

We shall hardly ever succeed in accomplishing for Sanskrit Literature what has already been done to good purpose in several important branches of Arabic, namely to give an accurate description of its works, their authors, and the time these have lived in. The compass of the former is so vast, extending as it does over a period of 2500 years, and the lack of interest in historical truth in India is so great, that difficulties meet the inquirer at every step. The attempt, however, to give an account of the whole of Sanskrit Literature as contained in Manuscripts deposited in India as well as in Europe, was to be made, and it fell to my lot to undertake this task. The present work is the result of a labour of nearly thirty years, and its imperfections must be excused owing to the nature of the materials at my disposal, and my absence from the great centres of Manuscripts and Books, the Libraries of Berlin and of the India Office in London. A work of this kind is doomed to remain incomplete. Not to speak of India, where new discoveries are made daily, it seems almost incredible that the Libraries of the Asiatic Society of Calcutta, of Paris, of the British Museum, of the Asiatic Society in London, still remain without a Catalogue of their Sanskrit MSS., and that information about these can only be obtained by personal inquiry, or by consulting their written lists which are full of errors. From my own experience I know that bundles of Sanskrit MSS. are scattered in Public and Private Libraries of England without attracting any notice. On this account it is possible that in Europe discoveries of important Sanskrit works can still be made.

The title *Catalogus Catalogorum* merely serves to express the sources from which the present work is derived. By the favour of the Government in India, no less than by that of private friends, I was supplied with what, I believe, is nearly a complete collection of printed lists of Sanskrit MSS. To arrange and sift the matter therein contained required a great amount of perseverance and discretion. Fortunately, some of the Catalogues which have appeared in Europe, and a few published by some truly learned Scholars in India, have often afforded clues to escape from mazes of otherwise inextricable confusion. The Catalogues and Lists I have made use of are the following.

1. *Jones*. A Catalogue of Sanscrit and other Oriental Manuscripts presented to the Royal Society by Sir William and Lady Jones. Printed in Sir William Jones' Works. London 1807. 8. Vol. XIII, p. 401—15. This is a small collection of MSS., which were all copied for Sir William Jones. It is now being kept in the Library of the India Office. Quoted by pages. This mode of quotation is adopted in all cases where no remark is made to the contrary.

2. *Mack*. Mackenzie Collection. A descriptive Catalogue of the Oriental Manuscripts collected by the late Lieut.- Col. Colin Mackenzie. By H. H. Wilson. Calcutta 1828. 8. This collection was made in the South, and the greater part of it is now in the Library of the India Office.

3. *Copenh.* Codices Indici Bibliothecae Regiae Havniensis enumerati et descripti a N. L. Westergaard. Havniae 1846. 4. Principally from the collection made by Erasmus Rask.