

OBITUARY NOTICES.

FRIEDRICH VON SPIEGEL.

It seems but fitting that our Journal should contain some record of the passing of that venerable scholar and master of Avestic learning, Friedrich von Spiegel, whose death occurred as far back as December 15th. With Spiegel, the last but one—for Justi still remains—of the ‘Old Guard’ of Iranian and Avestic scholarship disappears, after a career of unusual length (aged 85) and still more unusual fulness. In default of a more competent pen, may I be permitted to contribute these few words as a modest *Nachruf* in memory of one who for over half a century was, in his own department of Oriental research, “il maestro di color che sanno”? Spiegel’s activity goes back sixty years; but what is more worthy of record is that his literary output forms in itself a complete library of Iranian and Avestic lore in all departments, as the mere list of his publications will show, as far as I know, a unique record in any department of Oriental scholarship. This is probably owing to the fact of Spiegel’s lifelong and undivided devotion to the one special department of Orientalism—Ancient Irān, its history, people, languages, and literatures, above all its national religion and sacred books. He declined to allow himself to be drawn aside, like so many other scholars, into other, even adjacent, fields of study, and he was true to his first love till old age and increasing infirmity forced him to lay down the pen for ever.

As a young man, Friedrich von Spiegel’s first book on Iranian literature was a foretaste of what his subsequent lifework was to be. It is a well-selected and well-arranged reading-book of Persian literature, *Chrestomathia Persica* (Lipsiæ, 1846), containing extracts from the poets Jāmi,

F'irdūsi, Nizāmi, Chāqāni, Saadi, with a glossary. But (with two notable exceptions) all his literary output in the following years was devoted to the more ancient literary records of the Iranian race, and was part of the great outburst of activity in this field inaugurated by the epoch-working writings of Eug. Burnouf. This can best be shown by a chronological list of Spiegel's chief books, for his contributions to periodical literature are too numerous to be chronicled. The following contains the principal ones:—

1841. *Kammavakya*. First German edition of the Pāli text.
1845. *Anecdota Pālica*. By these two works Spiegel became the founder of Pāli studies in Germany.
1850. *Ueber einige eingeschobene Stellen im Vendidad*,¹ a short essay which he distinctly sets forth as a forerunner of an edition of the Vendidad and a commentary thereto.
- 1850–1853. *Der 19^{te} Fargard des Vendidad*.
1851. *Grammatik der Parsi-Sprache*.
- 1852–1863. *Avesta, die heiligen Schriften der Parsen. Aus dem Grundtexte übersetzt*. 3 vols. This was the first authoritative translation of the Sacred Book in a European language. [An English rendering of Spiegel's version by Bleek appeared at Hertford in 1864.]
1853. *Zur Interpretation des Vendidad*.
- 1853–1858. *Avesta, die heiligen Schriften der Parsen. Zum ersten Male im Grundtexte sammt der Huzvarēsh-Uebersetzung herausgegeben*. 2 vols. This may be reckoned his *opus magnum*. The Zend text was not superseded till Geldner's great edition in 1895, and for the Phl. Vendidad it is still the only edition.
- 1856–1860. *Einleitung in die traditionellen Schriften der Parsen*. The two vols. under this very inadequate title contain (1) the first Pahlavi (Huzvarēsh) Grammar ever published, and (2) the first chrestomathy and glossary of the same language.
1861. *Neriosengh's Sanskrit-Uebersetzung des Yaçna*. Still the only edition.

¹ Spiegel had already communicated a paper on "Parsi Traditions" to the very first volume of the *Zeitschrift* of the German Oriental Society (1846), and one on "MSS. of the Vendidad and the Relations of the Huzvāresch (Pahlavi) Version to the Zend Text" to the Bavarian Royal Academy in 1848.

