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Recent Works on the Rigveda *Vedische Mythologie*, von Alfred Hillebrandt. Dritter Band. Breslau, 1902. Pp. xxii + 464. 22 M. *Die Sagenstoffe des gveda und die indische Itihâsatradition*, von Emil Sieg. I. Stuttgart, 1902. Pp. vi + 152. 6 M.

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The Classical Review / Volume 17 / Issue 01 / February 1903, pp 76 - 78

DOI: 10.1017/S0009840X00207403, Published online: 27 October 2009

Link to this article: http://journals.cambridge.org/abstract_S0009840X00207403

How to cite this article:

E. V. Arnold (1903). The Classical Review, 17, pp 76-78 doi:10.1017/S0009840X00207403

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middle 'Latin' read 'Greek'; 'Latin' occurs three lines above. In a new edition the blocks of German which occur with so

much frequency in the notes should be translated into English.

J. P. POSTGATE.

RECENT WORKS ON THE RIGVEDA.

Vedische Mythologie, von ALFRED HILLEBRANDT. Dritter Band. Breslau, 1902. Pp. xxii + 464. 22 M.

Die Sagenstoffe des Rgveda und die indische Itihāsaträdition, von EMIL SIEG. I. Stuttgart, 1902. Pp. vi + 152. 6 M.

THESE are works of first-rate importance for the study of the Rigveda. Professor Hillebrandt completes an undertaking in which he has been engaged for twenty-five years, and gives us a general view of Vedic Mythology with naturalistic interpretations, illustrated and enforced by his unrivalled knowledge of the ritual books. Dr. Sieg, who appears before the public for the first time, does not claim to have given as yet more than the comparatively short period of ten years to his work. His position is that the Indians possessed a body of mythological material in the form of tales of the gods, of which the kernel had been handed down from the times of the Rigveda, and which at one period was embodied in a formal collection, recognised as a 'fifth Veda.' This collection has been lost, but large parts of it remain in the form of extracts or paraphrases in the Brāhmanas, the Vedic commentaries, and the epic poems. This material he proposes to collect and arrange, and finally to apply to the interpretation of the Rigveda.

Both writers are of course aware that the principles on which their work is based are very far from being undisputed. Hillebrandt recognises that he stands alone in his position as a belated adherent of theories of the 'sun-myth' type. His disclaimer of any special reverence for naturalistic theories may readily be accepted, as well as his statement that newer theories as to ghosts and wizards, tree-spirits and totems are even less successful in giving a reasoned explanation of the Vedic cults. He has also made an advance on his predecessors in recognising that we have in the Rigveda successive strata of belief, and that the writers of the hymns were in greater or less degree ignorant of the history of the gods they worshipped. But these qualifications are very far indeed from

producing any confidence in the writer's explanations. He has chosen to regard the Vedic deities as a series of puzzles, for which he provides definite solutions. Mitra is the Sun, Indra is the Sun, Soma is the Moon, Varuna is the Moon, Agni is the Sun or the Moon or the household fire, Vṛtra is the Winter, and so on. For these theories as a whole it may be shortly said that there is no case. The interpretations suggested are read into the text of the hymns with much ingenuity, but few if any of them could occur to a student of the Rigveda who did not begin his work with the same prepossessions as the author. The whole argument falls to the ground as soon as it is recognised that naturalistic interpretation is later in date than the Vedic poems. The Brāhmanas and the ritual-books are thick with interpretations of the Vedic deities of the same type as Hillebrandt's: the very multiplicity of them makes them mutually self-destructive. In Greco-Roman philosophy we have just the same process: but it has not occurred to modern critics to interpret Homer by the aid of Stoic speculations as to the nature of the gods.

But if Hillebrandt's main positions are untenable, there is still much to be learnt by the way from his essays. If he complains that the Rigveda is uninteresting, that its hymns 'in endless monotony' invite the gods to drink the Soma, and torment themselves in order to adorn the uniform appearance of the (sacrificial) flame with fresh similes, we obtain here at least a starting point for understanding what the Vedic poets actually meant: namely, that Soma is a drink, and not the Moon: and that Agni is a flame, and neither the Sun nor the Moon, at any rate so far as these poems are concerned. Further we have the statement of a problem which really presses for solution, namely, who the gods are to whom the sacrificial fire appeals, and who are invited to share the Soma-drink. And on this last point in particular Hillebrandt's new volume throws considerable light.

