

DIE RELIGION DES ṚGVEDA (THE RELIGION OF THE ṚGVEDA) Part 1. THE RELIGIOUS SYSTEM OF ṚGVEDA by THOMAS OBERLIES. Publications of the De Nobili Research Library, Vienna, vol.XXVI, 1998. Pages 632.

This volume is the first of the three as planned by the author on *The Religion of the Ṛgveda*. The author's goal seems to be to replace the work of Herman Oldenberg: *Religion of Veda* published in 1894. As a student of the great Indologist Paul Thieme, Oberlies presents his habilitation work through this publication.

This volume deals with the hymns to Soma in *Ṛgveda*. Its goal is to analyse the hymns in their context, form and composition. The theme of all Soma-hymns is the solemn ritual of pressing, purifying and mixing of Soma. The culmination of the cleaning of Soma is that moment in which the earthly juice is transformed into heavenly ecstatic drink. That is what happens through the singing of the Soma-hymns.

The book also highlights the rich imagery of these hymns, and through that hints at the complexity of the divine form, envisaged by this composition. Wasson's theory of Soma being a kind of mushroom has been rejected by many Sanskritists including Prof. Brough.

There are several publications on the *Ṛgveda* and its fascination remains unexhausted. The secondary literature used in preparing this volume is given in 136 pages. That is only an indication to the vastness and variety of the research interest of the scholars on the Vedic literature.

The De Nobili Research Library publication, Vienna, has presented this volume with meticulous care and scientific classification. There are three indices: one on subject matter (Index rerum) in about 66 pages (553-619), one on the quotations (Index locorum) (620-27) and one on the verbs (Index verborum). This work will be an important contribution to Indology.

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