, modern or historical are collected, supported financially by funds coming mostly from the German Research Foundation (DFG) and processed by the staff of the library. The special collection staff for South Asian studies consists of three Indologists. Much routine work is left to the non-academic librarians, who have no training in Indian languages, but do their job with much enthusiasm.

III. Collection of Manuscripts

When Roth left in 1843 to visit famous Indologists and libraries in Paris, London and Oxford, only 11 Indian manuscripts existed in the library of his own university. They had been presented in 1839 by Johann (John) Häberlin, a German missionary, on one of his trips home. The texts are: the Bhāgavadgīta, the Bhagavatapurana, some small texts of Kavya and Ritual literature and the Mugdhabodha and Kavikalpadruma of Vopadeva. Matters changed little until Häberlin's death in 1849. His large personal collection did not stay together after his death, as Roth mentions in the introduction to his manuscript-catalogue of 1865. It is known that the Imperial Academy of St Petersburg bought parts of the collection, when it was still in India. Later the rest came to Tübingen for a closer look and in order to be sold. There were several Tibetan mss in the collection as well, which were bought by St Petersburg. Tübingen bought the Sanskrit mss. in 1857.

Roth listed the Indian manuscripts, meanwhile 277 volumes, in 1865 in a catalogue - or rather a handlist, as there is not much of a description of the manuscripts. This catalogue is arranged in the Devanagari-alphabetical order of the titles, but there are five exceptions to this rule: titles belonging to the categories: Upanisad, Caitanya-literature, Tantra, Purana or Veda, are listed subjectwise. There is no index in this catalogue and therefore its use is limited.

The growth of the library's manuscript holdings under Roth's directorate is demonstrated only in a later manuscript catalogue. It was compiled in 1899 by his pupil and successor to the chair of Sanskrit, Richard Garbe. That catalogue is understood as a supplement to the former one, and

thus lists only the manuscripts added to the library since 1865.

The arrangement of the catalogue is much better and more details are given. It is arranged systematically according to Vedic Literature, the Srauta- and Grhya-Sutras, Prayogas and Paddhatis, Upanisads and Vedangas, Epic literature, Puranas, Tantras, classical Sanskrit literature and scientific literature beginning with philosophy, grammar and other scientific literature. The holdings on indigenous medicine are worth mentioning, as that was another focus of Roth's research work. The catalogue has four useful indexes. 220 manuscripts had come to the library due to Roth's efforts. Besides some individual purchases they came from three sources:

1. Between October 1885 and February 1887 Richard Garbe had gone sent to India for researches and in order to buy manuscripts for the library and for Roth personally. He did quite well and came back with 101 manuscripts, mainly classical Sanskrit texts, but also Vedic literature. These manuscripts bear the current call-numbers Ma I 294-394. In 19 letters Garbe writes about this voyage, and we learn many details about people he met as well as about prices for manuscripts and salaries for the copyists.

2. A second acquisition tour for the sake of the Tübingen library was undertaken by Sir Aurel Stein. In the early nineties of the last century, whilst he was already living in India permanently, he bought 20 birch-bark manuscripts for Roth and for the library in Tübingen. They reached Tübingen in Februar 1895, just four months before Roth died. They bear the call-numbers Ma I 396-415, and there are added handwritten details by Stein and his pandit to them.

3. Roth willed his private collection of manuscripts to the library. So another 83 Indian volumes were added to the library (Ma I 416-498). From the historical point of view, that third part forms perhaps the most interesting one. There are mainly texts of Vedic and auxiliary literature and a large number of medical and botanical texts, themes which Roth had worked on throughout his life. In an appendix to Garbe's catalogue, 39 manuscripts are listed, which are not Indian anuscripts in a strict sense. They are preliminary works, handlists and copies of Indian texts made by Roth and other Europeans. Only these are listed separately, the rest of the Roth collection being scattered throughout the catalogue according to the proper systematical place.

In his first book "On Literature and history of the Veda", which was the fruit of his two-year's sojourn in Paris, London and Oxford, Roth gave a list of 20 manuscripts he had used for this purpose. The same he did in his edition of Yaska's Nirukta, some years later. He gives some details about them, sometimes even the shelf numbers (at least of the manuscripts belonging to the East India House.), in order to facilitate further studies of this material, as he points out explicitly (in Nir.,p.lxiv). From 1852 on, Roth worked on the Sanskrit-German dictionary. He and Otto von Böhtlingk published that "great" dictionary from 1855 until 1875 in seven volumes, with the help of a great number of scholars, and with funding by the Imperial Academy in St. Petersburg. Again the editors gave a list of the texts, they used for the dictionary, and there were many manuscripts among these, some of which had been mentioned by Roth in earlier works. I could trace only a part of these manuscripts in his collections. From explanations he gives in the preface of the Nirukta, we know that manuscripts from other libraries had been given freely to him for his use. So I presume that he did not copy or excerpt all the manuscripts he ever used, or, that these excerpts have been lost. Nevertheless, a further study of those manuscripts may bring more light into the matter.