Hillebrandt brings out very clearly the

fact that Indra, the most prominent god in the Rigveda, is a late arrival in the pantheon (see especially p. 169). He is selected by the gods to be their king, as being the strongest amongst them: he receives a share in offerings originally designed for others. These earlier deities Hillebrandt recognises in the Ādityas: and without accepting any definite number for this group of gods, he treats as belonging to them Mitra, Varuṇa, Aryaman, Bhaga, Dakṣa and Aṅga: to which list some would be inclined to add Savitar. All these are distinctively gods of the sky and of light: they are also distinguished by being protectors of the moral law. Oldenberg, as is well known, believes them to be a non-Aryan group of deities, and would like to connect them with the Sun, Moon, and five planets. It is interesting to note that Hillebrandt agrees with Oldenberg in identifying Mitra with the Sun, and Varuṇa with the Moon: and supports the latter position very ingeniously with arguments drawn from the ritual. The whole line of argument, however, with both writers starts from the assumption that the Vedic Mitra, like the Persian Mithra of a much later period, was a sun-god: and of this there is no trace in the Rigveda itself. Personally I find this identification quite unconvincing: but if we put it aside, almost all that Hillebrandt says of the character and importance of the Ādityas as the immediate predecessors of India is worthy of attention.

In his treatment of the Ribhus Hillebrandt departs from naturalistic interpretation. He regards them as the gods of a clan in which the art of chariot-building stood in special honour: and believes that the Vedic clans accepted the clan and its gods together as members of their community, owing to the great importance they attached to the art.

Dr. Sieg opens his book with a very fair account of the differences of opinion which exist as to the value of the Indian interpretation of the Rigveda, and also of the various schools of interpretation amongst the Hindus. He admits frankly that amongst all schools fantastic and contradictory interpretations are prevalent, and that the only question that is open is whether there may not be found here and there, amongst so much that is worthless, fragments of a genuine tradition. This question, he rightly says, can only be determined by an examination of all the

material: and we therefore turn with interest to the hymns of which Dr. Sieg specially treats, to learn whether he can throw new light upon them. The hymns chosen are chiefly the following: *i. 170 (Indra and the Maruts), *i. 179 (Agastya and Lopāmudrā): *iv. 18 (Indra's birth): iv. 24 (sale of Indra): iv. 26, 27 (Indra and the eagle): v. 2 (Vṛṣa Jāna): v. 61 (Rathavīti): *x. 98 (Devāpi) and *x. 142 (burning of the Khāṇḍava wood). It may be noticed at once that five of these ten hymns, namely those to which an asterisk is prefixed, belong to the late Rigveda. These may be first discussed, because the hope of a real contact between these hymns and the later tradition is greater. Only in the case of one of these hymns does Sieg contend that the later tradition anywhere contains a true representation of the facts, viz. x. 142. In this case he thinks the verses may well be put in the mouths of the personages who appear in the tale of Mandapāla in the Mahābhārata, to which Śāyana also refers. Unfortunately the first six verses of this hymn are quite of the ordinary type of an Agni hymn, and only the last two are specially appropriate to the occasion: of a forest conflagration there is no trace in the hymn. In x. 98 a certain Devāpi appears as Purohita of Ṣamtanu, and makes prayer for rain: but again of the myth in which Devāpi is dispossessed of his kingdom by Ṣamtanu there is no trace. In i. 170 and i. 179 we have unquestionably Vedic myths; in i. 170 Indra seizes an offering designed for the Maruts: in i. 179 Agastya, who has made a vow of chastity, is induced to break it by the solicitations of his wife Lopāmudrā. In both cases the tradition retains the central position as exhibited by the hymn, but mixed with elements entirely foreign to it: and it is impossible to say whether the tradition has any other basis than a partial comprehension of the meaning of the hymn. Finally iv. 18 contains, in the form of a dialogue between Indra and his mother, an account of the birth of the former through his mother's side. The tradition so completely misunderstands the position as to assert that the miraculous birth is that of the poet Vāmadeva, and Dr. Sieg admits that the myth contained in the hymn belongs to a class 'of which practically every trace is lost in the later literature.' This is a significant fact. If Vedic myths as to the personality of the chief god in the Pantheon became completely strange to the Hindus of later

