



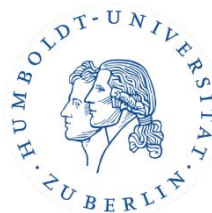
Albrecht Weber, HU Berlin, UB 1042 1

200 Years of Albrecht Weber – Pioneer of Indology and his Scholarly Legacy

17th – 18th February 2025



**Staatsbibliothek
zu Berlin**
Preußischer Kulturbesitz



**Stiftung
Preußischer Kulturbesitz**

Programme

February 17th 2025 will mark the 200th anniversary of the birth of the Indologist Friedrich Albrecht Weber (17.2.1825–30.11.1901). His far-reaching influence and international network had a significant impact on the development of Indology in the German-speaking world and beyond. This academic symposium on the occasion of the Jubilee is intended to shed light on Weber's many years of intensive work and to emphasise his lasting significance for Indology and other fields. Berlin and Albrecht Weber were and are closely linked. For several years, he held the chair of Indology at the Friedrich-Wilhelms University in Berlin. Weber worked also for many years on the collection of Indian manuscripts at the Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin (SBB), and important parts of his correspondence are kept here.

The symposium aims to explore Albrecht Weber's correspondence network and academic connections, his influence on the development of Indology, and the origins and development of Indological studies in German-speaking countries and Europe.

The conference is held in cooperation with Prof Dr Annette Schmiedchen (Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin), sub-project „From Deccan to Arakan“ of the ERC Synergy Grant-funded project „DHARMA – The Domestication of ‚Hindu‘ Asceticism and the Religious Making of South and Southeast Asia“.

Day 1: 17th February 2025

10:00 Registration / Welcome Coffee

10:30 Opening Address

10:45–12:15 Albrecht Weber's correspondence and academic networks

[Krause, Anett](#) (Berlin): Albrecht Weber's correspondence in various collections and an outlook on analysing it with digital humanities tools

[Walravens, Hartmut](#) (Berlin): Anton Schiefner as Albrecht Weber's correspondent

[Petit, Jérôme](#) (Paris): Weber's French connections: acquiring, cataloguing, and editing Sanskrit manuscripts

12:15–13:45 Lunch

13:45–15:15 Weber's influence on the development of Indology I

[Keßler-Persaud, Anne](#) (Göttingen): The first and the second Indological reading of the R̥gveda's marriage hymn

[Natu, Amruta](#) (Pune): Weber's view of ancient Indian astronomy vis-à-vis his immediate successors in that field

[Parpola, Asko](#) (Helsinki, online): Weber's contribution to the study of Vedic texts and Vedic ritual

15:15–15:45 Coffee

15:45–17:15 Weber’s influence on the development of Indology II

[Pinault, Georges-Jean](#) (Paris): Dice divination on the tracks of Albrecht Weber

[Salomon, Richard](#) (Seattle): Albrecht Weber on the origin of the Indian scripts

[Flügel, Peter](#) (London): The Significance of Albrecht Weber for the Establishment of Jaina Studies as an Academic Field

Day 2: 18th February 2025

10:00 Welcome Coffee

10:30–12:00 Origin and development of Indological studies in German-speaking countries and Europe I

[Schmiedchen, Annette](#) (Berlin): Georg Bühler – a contemporary of Albrecht Weber

[Ciurtin, Eugen](#) (Bucharest): “A Cup of Tea at Professor Weber” Or, Easternmost European Echoes. Fr. Albrecht Weber’s Romanian Students: M. Eminescu and C.D. Georgian, 1872–1877

[Hoffmann-Ruf, Michaela](#) (Berlin/Bochum): Indological studies at the University of Bonn at the time of Johann Gustav Gildemeister (1812–1890)

12:00–13:00 Lunch

13.00–14.00 Guided tour through the [Stabi Kulturwerk](#) for speakers

14.00–15:30 Origin and development of Indological studies in German-speaking countries and Europe II

[Dimitrov, Dragomir](#) (Marburg): Some observations about Bruno Liebich’s work on the Cāndravākaṛaṇa and his manuscripts

[Schneider, Johannes](#) (München): Verhinderte Anfänge. P. Heinrich Roth SJ (1620–1668) aus Dillingen und die älteste westliche Sanskritgrammatik

[Theilhaber, Amir](#) (Bielefeld/Potsdam): Agha Hassan Amanats Indar Sabha in Friedrich Rosens Übersetzung. Modernes Hindustani Theater zwischen britischem Imperialismus, indischem Nationalismus und deutscher Orientalistik