Among those manuscripts listed in the appendix, we find Whitney's manuscript of an "Index

verborum to the published text of the Athārvaveda", we find a copy written by Charles Rieu of the Aitareya Brahmana and a copy written by Goldstücker of Munk's Catalogue of the Sanskrit manuscripts in the Royal Library of Paris (1844). Written by Roth we find some of the elsewhere mentioned manuscripts he must have copied in Paris, London and Oxford, and - most important of all - we find a nearly finished German translation of the Atharvaveda which Roth never published. Roth and Whitney edited the Atharvaveda in 1855 and we know that Roth was concerned with the Atharvaveda his whole life. Nevertheless it was not officially known, that he held an almost complete translation of the Atharvaveda ready. According to Garbe Whitney must have known, because he cites that unpublished work in his English translation.

We should appreciate that all these European manuscripts and handwritten material stayed together in Roth's collection of Indian manuscripts. According to Garbe it was Roth's will that all handwritten material other than letters and completed texts be burnt, and - again according to Garbe - we lost, for that reason an unpublished work on Soma. It would have been his "Alterswerk", as we know from two articles on Soma, and many references in letters show that the Soma-question was the main interest of Roth's in his older days. Soma had been a extremely fashionable theme among the Indologists of the late 19th century. The search for Soma was - though a Vedic and botanical theme at first glance - a very political one as well, as the question of the origin of the Indoeuropean race was connected with it. Only a box labeled "Soma" containing newspaper cuttings about the Soma discussion in England and Germany has remained. The Soma-question leads us to the letters of Roth's estate, but before I leave the Indian manuscripts in our library I should like to draw your attention to the fact, that the catalogue of Garbe of 1899 is the last published manuscript-catalogue of Tübingen University library. Together with Roth's catalogue of 1865, only 494 manuscripts are listed and, more or less, described. Another 360 manuscripts have come to the library since then, and they are listed only in a handwritten accessions-book. Among them are 80 manuscripts purchased from A F Rudolf Hoernle's large collection and they contain perhaps the most valuable items the library possesses, besides the famous birch-bark manuscript of the Atharvaveda-Paippalada.

IV. Collection of Letters

Important for the Soma question are the letters from Albert Regel, a botanist who had travelled in the Russian parts of the Hindukush. Between 1883 and 1886 he and Roth exchanged letters. We have 29 letters written by him to Roth. They are interesting travelogues of even nowadays not easily accessible parts of the Hindukush and adjacent areas. His thoughts and findings about the Soma question bear no solutions, but reflect the discussions at that time. -

The most important convolute of letters consists of about 480 letters (on 871 sheets) from Otto von Böhtlingk written to Roth between January 1852 and 1881. At times when the publication of the Dictionary was in full swing, a letter came every week from St. Petersburg to Tübingen. In these letters the dictionary-work was discussed, and I am sure that it would be a fruitful task for a historian to dig out the background of the great dictionary. I am not aware whether the letters from Roth to Böhtlingk still exist. Böhtlingk died in Leipzig in 1904. Also in connection with the dictionary are letters from Grassmann and Weber. -

A great number of letters show the widespread connections of Roth, and also his fame. There are letters from non-Indologists seeking his opinion or advice, letters from colleagues exchanging gossip and letters from pupils and young scholars asking for a good word or an address. I have listed the names of the letter-writers (except the few private letters) with date and the number of letters existing in the library.

A quick look on two of his pupils will show two contrasting personalities, who reflect two different attitudes towards India and Indians.

I mentioned Richard Garbe in connection with his acquisition tour. In 33 letters and postcards we learn about his work-agenda and difficulties, about his search for a position and about his private life. In his letters from India, where he went for further studies in Sanskrit and philosophy, he draws quite a negative picture of India and the Indian way of life. His impressions he published in a travelogue "Indische Reiseskizzen" (1889), a book interesting to read as a diary and source-material, at the same time gives you shudders, when you read the repetition of all the prejudices and retold stories, he finds proved by some individual experiences.

What a contrary to Sir Aurel Stein, another pupil of Roth. This brilliant Hungarian, born in 1862, educated in German boarding schools with humanist curriculae (Greek, Latin, Hebrew), came to Tübingen in 1881 to study two years under Roth. In 1883 he took his PhD from Tübingen University and went - only 21 years old - to England to continue his studies in archaeology and pre-history of the North-western border area of the Indian subcontinent. The University library holds 21 letters, dated from November, 1884, when he arrived in England, until his departure to, and his first visit in, India. All these letters are written in German, in a very accomplished style. Not lacking great admiration and veneration for his teacher, he shows himself to be a vivid, open-minded and self-confident, though not arrogant person, who takes interest in all his surroundings. Through his eyes the reader can join him on his walks through London, Hampstead or Oxford and you can feel, even now, the atmosphere he describes, see the people he meets.

