

**THE RIGVEDA: THE  
OLDEST LITERATURE  
OF THE INDIANS**

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The Rigveda: The Oldest Literature of the Indians by Adolf Kaegi

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# THE RIGVEDA;

THE OLDEST LITERATURE OF THE INDIANS.

BY

ADOLF KAEGI,

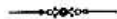
PROFESSOR IN THE UNIVERSITY OF ZÜRICH.

*AUTHORIZED TRANSLATION WITH ADDITIONS  
TO THE NOTES*

BY

R. ARROWSMITH, Ph.D.,

INSTRUCTOR IN SANSKRIT, RACINE COLLEGE, RACINE, WIS.



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1886.

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## PREFACE TO THE SECOND EDITION.

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THE invitation of my publishers to have my treatise on the Rigveda (Two Parts, *Wissenschaftliche Beilage zum Programm der Kantonsschule in Zürich*, 1878 and 1879) published in a somewhat revised and extended form, seemed to me the more to be accepted, since I had repeatedly been urged to do so from the most varied sources, and the article was frequently inquired for in the trade. It is plain that to specialists in the subject, to investigators in the field of the Veda, it cannot offer anything really new; its aim is to embrace the results of Vedic investigation, as well for beginners in the study as for all those who have a more special interest in this literature, the importance of which is perceived and admitted in ever-widening circles, especially for theologians, philologists and historians. That, however, it is founded throughout on personal investigation of the sources and examination of the investigations of others will be easily perceived by every one who takes the trouble to subject the text and notes to a more minute survey.

Here let me once more call attention to the fact that, in the sections upon the Vedic Belief and the Divinities, I have confined myself as closely as possible to the language of the hymns, so that almost the whole of this text (pp. 28-32, 84-71) is made up of the words of the poets. The quotations from the *Siebentzig Lieder* (cf. pp. 84 and 92) being given throughout in Italics, make it possible even for the non-Sanskritist to prove the method by which this is accomplished, at least in some short portions.

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If, especially in the treatment of Varuṇa, I have somewhat more fully followed out the similarities of the Vedic and the Biblical language (*cf.* now A. Holzman in the *Zeitschrift für Völkerversychologie und Sprachwissenschaft*, 1880, p. 251 f.), I shall now hardly have to meet the criticism that in so doing non-Indian, or even Christian, conceptions are put into the Veda; translation stands beside translation; it is left to the reader to prove similarity, as well as difference.

The great extent of the notes is explained by the fact that they are intended not only to prove, sustain and amplify the material presented in the text, but also to facilitate for others the survey of Vedic literature, and to point out the historical significance of the Rig. If some may criticise here too much or too little, others perhaps will be glad to utilize what is presented, even if only the references to the literature, for which the Indices may be welcome. On the letter, as well as on the correction, much care has been expended; if, notwithstanding, mistakes are discovered, it will surely be pardoned, especially in the very large quantity of numbers, by those who are experienced in such matters.

May the work in its new form serve to carry the knowledge of this ancient and highly important poetry and the interest in our studies into further circles.

DR. ADOLF KAEGLI.

ZÜRICH, November, 1880.



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Sanskrit c is pronounced like cā;

“ t, d, n like z, d, n;

“ ç and ç like çā;

“ ř like řā.

## INTRODUCTION.

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It is well known with what enthusiasm Voltaire, in his writings, especially in the *Essai sur les mœurs et l'esprit des nations*, repeatedly praised the ancient wisdom of the Brâhmans which he thought to have discovered in the *Ezour-Veidam*, brought to his notice from India about the middle of the last century.<sup>1</sup> But even Voltaire's eloquence persuaded but few of his contemporaries of the authenticity of the book. Although scholars were not in a position to disprove its genuineness,<sup>2</sup> they preserved a suspicious and skeptical attitude toward it. Soon after Voltaire's death, J. G. Herder, in the tenth book of his *Ideen zur Geschichte der Menschheit*, unhesitatingly expressed his opinion that whatever knowledge Europeans had hitherto gained of the mysteries of the Indians, was plainly only modern tradition; "for the real Weda of the Indians," he adds, "as well as for the real Sanskrit language, we shall probably have long to wait."<sup>3</sup> Although, happily, Herder's prophecy as to the language itself was not fulfilled,<sup>4</sup> yet in fact a number of decades passed before more trustworthy and detailed information was gained of these oldest literary memorials of the Indians. Colebrooke's celebrated *Essays On the Vedas*<sup>5</sup> did indeed (in 1805) give a valuable survey of the whole territory of Vedic literature, with some scattered quotations from various Vedic books; but it was not possible for Colebrooke to examine all the extraordinarily extensive works which are embraced in India under the name *Veda*, to distinguish properly the individual writings, or to determine their mutual relations.

About twenty years later a German, Friedrich Rosen, recognized in the rich collection of Vedic manuscripts