16.30–18.00 Presentation of manuscripts at [Haus Potsdamer Straße](#) for speakers

Abstracts

Dr. Eugen Ciurtin (Bucharest)

“A Cup of Tea at Professor Weber” Or, Easternmost European Echoes. Fr. Albrecht Weber’s Romanian Students: M. Eminescu and C.D. Georgian, 1872–1877

A late Romantic poet of omnivorous, Rückert-type reading and translating interests, M. Eminescu (1849/1850–1889), and Constantin D. Georgian (1850–1904), the Wegbereiter of Romanian Indology and comparative study of religions, are the two Romanian students of Friedrich Albrecht Weber who greatly benefited from his teaching courses, books, articles, catalogues and indeed personal guidance. Eminescu in 1872–1874 and Georgian in 1876–1877 frequented Weber’s Indological classes at the University of Berlin, with results as surprising as Indic-wise cosmological poems versifying Weber’s translations from the Ṛgveda or a first ever critical edition of a Sanskrit medieval tract. My paper shall present the Berlin-Bucharest-Iasi network of Weber readers, placing in their true European context the Romanian recently published and still unpublished sources.

While Eminescu came from Vienna where he studied mainly philosophy, Georgian came from Paris and Leipzig, where he already studied with Bergaigne, Bréal, Foucaux, and Darmesteter, and successfully defended his PhD with Brockhaus, Brugmann, Hübschmann, and Leskien. Despite the very status as Romanian national poet, all things Vedic and more generally Indian in Eminescu have very partially been or should more seriously be related to Weber’s Berlin professorship and publications, especially the poems, the prose fragments and the translations from the German and Latin related to India dating from 1879–1881 and 1884–1887. Georgian not only used extensively Weber’s scholarship in his publications, lectures and manuscripts, but even translated into Romanian two of his large articles (some 150 pages on Vedic ritual, from his *Indische Studien* 1868 and 1873), undoubtedly of much use for his inaugural teaching course on Sanskrit language and literature at the University of Bucharest in 1876/1877 – even before his native country’s accession to independence – and even reported the fact to Abel Bergaigne, his prior professor in Paris who first taught him Sanskrit.

As the work of Weber is gigantic, comparable only to Eugène Burnouf’s or Fr. Max Müller’s (as previously reported by Asko Parpola: he published some 11,250 pages in-8o as well as 7,473 pages in-4o), it may be helpful to search for other Easternmost European readers as well. I shall also present a listing of Weber’s works in Romanian publications and Bucharest libraries of the 19th century as well as references to the original German publications of Weber in some other Romanian manuscript and writings from Georgian, Hasdeu (1838–1907), Georgian’s Romanian colleagues and disciples Moses Gaster (1856–1939), Lazăr Șăineanu (1859–1934) and disciple Indologist Theodor Iordănescu (1870–1939), also a Berlin pupil of Weber’s successor Richard Pischel (1849–1908), up to the young Mircea Eliade (before leaving Bucharest for good in 1940). Covering thus Topics 1–4 of the Symposium and taking into account Weber’s involvement in other academic cultures (e.g. his Polish pupil Jan Hanusz, 1858–1887, to whom he assigned the edition of a Prakrit manuscript from Berlin collections), I would like to contribute to the furtherance of Weber’s European image and scholarly networks: a grand scholar instrumental in helping students (in this case: both quart of a century younger followers) coming from cultures without any proper Indology at that time.

For previous Berlin-Bucharest Indological connections in the 1870s: Arion Roşu (1924–2007) discovered, duly organised, and studied the multilingual, back then fully unpublished archive of C.D. Georgian, ‘the founder of Romanian Indology’ as described by him in ZDMG (Roşu 1966) and then wrote in the same periodical on ‘Eminescu et l’indianisme romantique’ (Roşu 1970) highlighting the Romanian national poet’s readings from Weber. I continued his work in Ciurtin 1997 (in Romanian with a French abstract, specifically on Weber: pp. 148–151 and 158), Ciurtin 2004–2005 [2007], Ciurtin 2017 (in French, on Georgian’s manuscript critical edition of Bhānudatta Miśra’s Rasamañjarī made at the instigation of Weber in 1876/7), then in some dozens of loci in Constantin Georgian’s Unpublished Asian Works, volumes I (Ciurtin 2017), II (Ciurtin 2018) and III (Ciurtin 2019 open access), a 1,150-page critical edition of the main manuscripts from his archive, with specimens in 14 languages. The very title A Cup of Tea at Professor Weber translates C. Georgian’s French-German manuscript Une tasse de thé chez le professeur Weber from January 1877 while in Berlin (© Library of the Romanian Academy, Bucharest, Archive C. Georgian II MS. 18, now in Ciurtin 2019, pp. 277–283).

