



## SCHAEDER, HANS HEINRICH

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**SCHAEDER, HANS HEINRICH** (b. Göttingen 31 January 1896; d. Göttingen 13 March 1957; [Plate I](#)), one of the most creative, knowledgeable, and versatile of German Iranists, and taking into account his familiarity with other neighboring disciplines, from Hebraic studies to Sinology, he might have claimed to be an Orientalist in the full sense of the word. As a historian of Oriental religions and Hellenistic philosophy, he mastered this enormous field of scholarship from the *Vedas* and *Zoroaster* up to Islam.

More than many other scholars Schaeder was a self-made man, educated in a strictly European way. His personal connection with countries outside Europe was almost nil. He never visited the East and did not take much scholarly interest in contemporary problems of the Near, Middle, or Far East (Pritsak, p. 25). For Schaeder, as he himself admitted, the “Orient” was not the idealized world of romanticism and immeasurable wisdom but the alternative plan to the unique occidental culture. Occidental culture won its freedom, according to Schaeder, from its characteristic, never resolved tension between “Christian revelation” and “Greek education” (*Goethe als Mitmensch*, pp. 5-6). This freedom was never and nowhere achieved in the “Orient” with its monocausal forms of culture. It is all the more astonishing to see how much ingenuity and time Schaeder devoted to his research into eastern and mainly Iranian cultures.

Schaeder is described by those who knew him personally as an independent, passionate scholar. His thirst for knowledge was inexhaustible. It was not unusual for one idea to project or to chase the other, but this gift of



overwhelming inspiration had its price. Many of the envisaged plans remained torsos or even unwritten at all. Neither Schaeder's doctoral dissertation nor his habilitation thesis have ever been properly published (Pritsak, p. 24).

Schaeder often took the short cut of giving public lectures on whatever topic he was currently interested in or asked to talk about. He was an impressive orator who could be sure that his words would fill the lecture halls.

It was not easy to become Schaeder's pupil. Schaeder was permanently looking for gifted students who more or less fulfilled the preconditions of academic work. If they somehow disappointed the master, those "Genies vom Dienste" (geniuses at the service) could find themselves replaced by others. Yet some of his best students did not give in and became well-known scholars in their own right. Suffice it to mention the renowned Islamicist Annemarie Schimmel (1922-2003) and the noted historian of oriental religions, Carsten Colpe (1929-2009). The last student to study with Schaeder was Hans Helmhart Kanus-Credé, a scholar of the *Šāh-nāma*.

Schaeder's life and professional career was very much determined by his father, professor Erich Schaeder (1861-1936) who taught Protestant theology at several universities. The educational level in his parental home as well as the classical schools he was privileged to attend prepared him in the best possible way and in many respects for his further private and academic life. Thus Schaeder came to be a gifted pianist, even introduced into the art of writing music (Pritsak, pp. 21-22).

Schaeder's first classical studies in 1914 at the university of Kiel were interrupted by the outbreak of the First World War. Schaeder did voluntary service as a medical orderly in Russia and Rumania (where he came closest to the real "Orient"). He continued his classical studies after the end of the war with Werner Jäger (1888-1961). It was the historian Fritz Kern (1884-1950) who drew his attention to the East. He needed a gifted person who was able to read medieval Arabic sources on German countries in their original language. Not only did Schaeder fulfill Kern's expectations, he even chose the Middle East and above all Iran as the worthwhile subject of his further studies.

Schaeder took all his academic degrees in an incredibly short time. He was awarded his doctorate in 1919 with a thesis on the early Islamic theologian [Ḥasan Baṣri](#), and he took the habilitation degree in 1922 with a study on the



poetical means and motives of Šams-al-Din Moḥammad Hafez (*Hafizstudien*). Omeljan Pritsak (1919-2006), who must have seen this unfortunately unpublished work, says that it was (or is?) an introduction to the arts of classical Persian poetry (Pritsak, pp. 28-29).