From the very beginning Stein had in mind to go to India. He was interested in the North-West, he had read Avesta and Old-Persian with Roth as well as Vedic and Sanskrit. At first it did not look he would achieve this goal soon. Georg Bühler seemed to have helped him in finding a post in India. He wrote about a vacant place to Roth in January 1888 and added "...*Stein würde vortrefflich unter die Engländer passen*". ("Stein would fit perfectly among the English") Two years before, he already had mentioned Stein in a letter to Roth. Talking about the just finished "Deutscher Orientalisten-Kongress" in Vienna (1886) he said: "*Stein's Vortrag hatte ich gerne und möchte Sie bitten, mir seine Londoner Adresse mitzutheilen, wenn Sie diesselbe wissen. Stein hat mir immer gut gefallen und ich will ihm wünschen, daß er Gelegenheit finden mag, den Hindukush zu sehen. Er würde jedenfalls etwas Neues herausbringen. Dass er in Pest viel Chancen hat, bezweifle ich, da dort Arica minus grata sind.*" (I liked Stein's paper very much ...and I hope that he will find an opportunity to see the Hindukush. I am sure he would find out something new...)

Stein did see India very soon, and he fitted among the English so well, that he became naturalized in 1905 and he also fitted among the Indians. Whilst he still lived in England he looked for contacts with Indians and he learned Panjabi and Hindustani in preparation for his intended visit. Later he considered Kashmir his home. I would not claim that to Stein was not a child of his time and in that sense a colonialist and racist, but his tone surly is different to that of Garbe and his likes. He was known for his good contacts to Indians, and it was he who finally succeeded in purchasing that birch-bark manuscript of the Athārvaveda Paippalāda, which had been kept in the library of the Maharaja of Kashmir.

Roth, Garbe and Stein can be taken as examples for the change of attitude of German Indology. Roth, the Protestant theologian, who did something new in doing thorough research on such foreign cultures and religions. He was open-minded considering his time and circumstances, a person, though, who never expressed the desire to see India. Garbe, can be taken as a "middle generation": he did go to India, but was disillusioned by it in the same way, as the humanist fans

of Ancient Greece, the lovers of Homer, who did not find much of that spirit in the Greece of the present days. He wanted to extract out of India the knowledge of her philosophers, and wasn't much interested in, or even worse, he was disgusted by the different way of life of the Indians. Stein, at least, was more progressive. He was interested in his surroundings wherever he was, and he observed with a sharp, but un-prejudiced eye, which was not blind to failures and deficiencies.

V Outlook

There is much work left to do for persons interested in these topics:

- the preparation of a concordance of the two manuscript catalogues, or better a new catalogue, taking in account all the information we have about the sources of the manuscripts would be most helpful,
- the Böhlingk letters should be looked into and perhaps edited and a search for the letters from Roth to Böhlingk started,
- the Weber letters (about 50) could also turn up interesting news about 19th century Indological connections,
- One convolute of material is a most obscure one. It is labelled "Indica und Persica" and it contains rather heterogeneous material. Beside some ephemera, I found a thick packet of a copied Iranian text with a German translation. Another copy of the Aitareya Brahmana was also found. I have listed this material roughly in a list for persons interested in it.
- Last but not least, the German Atharvaveda translation could be published.

Thank you!

THE DIFFERENT LOTS OF HANDWRITTEN MATERIAL FROM ROTH'S LEGACY

Between the "German manuscripts" (Md) in the Tübingen University library's collections there are to be found letters and "mixed material" from the Roth estate. Here I give a rough sketch of the content of each lot which has come to the library at different times.