Prof. Dr. Dragomir Dimitrov (Marburg)

**Some observations about Bruno Liebich’s work on the Cāndravyākaraṇa
and his manuscripts**

In the fifth century AD the famous Buddhist scholar Candragomin contributed besides several other compositions a substantial reworking of the Aṣṭādhyāyī, a highly intricate and ingenious treatise on Sanskrit grammar which Pāṇini composed approximately one millennium earlier. Despite its huge importance and the strong influence which it exerted on later generations of grammarians across South and Southeast Asia, Candragomin’s Cāndravyākaraṇa (fifth century AD), however, remained for a long time poorly studied and largely inaccessible. This unfavourable situation changed significantly when the German indologist Bruno Liebich (1862–1939) published his editio princeps of the Cāndrasūtra in 1902, followed in 1918 by another major edition of its main commentary known as the Cāndravṛtti.

In my talk I will present some little known details concerning the manuscripts used by Liebich for the preparation of his exemplary editions. By going back to the original Nepalese sources and by studying closely their history and use, it ultimately becomes possible to judge more reliably the quality of Liebich’s editorial work. This prompts us to raise again the question about the trustworthiness of his editions which are meanwhile more than a century old. The re-examination of Liebich’s codices, as well as the evaluation of other more recently discovered important manuscripts, some of which contain also other later commentaries belonging to the Cāndra system of grammar (Ratnamati’s Cāndrapañjikā from the first half of the tenth century being the most extensive and important among these later exegetical works), permit us to answer more satisfactorily whether a new edition of the Cāndravṛtti is worth preparing and to what extent such an undertaking can be successfully accomplished nowadays. The analysis of Bruno Liebich’s pioneer works and his primary sources lets us conclude that despite the extraordinary high quality of his scholarship, his editions cannot be considered definitive, and now with more resources at hand partially better results can be achieved.

Prof. Dr. Peter Flügel (London)

The Significance of Albrecht Weber for the Establishment of Jaina Studies as an Academic Field

Without A. Weber's pioneering work on Śvetāmbara texts and his formative influence as a teacher and academic chair, Jaina research would not have taken root as a significant branch of Oriental Studies, despite the fact that Weber regarded the Jainas as a Buddhist sect, did not use the expression Jaina Studies, and has been largely forgotten or ignored by recent scholarship in the field. The influence of Weber was formative because he was able to incite some of the most talented students of his class of 1871-2 to take up the investigation of the previously unknown Prakrit, Sanskrit texts of the Jainas that began to arrive in Berlin from 1873 onward, and because his disciples gained leading positions in German academic institutions. The paper will trace the lines of Weber's influence and show that despite considerable advances in the field of Prakrit and Jainology, and Jaina Studies more generally, there is still a lot to be learned from re-visiting Weber's works on the Jaina traditions.

Dr. Michaela Hoffmann-Ruf (Berlin/Bochum)

**Indological Studies at the University of Bonn at the time of
Johann Gustav Gildemeister (1812–1890)**

The University of Bonn was founded in 1818. The study of oriental languages was given a place in the curriculum of the newly founded university almost from the outset. From the beginning it was the declared intention to establish a full professorship for 'Oriental language and literature' at the Faculty of Philosophy. The Semitic languages (Arabic, Hebrew) and Persian had been taught since the summer semester of 1819 by Georg Wilhelm Freytag (1788–1861), who also gave lectures on theology. August Wilhelm von Schlegel (1767–1845), Professor of "Fine Literature", brought a new discipline to the University of Bonn, 'Indian literature', which had hardly been taught in Germany before. From the summer term of 1821, Schlegel taught Sanskrit. The 'Bonn School' that subsequently emerged was recognised far beyond Bonn, as far away as Paris and London.