1862. *Die Altpersischen Keilinschriften. Im Grundtexte mit Uebersetzung, Grammatik, und Glossar.*
1863. *Erän: das Land zwischen dem Indus und Tigris.*
- 1864-1868. *Commentar über das Avesta.* 2 vols.
1867. *Grammatik der Altbaktrischen Sprache.* The first, and for long the only, Zend grammar.¹
1867. *Das Leben Zarathustra's.*
- 1871-1878. *Eränische Alterthumskunde.* 3 vols. Still an indispensable thesaurus of Ancient Iranian history and geography.
1874. *Arische Studien.*
1881. New edition of *Altpersischen Keilinschriften.*
1882. *Vergleichende Grammatik der Alteränischen Sprachen.* The only comparative grammar of these languages that we possess. This was the last book which Spiegel published; but numerous learned articles from his pen in the *Zeitschrift* of the German Oriental Society and other reviews attested his intellectual activity during the last twenty years of his life.

The mere enumeration given above suffices to show that Spiegel's astonishing literary output practically covered by itself the whole ground later on worked so effectually by the numerous scholars who co-operated in the invaluable *Grundriss der Iranischen Philologie*. The two dozen volumes which contain it is in reality an Iranian Cyclopædia; of the greater part of it, it can by no means be said that it is obsolete, and much of it is still alone in the field.

How much succeeding generations of Avestic scholars have owed to Spiegel's *bahnbrechend* works, from which most of them have learnt their first elements, it would not be easy to say. It is all the more strange that his name and merits seem to have been somewhat neglected of late among the younger generation.

Spiegel was not only a prodigious worker; he was the leader of a school. The very title-page of his translation of the Avesta contained a profession of principles ("mit steter Rücksicht auf die Tradition"). Avestic scholarship

¹ The title indicates that Spiegel shared the now generally abandoned view that Zend was the language of Bactria.

in those days was sharply divided into two camps: there was the 'Vedic' school of Roth, which saw everything through Sanskrit spectacles, and interpreted the Avesta in terms of the Veda, despising as valueless the indigenous traditions represented by the later Pahlavi literature, and to some extent retained by the modern Parsis; and there was the Traditionalist school, which refused to deny all weight to these latter, and still more to treat everything Avestic as a mere local variety of Vedic thought and belief. Spiegel, with Justi by his side, was the champion of the latter school. Long and bitter was the warfare waged. But Spiegel lived long enough to see the triumph of the methods he had so long contended for. De Harlez, who was virtually his pupil, inflicted a deathblow on the more extreme views of the Vedic school; and Darmesteter, himself much more largely influenced by de Harlez than he ever acknowledged, may be said to have completed the victory, which has since been consolidated by scholars like Wilhelm and Jackson and their school. It is pathetic to note that the very last article I can find from the hand of the aged Spiegel is a short note in the *Journal of the German Oriental Society* for 1903; "Über den Zoroastrismus," in which the veteran sums up the results in the case India *v.* Irān, and, as a kind of scientific 'last will and testament,' reasserts that "the Old Persian religion has nothing to do with India," and that the chief influence came from the West, originally from Babylon.

Spiegel, a Bavarian, was born at Kitzingen, near Würzburg, on 11th July, 1820, and as a young man entered the neighbouring University of Erlangen, with which his entire scientific career was destined to be connected. As a pupil of Rückert's, he devoted himself early to Oriental study; took his doctor's degree in 1842 at Jena, and then spent some time at Copenhagen studying the Zend and Pahlavi MSS. there preserved, following up this work by similar researches in the libraries of Paris, London, and Oxford. He was called to the Chair of Oriental Languages at Erlangen in 1849, and faithfully laboured at that post

until 1890. I well remember paying him a visit at the University in the early 80's, and was impressed with the modest simplicity and kindly geniality of the great scholar, and the almost humble surroundings of his unpretending home, which he laughingly contrasted with the lordly splendour he had seen enjoyed by the 'dons' of Oxford in their beautiful Colleges. The tenour of his whole life was in keeping with this domestic simplicity and entire absence of all pretence or personal pride. A fair share of honours, academic and royal, fell to him during his long career, yet he was never drawn from his life of quiet retirement and strenuous labour, in which few Orientalists have surpassed him. On his resignation of his chair in 1890 Spiegel retired to Munich, where he passed his last years of life.

Spiegel may be said to have left as his scientific heir his son-in-law, Dr. Eugen Wilhelm, Professor at the University of Jena, who already stands in the very front rank of Iranian and Avestic scholars.

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