During his studies Schaeder worked in Berlin as a cultural journalist for publications such as the conservative *Grenzbote* and became active in ephemeral Christian oriented conservative circles in 1920 and 1921 (Pritsak, pp. 25-26).

Schaeder was not introduced into Iranian studies by, and at the time dominate and rival, schools of Friedrich C. Andreas and Christian Bartholomae. Schaeder was and remained independent of both schools all his life. Instead he owed his introduction into his later working field to such contrasting scholars as the German orientalist and politician in Prussia C. H. Becker (1876-1933), and the secluded polymath Josef Markwart. It is obvious that both of them influenced the subject of his work and even the form and arrangement of his articles.

In 1922, the year of his habilitation, Schaeder was appointed to his first professorship at Breslau where he stayed till 1926. This time is regarded as the most productive period of his life. Pritsak stated that Schaeder, in steady contact with outstanding specialists and through studies of his own, acquired an amazing knowledge of Semitic, Iranian and Turkic languages, of philosophy, religious science and general linguistics, and such important works as “Urform und Fortbildungen des manichäischen Systems” (1927) and *Die Komposition von Esra 2-4* (often called *Esra der Schreiber*) were written at that time (1930; Pritsak, pp. 29-31).

Schaeder became professor at Königsberg (and for a brief period at Leipzig) from 1926 to 1931. In 1930, Markwart died and Schaeder was appointed as the successor to his chair, unique in Germany, for Iranian and Armenian philology. He occupied the chair from 1931 to 1944 (Pritsak, p. 29). This was the time of the Third Reich, and without doubt the most problematic period of Schaeder’s life. Schaeder shared with the new regime a basic national bias, but what he wrote during that period does not compel us to suspect that his scholarly work had undergone any influence from the side of fascist primitive racism and expansionism. Moreover, Schaeder always wrote in a respectful way about the merits of his Jewish colleagues. But Schaeder did not leave Germany, and a kind of inner emigration would have been impossible for a



man of his moods. On the contrary, from 1933 to 1935 he stepped forth as the director of the Orientalisches Seminar of the University of Berlin (Pritsak, p. 34).

One must also say that Schaeder allowed himself to be misused by the Nazi propaganda as the kind of scholar they liked to show off. The impression Schaeder made abroad is best characterized by an episode in C. P. Snow's novel *The Light and the Dark* (1947, pp. 214-25). The hero of Snow's story, Roy Calvert (alias Charles R. C. Allberry), had and kept close contacts with German colleagues and repeatedly visited Germany even under fascist rule. During his visit to Germany in 1938 he met and was received by a high-ranking official whose name was—with a slight spelling deviation—(Reinhold) Schäder.

Schaeder left Berlin in 1944 and went back to Göttingen. There he soon obtained the well-designed chair of Orientalische Philologie und Religionsgeschichte that he kept till 1957, the year of his death. The last years of his life are described as an unhappy sequence of depressions and diseases (Pritsak, p. 21). It was certainly also a time of scholarly decline. The religious and the aesthetic components in Schaeder's life may have given him some last comfort, as his conversion to the Catholic faith seems to testify.

*Schaeder and Iranian Studies.* Of about 260 publications (monographs, articles, obituaries, reviews, translations into German, editions, printed lectures, journalistic essays) circa 90 are mainly devoted to Iranian and Manichaean studies. The figure is sufficient to show that these two subjects are the main part of Schaeder's scholarly oeuvre.

It was not Schaeder's aim to distinguish himself as a first editor of those texts or art objects that had become accessible in the first half of the 20th century and that revolutionized Iranian studies. His editions of Iranian Turfan texts are insignificant. He was the ideal scholar to work up the results of the editorial work of others, to point out in which way and to which degree they corrected or completed our current knowledge, and, if possible or necessary, to improve on the editions themselves.