Johann Gustav Gildemeister (1812–1890) moved from the Georgia Augusta University in Göttingen to the Friedrich Wilhelm University in Bonn in the spring of 1834. He cites theology as the main reason for the move. However, his decision was probably also influenced by the range of oriental philology courses on offer. The professors with whom Gildemeister undoubtedly attended the most lectures were August Wilhelm von Schlegel, Christian Lassen (1800–1876) and Georg Freytag. Based on Gildemeister's letters to his family in Bremen, which are in the possession of the Bonn University Archives, my lecture deals with the situation of Indological Studies at the University of Bonn in the 1830s. One focus here is on Gildemeister's teachers and the courses on offer. Another focus is on the study conditions, i.e. the problems and challenges that students were confronted with. Last but not least, I would like to take a look at how the students themselves viewed the situation.

Dr. Anne Keßler-Persaud (Göttingen)

The first and the second Indological reading of the Ṛgveda's marriage hymn

Ernst Haas (1862: 269–279), one of Albrecht Weber's students, is credited with the first Indological interpretation of the Sūryāsūkta (Ṛgveda 10.85). This hymn is generally considered a collection of verses relating to the wedding ritual. In the introduction to his study of the "Heirathsgebräuche der alten Inder", Haas presents an eleven-page analysis of this Ṛgvedic hymn. The main part of his study, however, is concerned with the Gṛhyasūtras, i.e. "die sämtlichen in der Handschriftensammlung der kgl. Bibliothek zu Berlin vorhandenen Sūtren" (ibid. 267). Weber publishes Haas' work in the journal *Indische Studien*, of which he has been editor since 1850, and provides it there with partly further, partly critical notes. In addition, Weber (1862: 177–195) supplements Haas' contribution by publishing the earliest Indological translations of the Sūryāsūkta and the Atharvavedic marriage hymn as well as several other marriage-related hymns of the Atharvaveda in the same issue.

In my paper, I will analyse how Weber researched the little-known field that the Vedic marriage hymns represented at the time – at least from a Western perspective –, in some ways as the first, in other ways as the second Indologist. On the one hand, I will look at Weber's editorial activity and publication strategy, on the other at his method of translation and interpretation. In addition, I will ask how his view on the Sūryāsūkta, in combination with Haas' study, has shaped, influenced and inspired the Indological reception of the Ṛgvedic marriage hymn for well over 150 years.

Dr. Anett Krause (Berlin)

Albrecht Weber's correspondence in various collections and an outlook on analysing it with digital humanities tools

Much of Albrecht Weber's estate has been preserved, although in very distant places. His library was acquired by the Library of Congress (Washington) in 1904. Parts of his correspondence can be found there and in the Berlin Staatsbibliothek. The latter came into possession of Weber's letters through the collecting passion of the chemist and historian of science Ludwig Darmstaedter (1846–1927). These collections contain numerous letters from scholars such as Georg Bühler, Aurel Stein, Ernst Windisch and many others. They also contain drafts of Weber's replies to his correspondents.

In my talk, I will select certain aspects of these letters and explore them in more detail. I will also show how these letters can be processed and analysed using digital humanities tools: For example, the tool *Transkribus* can be used to convert a large corpus of letters into machine-readable text in a relatively short time using automated transcription. This can then be further analysed using the web-based text analysis tool *Voyant*.

Dr. Amruta Natu (Pune)

Weber's view of Ancient Indian Astronomy vis-à-vis his immediate successors in that field

Albrecht Weber (1825–1901) has written extensively on a wide range of subjects in Indology. Ancient Indian astronomy is one such topic which perhaps emerged in his studies as an auxiliary to the Vedic research. In 1853 he wrote in his *Indische Studien* on *Zur Geschichte der indischen Astrologie*. The two parts of *Die vedischen Nachrichten von den naxatra Mondstationen* were published in 1860 and 1861. He dealt with the subject also in his work on *History of Indian Literature*.

In the late 19th century, there was a long debate between a bunch of scholars regarding the place of origin of the Nakṣatra system. China and Babylonia or Chaldea were the conflicting choices among the western scholars Weber, J. B. Biot, W. D. Whitney etc. and Indian scholars like B. G. Tilak and S. B. Dikshit advocated the indigenous origin of science. While Weber denied the Indian origin of the Nakṣatra system he stated that the names of planets suggest that planets were discovered by Indians independently. His views about the Nakṣatra series beginning with Kṛttikā had also been discussed by the scholars mentioned above. H. Jacobi and Tilak deployed the astronomical data to date the Vedic literature. They have cited Weber frequently. At least at one place Tilak seems to have judged Weber only as a 'foreign' scholar. Though my focus is limited to ancient Indian astronomy, the following questions are worth considering. Why did the western scholars endeavour into the jungles of such questions like the origin of astronomical knowledge with just a handful of two-edged evidences? Were the writings of the Indian scholars mere reactionary? Did they have nationalist biases or nationalist intentions?