periods, the hypothesis of a continuous tradition must clearly be restricted to a very narrow range.

If we now turn to the five hymns that belong to the Rigveda proper, we notice that two (iv. 26, 27) which really contain a myth are interpreted by Sieg without any reference to the tradition. 'It is a reasonable matter for surprise' he says 'that so simple a story has so completely disappeared from the later tradition.' In iv. 24 the traditional version serves a useful purpose in preserving the meaning of a Vedic phrase, though the story as a whole is worthless. Finally in v. 2 and v. 61 we have hymns which are quite of the ordinary Vedic type except that they consist of somewhat disconnected fragments, and for which the traditional interpretation is only mentioned by Sieg in order to be abandoned in its most essential features.

On the whole it appears that nothing has

yet emerged from the mass of traditional comment to give it a direct value in Vedic exegesis: indeed a bias in favour of the tradition is one of the standing dangers to which Vedic scholarship is exposed. A correct tradition as to any sacred text is indeed almost inconceivable in itself, since the commentators naturally desire to make it support the views which they themselves favour. But indirectly a study of the later Vedic literature promises much, for in no other way can a thorough familiarity with an idiom approximating to that of the Rigveda be obtained. Dr. Sieg has possibly been hunting for a non-existent treasure, but a rich crop may certainly be looked for from the soil he has turned up so diligently. He possesses a singular fairness of statement and breadth of view, and has established a claim to a position in the front rank of Vedic scholars.

E. V. ARNOLD.

BRIEFER NOTICES.

The Antigone of Sophocles, with a Commentary, abridged from the large edition of Sir Richard C. Jebb. By E. S. SHUCKBURGH. Cambridge, University Press. 1902. Pp. xl. + 252. 4s.

THIS edition by Dr. Shuckburgh comes very quickly on the heels of Mr. Bayfield's edition. But both are welcome. Mr. Shuckburgh has made a most judicious abridgment of Prof. Jebb's edition by omitting, as he says, 'the notes containing discussions of the views which the commentator rejects,' which, however valuable they may be, are more suited for advanced students. The introduction also has been considerably shortened by the omission of certain paragraphs, but everywhere Prof. Jebb's language has been adhered to, while all that is essential in it to the comprehension of the play has been retained. Prof. Jebb's reasons for considering ll. 905-920 to be spurious are very shortly given. Some German scholars, e.g. Bellermann and Steinberg still consider them genuine. Dr. Shuckburgh's work has been almost wholly confined to selection. Only very rarely has he added a few words or a quotation. It is in fact difficult to see how the abridgment could have been better made. Perhaps a subject-index might with advantage have been

interwoven with the grammatical index, as Prof. Jebb has done.

R. C. SEATON.

De Aristophanis in Nubium fabula consilio atque arte. By J. HELDER. Haarlem, Kleyenberg, 1901.

It is difficult to find anything new and original in these 196 pages. The language runs in and out of Dutch and Latin, and the content consists largely of quotations. The subject is perhaps to blame. To interpret the mind of an ancient author is the privilege of the mature and of the exercised. The young should be turned to the collection of details, from papyri or inscriptions, which may establish some matter of fact, and dissuaded from topics which invite to unsubstantial rhetoric. *Fecimus et nos haec iuvenes*, but in this country we do not continue it beyond our College literary society.

The two instructive things which have been of late said about Aristophanes' '*Ars et Consilium*,' are to my knowledge, Kaibel's remark that the Old Comedy was a critic *ex professo*, and the Athenian government from Pericles onwards progressive; and