A good example is Schaeder's review of [Friedrich C. Andreas](#) and [Walter B. Henning](#)'s edition of *Mitteliranische Manichaica aus Chinesisch-Turkestan II*, 1933, in his *Iranica* of 1934, pp. 68-83. Schaeder gave an inspiring commentary on the composition of the Manichaean Middle Persian fragment M2, in particular his discovery that M2 is a composite text and his confirmation that



M2 is an etiological legend of the Central Asiatic *dīnāvārīya*-community are instructive. Schaeder was evidently the first to recognize the name of Mani's disciple Patticius (written *ptyg*) in the same document (Schaeder, 1934, p. 69).

Schaeder proved good reasoning in his article “Beiträge zur iranischen Sprachgeschichte” (1935 [1936], pp. 560-88 ): He analyzed the origin of the Middle Persian passive with the morphemes *-īy-* and *-īh-*. The second formative element, he derived from the first one, *-īy-* (1935/36, pp. 564-565), whose *h*, he argued, had a “hiatus deleting” (*hiatus-tilgende*) function. Prods Oktor Skjærvø re-examined the problem again in 1997 (pp. 177-79). Like Schaeder, Skjærvø assumed the priority of the ending *-īy-*. As for its origin, the existence of a temporary Persian  $\theta$  was made responsible which was due to become *h* in Middle Persian.

In his article “Ein parthischer Titel im Sogdischen” (1935a, pp. 737-49), Schaeder gives the correct etymology and meaning of the Sogdian title *wyspyδr'k* and its cognates (For MPers. *wāspuhr [agān]*, discussed at length, cf. also Henning, “The survival of an ancient term,” 1964, pp. 95-97).

Ernst Herzfeld's archaeological work in *Persepolis* brought to light a number of hitherto unknown Old Persian cuneiform inscriptions. Schaeder's contributions to their decipherment, correct reading and interpretation cannot be overestimated. They are indispensable additions to and corrections of Herzfeld's first reports on those objects.

In his article “Über die Inschrift des Ariaramnes” (1931, pp. 635-45), he proves that the inscription (cf. Kent, p. 107) which claims to be a proclamation of king Ariaramnes (*Ariyāramna*) is “genuine but not authentic,” i.e., it was written probably in the fourth century BCE. In “Über einige altpersische Inschriften” (1935, pp. 489-506), he states that a brief Old Persian inscription on four silver dishes is a modern fake, and he defends the genuineness of an inscription by *Xerxes* (cf. Kent, p. 112) and the correctness of its language.

Schaeder came back to Old Persian studies in his great article “Des eigenen Todes sterben” (1946/47, pp. 24-36). He confirms W. Schulze's interpretation of Old Persian *uvāmršiyuš* as “dying a natural death” by many new attestations of the word in many languages (still more in Asmussen, 1968, pp. 7-10).

Another main topic of Schaeder's Iranian studies was—not surprisingly—the person and message of Zoroaster. What Schaeder had to say is based on a



philological analysis of the texts, largely making use of Bartholomae's results. But he did not devote his time to continuous study of the [Gathas](#). A good example for his treatment of Avestan sources is his excursus on *zandīg*, "heretic" (Schaeder, 1930, pp. 274-91).

Schaeder shared the opinion of those scholars who regard it as absolutely illegitimate to interpret Zoroaster on the strength of later (Young Avestan, Middle and New Persian) sources (cf. his concise remarks in *Deutsche Literaturzeitung* [DLZ] 3, 45, 1932, coll. 2121-37).

Schaeder developed his own ideas on Zoroaster and his message in some long articles. In "Gott und Mensch in der Verkündigung Zarathustras" (1934, pp. 187-200), he enriches the picture of Zoroaster drawn by Bartholomae by a profound analysis of Zoroaster's spiritual matter of concern. He underlines his reverent worship of the deity and—as a seeming contradiction—their lively, friendly dialogues. He discovers a trace of archaic mysticism (p. 197).

Schaeder's other important article, "Zarathustras Botschaft von der rechten Ordnung" (1940, pp. 575-602) also focuses on Zoroaster's religious attitude. Zoroaster's doctrine is an instigation of every believer to actively join in the fight for the ultimate victory of [Ahura Mazdā](#) and against the powers of deceit. This image of Zoroaster, Schaeder says, radically contradicts the later one present mainly in the Middle Persian legend of the prophet.