In my talk, I intend to discuss such aspects of ancient Indian astronomy as dealt with by Weber and received on varied independent planes by different scholars; his contemporaries and junior contemporaries.

Prof. em. Asko Parpola (Helsinki)

Albrecht Weber's contribution to the study of Vedic texts and Vedic ritual

Weber was a great pioneer of Indology, who was active in many fields. The basis of his work were Sanskrit and Prakrit manuscripts in European libraries, above all in the Royal Library of Berlin, whose large collection assembled in India by Sir Robert Chambers he catalogued in an exemplary way in 1850–53. Through this work he could open up new vistas in the history of Indian literature, immediately communicated in his book *Akademische Vorlesungen über indische Literaturgeschichte* (1852). The Chambers collection was particularly rich in Vedic texts. Later on, Weber carried out another gigantic task by cataloguing the library's later large acquisition of Jaina manuscripts (1888–1892), therewith again opening a new field of research. Besides, he published a professional journal devoted to all fields of Indology, *Indische Studien* in 18 volumes (1849–1898) – with many important contributions written by editor himself. His reviews and minor indological papers he collected in three volumes entitled *Indische Streifen* (1868–1879).

Weber took his Ph.D. at the age of 20 in 1845 on a thesis which edited the 9th adhyāya of the Vājasaneyi-Saṃhitā. The years 1846–48 he spent in London, Oxford and Paris copying and collating manuscripts for his three-volume edition of The White Yajurveda, comprising the whole Vājasaneyi-Saṃhitā (1852), the Śatapatha-Brāhmaṇa (1855) and the Kātyāyana-Śrautasūtra (1859), each with extracts of commentaries, and consulting also the Vājasaneyi-Prātiśākhya (edited by Weber in 1858) and other auxiliary texts. Weber's edition of the ŚB is still widely used. His edition of the Taittirīya-Saṃhitā (1871–72) observing its prātiśākhya (edited by Whitney in 1871) and its padapāṭha (studied by Weber in 1873) has also stood the test of time, being still fully valid. In his TS edition Weber could cite parallel passages from the Maitrāyaṇī Saṃhitā (on which he wrote shortly in 1873) and from the Kāṭhakaṃ (discussed by Weber in 1855) – these two very important texts were published by L. von Schroeder in 1881–86 and 1900–1910.

Besides Yajurveda, Weber contributed also the study of the Sāmaveda and the Atharvaveda. “Über die Literatur des Sāmaveda” (1850) is an early but remarkable piece, and he published chapters on omnia and portenta in the Sāmavedic text Ṣaḍviṃśa-Brāhmaṇa and in the Atharvavedic Kauśikasūtra (1859). He translated two books (II and XVIII) of the Śaunaka Atharvaveda into German (1873, 1896).

Weber was the first to publish exact and detailed information on the Vedic ritual: “Zur Kenntniss des vedischen Opferrituals” (1868–1873). He devoted also special studies to the human sacrifice (1864), the Vājapeya (1892) and the royal consecration, rājasūya (1893). “Episches im vedischen Ritual” (1891) is an early study of a theme later taken up by other scholars. Still largely unbeaten is his important study of the Vedic nakṣatra calendar (1860–61), and he published also a major study “Über den Vedakalender, Namens Jyotiṣam” (1862). Weber's study of the Indian metrics includes “Vedische Angaben über Metrik” (1863).

In addition to the texts that he published, Weber copied from manuscripts many other Vedic texts for his studies. A major but often forgotten contribution of Weber to Indological studies is his collaboration with Otto Böhtlingk and Rudolf Roth on their Sanskrit Wörterbuch. “Beiträge zum Petersburger Wörterbuch” in Weber's Nachlass contains 3201 pages; Böhtlingk regretted that for space reasons he could include only a small portion of this vocabulary.

Prof. Dr. Jérôme Petit (Paris)

Weber's French connections: acquiring, cataloguing, and editing Sanskrit manuscripts.