- Md 762 **"Roth Orientalisten-Kongresse"**
Newspaper cuttings, tickets etc. from 6. Orientalisten-Kongreß in Leiden, (10.-15. Sept. 1883) and from the 7. Orientalisten-Kongreß in Wien (26. Sept.-2. Okt. 1886); Drafts (= abstract to:
Jolly, J.: Manava Dharmasastra; Cust, Robert N.: Mittheilung über unsere gegenwärtige Kenntnis der Sprachen Oceaniens; Temple, R.C.: Hindustani Proverbs; weitere kleinere "notes" von Grierson, A. Barth, Cecil Bendall, E.B. Cowell, Robert Cust, A.F. Rudolf Hoernle, F. Max Müller, R. Rost, E. Senart, A.H. Sayce; Grierson/Hoernle: Comparative Bihari Dictionary (handwritten list of the different dialects and languages); varia such as hotel-receipts etc.
- Md 762a
Teil 1 **"Briefe von R. Roth, Bl. 1-41"**: Includes 1 sheet with a letter from the granddaughter of Roth, telling, that the letters are letters from Roth to his daughter Anna. Accession date is 1944.
fol. 2-4 are 21 letters "An Anna" dated from 1878 to 1886. Mainly private themes are discussed, here and there we find a name of an Indologist who visited, or a work Roth has in mind to finish and the like.
- Md 762a
Teil 2 **"Briefe von R. Roth, Bl. 42-59"**
Letters to Auguste Camerer, Stuttgart. Fol.42-58 include 16 Briefe from 1846-1852,missing fol 47, the 6.letter)
Fol. 59 is a letter from Sir Aurel Stein to Frau Anna Vierordt dated 1931, written in Srinagar, Kashmir.
- Md 762b **"Böhlingk Briefe"** (inv. 1944): Contents 871 fols. or 476 letters and postcards, from january 1852 to April 1881.
Fol.871 is a letter from Albrecht Weber dated from 1871.
- Md 762c **"Briefe an Rudolf Roth"** (inv. 1944): Letters from various correspondents, mostly Indologists and other scholars, a few letters from relatives. A larger number of letters come from:
Richard Garbe (1885-1888), 33 letters,
Hermann Grassmann (1872-1876) 10 letters,
John Muir (1871-1875) 9 letters,
Anton Schiefner (1869-1876) 9 letters,
Aurel Stein (1884-1895) 21 letters,
Albert Weber (1853-1876) 54 letters,
William D. Whitney (1856-1875) 26 letters.
- Md 763 **"Roth Soma"**
List titled "Aus R. von Roth's Nachlaß ... betreffend die Soma-Pflanzen"; collected newspaper-cuttings about the Soma controversies between Roth and Max Müller and the like.
- Md 764 **"Regel an Roth Briefe"**, (132 fols, different sizes)
"Aus W.R. von Roth's Nachlaß": 28 (29) letters from Albert Regel who

travelled between 1883-1886 in the north-western frontier area, on the Russian side. - Two letters from Fritz Regel, a cousin of A. Regel, inform Roth about Regels mental illness.

Md 765

"Roth Briefe an ihn"

43 letters from 21 different correspondents, again mainly Indologists. There are 13 letters from Johann Georg Bühler, from other correspondents there exist no more than 5 letters each.

Md 766

"Indisches und Persisches aus R.v. Roth's Nachlaß"

Heterogenous material, parted by envelopes etc. into the following eleven parts:

(1) "Persica" (written on cover). 8 lithographies from the rock inscriptions of "Behistun". On one: "Detaches Persian Inscriptions on the face of the tablet of sculptured Figures at Behistun, copied 1844".

(2) "The Hindoo Lunar Mansions". lithography. Handwritten note: "Aus As. Recherches II zu Jones, On the antiquity of the Indian Zodiac".

(3)(4) Two sheets (65x22,8 cm) with Mantra "Om Mani Padme Hum" in endless repetition; Tibetan dbu-can script, printed.

(5) On cover: "Acvalayana Sutra Copie d`après 1039 E.I.H collectionnè d`après 122 - There are 10 fols. (32x25) cm; Dev. Char., Accents and different readings in red ink; Adhyaya I,1 - III,5.

(6) Cover void. Continuation of (5), same hand. 8 fols. Adhyaya III,6 - VI, 15(end) -dated: iti parisistam samvat 1844 śake 1902.

(7) Two parts of a copy of an Indian manuscript (not identified)

(8) Blue cover, void. 41 fols., Copies of 37 different RV-suktas.

(9) "Literary ślokas in the Rigveda, with compliments from E.V. Arnold"(handwritten) - 19 fols. Date: Bangor, May 1895, Edward V. Arnold.

(10) Poem Sanskrit/German Adalbert Kuhn on occasion of his wedding 16. Nov. 1858. Printed;

(11) drafts of letters from Roth,; 24.9.1887; 18.12.1875, asking Bühler(?) to send him a missing vol. of his "Reports on Sanskrit Manuscripts..."; Wordlist (not from Roth): "Improved reading in Atharva", note from Roth. Excerpt from the "Monatsbericht der Königlichen Akademie der Wissenschaften zu Berlin, 20. Februar 1871, Sitzung der philosophisch-historischen Klasse". Inside copy of "Report..."from Bühler from 1870/71, with a list of Atharvaveda-Mss. Draft for a index with geographical and personal names.

12 fols. of thin paper (numbered), 8 fols. (not numbered); Avesta(?) text, partly transliterated, partly translated; date: Nürnberg, 8. Oktober 1857.

One folio with notes and memos, like: "John Wilson, the Parsí Religion ... Bombay 1843. 610 S."

One cover sheet: "Archäologie...(illegible) ... Werk", rest void.