Still worth reading after [Robert Charles Zaehner](#)'s monumental *Zurvān: A Zoroastrian Dilemma* is Schaeder's article "Der iranische Zeitgott und sein Mythos" (1941, pp. 268-99). Even though Schaeder did not yet know the Manichaean attestation in M28 (Henning's re-edition of the text appeared 10 years later) confirming the Christian versions of the Myth in an important point, Schaeder could prove that the colorful [Zurvan](#) myths are late compositions produced in [Sasanian](#) times (p. 289). Then Schaeder came to the surprising conclusion that the Zurvan myths cannot be testimonies of any religious belief but must be tokens of sheer irreligious disbelief and doubtfulness (p. 289). That may or may not be the only possible explanation of those unusual legends, but it certainly is an inspiring one.

As a representative work that also covers the vast area of classical Persian poetry one might refer to Schaeder's long article "Die islamische Lehre vom Vollkommenen Menschen, ihre Herkunft und ihre dichterische Gestaltung" (1925, pp. 192-268). In this article Schaeder elaborates the ubiquitous motive of



the beloved friend in Persian and Persian oriented lyrics and discovers its “convergence” with the old mythical motive of the “Perfect Man.”

But the main work on Persian classical poetry was Schaeder’s habilitation thesis *Hafizstudien* which unfortunately remained unpublished. Omeljan Pritsak knew of it (pp. 28-29) that this is all the more to be regretted because this work showed Schaeder to be a connoisseur of the whole world of the classical Persian poetry and an expert in distinguishing between the conventional elements of poetical technique and the individual part of any significant poet.

Schaeder did, however, publish on Hafez. In those communications he evidently made use of what he had worked out in his thesis, such as “Lebensansicht und lyrische Form bei Hafis” (in *Goethes Erlebnis des Ostens*, 1938, pp. 105-22) or in his review-article “Läßt sich die ‘seelische Entwicklung des Dichters Hafis’ ermitteln?” (1942, coll. 201-10). The answer to the last question (“Can the ‘spiritual development of the poet Hafez’ be determined?”) is no.

*Schaeder and Manichaeic Studies.* The most important and enduring are, without doubt, Schaeder’s contributions to Manichaeic studies, among them his classic “Urform and Fortbildungen des manichäischen Systems” (1927). He was made familiar with the enigmas of the Manichaeic doctrine and the wealth of recently found primary sources by Richard Reitzenstein (1861-1931), with whom he collaborated in their joint publication *Studien zum antiken Synkretismus II* (1926, Schaeder’s part being the Iranian sources, pp. 199-355). The work was devoted to the figure of the First Man in oriental mythology and to the First Man, also called Ohrmezd in Manichaeic mythology (see [Manichaeism ii](#)). Schaeder, however, became at once convinced that the treatment of mythical persons or episodes without due reference to the general context of a religious doctrine could only be counterproductive and, in this case, would lead to wrong conclusions (Schaeder, 1926, p. 296; 1935b, p. 75). This meant in concrete that giving Manichaeic deities and demons the names of Zoroastrian gods and demons did by no means convey more than a formal, terminological adaptation to Zoroastrianism. It became also clear that his acceptance of Reitzenstein’s explanation of Manichaeism as an offshoot of the so-called Iranian “Erlösungsmysterium” was an error. Schaeder’s collaboration with Reitzenstein came to an end and he published his new ideas in the series of his printed lectures, the “Urform” booklet (pp. 65-157).



Schaeder had become convinced that neither any form of Zoroastrianism nor Christianity (let alone Buddhism) was the ultimate source of Mani's theology and cosmology, but alone the scholarly reasoning of Hellenistic philosophy, the *logos* behind the Oriental *mythos*. Schaeder goes so far as to identify the brief report on Mani's message by the Neoplatonist philosopher [Alexander of Lykopolis](#) as "a perfectly true interpretation whose conceptual inventory stems from Mani himself" (Schaeder, 1927, p. 118). It renders the *Urform* of his doctrine which Mani preached then, however, in many forms of mythological disguise. The Zoroastrian and the Christian *Weiterbildungen* are discussed in detail, the gnostic one is briefly characterized as the frame of Mani's world-view.