History of Indian manuscript collections is a transnational history. In the mid-19th century, collections in Oxford, London and Berlin overshadowed the Paris collection which was being during a century the first of this kind in Europe. Engaged in many orientalist institutions in France and abroad, Eugène Burnouf asked the ministry of Public Instruction to reinforce the Indian collections by acquiring corpuses of Sanskrit manuscripts through the Asiatic societies in Paris and Calcutta. Meanwhile, Berlin acquired the extensive Chambers collection which was described without delay by Albrecht Weber. To feed his personal collection and his teachings on the Veda at the Collège de France, Burnouf employed Theodor Goldstücker to take copy of some manuscripts held in Berlin. These copies are now kept at the National Library of France. Weber himself was a disciple of Burnouf and worked in Paris on manuscripts acquired

thanks to him, particularly for his edition of the *Śatapathabrāhmaṇa*. The comparison and study of these original and copied manuscripts, as well as the reading of archives of the French administration, shed light on this crucial period when Indian studies received strong philological basis.

Prof. Dr. Georges-Jean Pinault (Paris)

Dice divination on the tracks of Albrecht Weber

During his whole career, Albrecht Weber showed a keen interest for all aspects of the Indian past, including folklore. Among his pioneer works, the treatment of manuscripts pertaining to divination and prognostication is worth noting. One case in point is the *Pāśaka-kevalī*, lit. “exclusive [knowledge] of dice”, in Sanskrit, which Weber edited and translated. The first publication contains a presentation and the text itself, in 183 stanzas, attributed to Garga, a Jaina scholar: “Über ein indisches Würfel-Orakel”, *Monatsberichte der Königlichen Preuss. Akademie der Wissenschaften zu Berlin*. Aus dem Jahre 1859, p. 158–180, Berlin, 1860. The reprint as chapter 15 of the *Indische Streifen*. Bd. 1. Berlin, Nicolaische Verlagsbuchhandlung, 1868, p. 274–307, provides actually the German translation of the text, preceded by a very useful commentary. The technique of dice divination, alias cubomancy, as reflected in the *Pāśaka-kevalī*, is based on triplets of numbers, obtained by throwing four-sided sticks, inscribed on the faces with pips or circles marking 1, 2, 3, 4. Three rolls of one four-sided stick, or casting three such sticks, make 64 combinations, which are taken as omens. The paper will analyze the structure and the vocabulary of the text, on the basis of Weber’s edition and translation, and of a second edition by Julius Erich Schröter, *Pāśakakevalī. Ein indisches Würfelorakel*. Inaugural-Dissertation, Leipzig, Borna, 1900. This Sanskrit work can be compared with other instances of dice divination in Tibet, China and Central Asia, written in different languages. The popularity of the practice is documented by the so-called “Bower Manuscript” (Bodleian Library, Oxford), dated in the beginning of 6th century CE, written on birch bark *pothi* leaves, in Gupta script, in Sanskrit interspersed with Prākṛit, see A.F. Rudolf Hoernle. *The Bower Manuscript*, Calcutta (Archaeological Survey of India), 1893–1912. In this admixture of different works, there are two divination texts, the second one (Hoernle’s edition, Part V) being the closest to the *Pāśaka-kevalī*. This manuscript has been found in March 1890 in a damaged Buddhist side of the Kucha region, precisely in the ruins of a stūpa in Kumtura. A further text is the manuscript in Tocharian A, on paper *pothi* leaves, found by the Pelliot mission in Subashi, also near Kucha, PK NS 1–6 (Bibliothèque nationale de France), which I have deciphered. This latter work can be dated to the 7th century CE. Weber’s work gives a decisive support to the understanding of both texts, which reflect probably a tradition of Northwest India.

Prof. em. Richard Salomon (Seattle)

Albrecht Weber on the Origin of the Indian Scripts

In 1998 (*Indian Epigraphy...*, New York, p. 24) I referred to Albrecht Weber’s 1856 article “Ueber den semitischen Ursprung des indischen Alphabetes” (ZDMG 10, 389–406) as “The

first comprehensive and authoritative treatment of the Semitic hypothesis” of the origin of the Brāhmī and Kharoṣṭhī scripts. In this famous article Weber compared the forms, and to some extent also the systems, of the early Indian scripts to those of the early Semitic scripts (mostly Phoenician and Aramaic) as they were known at the time. In the 168 years since then, a vast amount of new material, both on the Indian and the Semitic side, has been discovered and analyzed by Indologists and Semiticists. Ironically, however, the new material and new methods have still not led to a complete consensus on the Semitic hypothesis, and the question is still a matter of considerable controversy (Salomon, “On the Origin of the Early Indian Scripts,” JAOS 115, 1995: 271–279). This presentation will discuss and evaluate the methodological principles employed (or assumed) in Weber’s article in the light of more modern approaches. Moreover, the problem will be framed within a broader consideration of the study of the history of writing and the principles of script derivation, especially by way of their differences from the study of language affiliation.

Prof. Dr. Annette Schmedchen

Georg Bühler – a contemporary of Albrecht Weber

Georg Bühler (1837–1898) was a slightly younger contemporary of Albrecht Weber (1825–1901). What both Indologists had in common was that they not only pursued their formal university education in Germany, but also travelled to Paris and London for a time to continue their Sanskrit studies. In contrast to Bühler, who lived and worked in India for many years, Weber spent his entire professional life as a researcher and professor in Germany.

Weber was one of the first Indologists to take a great interest in the study of Jainism and Jaina Prakrit. The basis for his treatise *Über die heiligen Schriften der Jaina* (“On the holy scriptures of the Jainas”) were, to a very large extent, manuscripts which Bühler, who had gained access to libraries that had previously been inaccessible to foreigners, sent from India. The two researchers also appear to have had intensive scholarly exchange, as evidenced by the numerous letters from Bühler to Weber kept in the Berlin State Library. In order to facilitate a historical contextualisation of Weber’s work, the lecture will focus on Bühler’s contribution to the development of Indological studies in German-speaking countries and Europe.

Prof. Dr. Johannes Schneider (München)

Verhinderte Anfänge. P. Heinrich Roth SJ (1620–1668) aus Dillingen und die älteste westliche Sanskritgrammatik.

Heinrich Roth war sechzehn Jahre als Missionar in Indien tätig. In Agra lernte er sechs Jahre lang Sanskrit; seine "Grammatica [!] linguae Sanscretanae Brachmanum Indiae Orientalis" stellte er um das Jahr 1662 fertig. Dieses Werk war fast drei Jahrhunderte lang verschollen, die Handschrift wurde erst 1967 wiederentdeckt und 1988 der Forschung zugänglich gemacht. Roth steht unter dem Einfluß eines einheimischen sprachkundlichen Systems, des Sārasvatavyākaraṇa, nach dem er unterrichtet wurde. Der Vortrag zeigt anhand ausgewählter Beispiele das Ineinander westlicher und östlicher Zugänge in Roths Werk und stellt so die

Besonderheit dieser ersten westlichen Sanskritgrammatik heraus. Roths Ordensobere verweigerten seinerzeit die Drucklegung – eine folgenreiche Fehlentscheidung: Sie hat dazu geführt, daß nach Roths Tod mehr als ein Jahrhundert verging, bevor die westliche Sanskritistik sich heranbilden konnte und sich dabei völlig unabhängig von seinem Pionierwerk formieren mußte.

Dr. Amir Theilhaber (Potsdam/Bielefeld)

Agha Hassan Amanats Indar Sabha in Friedrich Rosens Übersetzung. Modernes Hindustani Theater zwischen britischem Imperialismus, indischem Nationalismus und deutscher Orientalistik