The main argument against Schaeder's theory is the indisputable fact that neither the many Coptic and Greek Manichaean documents which came to light later nor the substantial Central Asiatic texts which were edited after 1926 contained a "philosophical" presentation of the Manichaean world-view such as that given by the Neoplatonist referee.

But even so Schaeder's "Urform" remains a fundament of Manichaean studies. Its systematic characterization of adaptations to other religious doctrines as outward and formal ones, as adaptations to local languages and cults at best is the only possible method to properly arrange the ever growing amount of Manichaean source material, and Schaeder's quest for the original form and wording of Mani's message remains a task for the future. At least so much one can say that his distinction between a Hellenistic origin of the Manichaean doctrine and an oriental— preferably an Iranian— one determined the later discussion up to the discovery of the [Cologne Mani Codex](#).

Schaeder's study is also rich in illuminating remarks on details of doctrine and history. His discovery of Greek philosophical terms, especially of the Stoic school, cannot be doubted (1927, pp. 126-27). Of importance for his main argument, the impact of Hellenistic philosophy on Mani's reasoning is the assumption that those ideas go back to Plato's *Timaios* and to Poseidonios' commentary and were mediated by [Bardesanes](#) who, for Mani's sake, became the subject of an excellent article (cf. Schaeder 1927, p. 118; 1932, pp. 21-74).

Schaeder explains in his brief but instructive article "Manichäismus und spätantike Religion" (1935 b, pp. 65-85) that he regards Manichaeism as an enduring and actual challenge to the European way of reasoning. Its aim was to combine and harmonize Greek philosophy with Christian belief in an



exemplary way (pp. 83-85). The result was an appalling decline of both into spiritual fruitlessness. This decadence started, Schaeder had to learn from the recently published *Kephalaia* texts, in Mani's own time (p. 80). It was not a peculiarity of the late East Manichaean community of Turfan (see [TURFAN EXEDITIONS](#)). It must have compelled Schaeder to give up his theory of a philosophical Urform of this doctrine. He now regarded this as a secondary adaptation to the spiritual level of a well educated, philosophically minded auditory, put together by Manichaean missionaries (p. 83).

“Der Manichäismus und sein Weg nach Osten” (1948, pp. 236-54) is Schaeder's last great contribution to Manichaean studies. It contains what the title promises: a well-presented description of the general Manichaean doctrinal and ethical system and traces of Manichaeism as a historical reality in China and Central Asia. All the details were known since the thirties of the last century. The article does not match the level of Schaeder's earlier works.

Schaeder wrote his own works in German and translated many important works of foreign scholars into German. In this way he made [Henrik S. Nyberg's](#) *Religionen des alten Iran* an internationally accessible book. That was quite reasonable as long as German was a preeminent language of scholarship. The decreasing international role of German makes it advisable to save some of Schaeder's works from oblivion by translation into the now predominant languages of scholarly communication (e.g. his “Urform und Fortbildungen des manichäischen Systems”).

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in der Überlieferung der griechischen und syrischen Kirche” in *Hans Heinrich Schaeder, Studien zur orientalischen Religionsgeschichte*, Darmstadt, 1968. He enriched Schaeder’s enduring contributions to oriental studies in his detailed postscript, “Kurze Charakteristisk der Mani-. Bardesanes- und Esra-Forschungen von 1927-1967” (pp. 253-82). Colpe’s anthology is not the first and only reprint of some of Schaeder’s scattered and not always easily accessible works. Already in 1960 a re-edition by E. Schulin of some of Schaeder’s articles had appeared under the title *Der Mensch in Orient und Okzident: Grundzüge einer eurasiatischen Geschichte*, which, however, is not devoted to Schaeder’s oriental studies.

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