1886 reiste Friedrich Rosen nach Indien, um dort anderthalb Jahre am Hof des britischen Vizekönigs dessen Sohn zu unterrichten. Rosen stammte aus einer Orientalisten- und Diplomatenfamilie und war Mitte des 19. Jahrhundert in Jerusalem aufgewachsen, sprach Arabisch und Persisch, und hatte Philologie und Indologie studiert. In Kolkata angekommen, wurde er schnell auf ein Theaterstück aufmerksam, das sich in der Hauptstadt der britischen Kolonie und weit darüber hinaus in ganz Südasien großer Beliebtheit erfreute: dem *Indar Sabha*. Drei Jahre vor dem Aufstand von Agha Hassan Amanat 1853 in Lucknow unweit des Hofes vom Patronen der Künste, Wajid 'Ali Shah, veröffentlicht, erlangte dieses Theaterstück, welches kulturelle, religiöse, stilistische und sprachliche Elemente aus dem muslimischen und dem hinduistischen Kanon in der Form einer Komödie mit langen Musikeinlagen vereinte, so große Beliebtheit, dass es ein genrestiftendes Theaterstück in Südasien wurde. Rosen ging dem *Indar Sabha* und seinen Aufführungsformen in mehreren Städten Indiens nach, unterhielt Beziehungen zu Buchhändlern, tauschte sich aus mit den Tagores in Kolkata und anderen belesenen und kulturaffinen Personen, und besuchte Volkstheateraufführungen auf dem Land, um das *Indar Sabha* im weiteren Kontext zu erfassen. Rosen sah im *Indar Sabha* eine eigenständige für Indien passende kulturelle Entwicklung, welche er von der „europäischen Gleichmachung“ bedroht sah. Ob und wie dieses Theater mit antiken indischen Theatern in Verbindung zu bringen sei, erachtete er als wenig wichtig. So schrieb er in seiner 1891 in Leipzig bei Ernst Windisch und Ludolf Krehl verteidigten Dissertation. Auch wenn Annemarie Schimmel Anfang der 1980er Jahre meinte, basierend auf Rosens Publikation ein Aufblühen der deutschen indienwissenschaftlichen Beschäftigung mit Urdu feststellen zu können, so blieb Rosens Übersetzung und Einordnung des *Indar Sabha* doch eine singuläre Arbeit. Hindustani erlangte auch in der Folgezeit keine größere Aufmerksamkeit und die Erforschung des modernen Südasiens blieb hinter der Beschäftigung mit dem alten Indien zurück.

Dr. Hartmut Walravens (Berlin)

Anton Schiefner as Albrecht Weber's correspondent

The Berlin State Library (Manuscripts Department) holds 89 letters from Anton Schiefner (1817–1879) to his friend Albrecht Weber, not as part of the estate, but thanks to the collecting zeal of the autograph lover Ludwig Darmstaedter (1846–1927). The correspondence

covers the years 1856–1879. It is not known how the two scholars became acquainted – certainly not during their studies: when Weber entered the university in Breslau, Schiefner had already returned from Berlin to St. Petersburg. Perhaps they met at a philologists' gathering.

Schiefner was the son of a Bohemian glass merchant who had emigrated to Reval; he was born in Reval, attended the Ritter- und Domschule and then studied law in St. Petersburg. After that, he spent two years attending the University of Berlin, where he probably devoted himself mainly to classical languages and Sanskrit. He then taught Latin for six years, and Greek at the same time until 1852, at the first grammar school (Gymnasium) in St. Petersburg. In 1848 he was appointed curator of the second section of the library of the Academy of Sciences, and in 1852 adjunct for Tibetan. In 1863 he became director of the library's second department and simultaneously, from 1860 to 1873, he worked as a professor of classical languages at the Catholic Academy in St. Petersburg.

Schiefner was undoubtedly a scholar of wide-ranging knowledge who also published a great deal: in Tibetology, his main focus was on linguistics and Buddhist narrative literature (Jâtakas), which he translated from the Tibetan Kanjur. In the field of Finno-Ugristics, his (first) German (metric) translation of the Kalevala should be mentioned, as well as his translation and edition of the works of the early deceased Finnish scholar Mathias Alexander Castrén (1813–1852) (12 volumes). In the field of Estonian literature, he proved to be the midwife of the Estonian epic *Kalewipoeg*, as evidenced by his extensive correspondence with the Estonian physician Friedrich Reinhold Kreutzwald, its editor. Another area of his work were the Caucasian languages, for which he had at his disposal the extensive materials of Major General Peter von Uslar (1816–1875), which he linguistically organised, edited and translated. And finally, folklore and fairy tale research should be mentioned, which play a role in most of his works, without him having dedicated any monographic works of his own to them. His edition of Wilhelm Radloff's *Samples of the folk literature of the Turkish tribes of South Siberia* (Volumes 1–4) should be mentioned here.

Schiefner was a very sociable and communicative person and had a wide-ranging scholarly network, whereby it soon became clear that many scholars were both Weber's and his own acquaintances and correspondents. In addition, the subject areas were not yet so narrowly defined at the time and the scholarly interests were wide-ranging. Today, the letters read like a chapter from the history of European Indology and linguistics and provide excellent source material. In addition to information about the current work of the writer and his addressee, there is a lot of news from the scholarly world, new publications and scientific questions.

Since there is no Schiefner estate (Schiefner's son Meinhard was shot by the Bolsheviks in 1918 as a Czarist general and his property was probably plundered), his published works and his letters are the only surviving, but very meaningful, documents for his life and work. The letters have now been published in five volumes; in which the letters to Weber cover almost 300 pages.