

## BOOK REVIEW

**WALRAVENS, Hartmut 2018.** *Walther Heissig (1913–2005). Aus dem Nachlass des Mongolisten und Ethnologen – Nachlassübersicht – Briefwechsel mit Erich Haenisch, Lajos Ligeti, Käthe Uray-Köhalmi, John R. Krueger und Erik Haarh.* Norderstedt: Books on Demand (BoD). 219 pp. ISBN: 9783748180708.

Reviewed by Michael Knüppel

Liaocheng University, Liaocheng. E-mail: michaelkneuppel@gmx.net

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In this volume Hartmut Walravens makes accessible materials from the Walther Heissig estate, which came into the holdings of the Berlin State Library (Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin) through his widow, Annemarie Heissig-Scheer. The author-editor follows up on his former appreciation of the grand master of Mongolian studies, Walther Heissig (December 5, 1913 – September 15, 2005)<sup>1</sup> as well as his edition of the correspondence between Heissig and Nikolaus Poppe (1897–1991).<sup>2</sup>

In the preface of the volume (pp. 9–11) a comprehensive, albeit sketchy, outline of Heissig's *vita* is given, reference is made to the already available appreciation of the scholar by the author/editor of the volume, and following the description of the (unfortunately often sobering) situations of handling or preserving scientific and literary legacies, the material from Heissig's estate reproduced in this volume is sketched.

The first part is a text copy of a broadcast series by Deutsche Welle with stories by Asian peoples from different countries/regions (pp. 12–36) in English – here from Mongolia, Tibet, South China, Punjab, Indonesia and New Guinea.

In the next part of the volume, the remains of a work by Heissig on his research on Mögöli in Afghanistan, more precisely his search for evidence of the Mögöli literature, are reproduced

<sup>1</sup> Walravens, Hartmut 2012. *Walther Heissig (1913–2005) – Mongolist, Zentralasienwissenschaftler, Literaturwissenschaftler und Folklorist: Leben und Werk Würdigungen, Dokumente, Forschungsberichte und Rundfunkprogramme auf Audio-CD.* Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag.

<sup>2</sup> Walravens, Hartmut (ed.) 2011. *Nikolaus Poppe (1897–1991). Briefwechsel mit Walther Heissig (1913–2005). Ein Beitrag zur Geschichte der Mongolistik.* [Österreichische Akademie der Wissenschaften. Philosophisch-Historische Klasse. Sitzungsberichte 817. Beiträge zur Kultur- und Geistesgeschichte Asiens 71.] Wien: Verlag der Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften.

(pp. 37–64). This material has emerged from this unique scholar's field research stay in the years 1969–1971 that comprises the first five chapters (or drafts of such) of a corresponding work.

Following this part of the volume, H. Walravens gives a provisional “Finding aid” of the Heissig estate in the holdings of the Berlin State Library – “Vorläufige Übersicht über den Nachlaß Prof. Walther Heissig, der Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin geschenkt von Frau Annemarie Heissig-Scheer im Frühjahr 1917” [“Preliminary overview of the estate of Prof. Walther Heissig, donated to the Berlin State Library by Ms. Annemarie Heissig-Scheer in spring 1917”] (pp. 71–118). This overview is supplemented by a name register (pp. 118–124). This register, which we here assume to have been compiled by the editor/publisher and not based on a register that was already attached to the estate when it was handed over, is slightly flawed: the first names of the listed persons were partly abbreviated, partly omitted (although they could have been added without any problems: *Baitschura* [better *Baičura*], *U[zbek]*, *Barr*, *K[ai]*, *Bawden*, *C[harles]* *R[oskelly]* etc.) or given incorrectly (read *Menges*, *Karl Heinrich* instead of *Menges*, *Karl Heinz*), and not all names are spelled correctly (read *Caferoğlu*, *Ahmet* instead of *Caferoglu*, *Ahmet* and the like). Of course, this cannot be discussed any further here, as these minor nuances do not detract from the purpose of the register.

The preliminary finding aid is followed by the editions of the correspondence between Walther Heissig and the Mongolists Erich Haenisch (pp. 125–147; 24 items from the period 1950–1968), Lajos Ligeti (pp. 149–160; 23 items from the years 1961–1982) and John R. Krueger (pp. 193–206; 18 pieces written from 1961–1995), the Tungusologist Käthe Uray-Köhalmi (pp. 161–191; 62 pieces from the period 1958–2000, among which there are also some letters from the husband of K. Uray-Köhalmi, the Tibetologist Géza Uray) and the Tibetologist Erik Haahr (pp. 207–212; 9 pieces from the years 1959–1967). Each of these correspondences edited here are introduced by a short biography of Heissig's correspondent. It is precisely these editions of letters that are particularly informative for readers of our days who are interested in the history of science, but also for the representatives of various other research fields touched upon here, as they allow a diverse insight into everyday research in Mongolian studies, Tungusology and Tibetology of the past decades.

After the editions of the letters, the editor gives a supplement to the estate directory/preliminary finding aid (pp. 212–216) as well as an index of names for the editions of letters (pp. 217–219). For the latter we can say what has already been stated above about the register of the finding aid: e. g. instead of *Hoppal*, *Mihaly* read *Hoppál*, *Mihály*, instead of *Jisl*, *Lumir* read *Jisl*, *Lumír*, instead of *Klimkeit* read *Klimkeit*, *Hans-Joachim* instead of *Strahlenberg*, *Johann Philipp Tabbert von* (this is a sequence of errors that is frequently found in the relevant literature) read *v. Strahlenberg*, *Philipp Johann (Tabbert* was the name used until the ennoblement in 1707), instead of *Uray-Köhalmi* read *Uray-Köhalmi*, instead of *Veencker*, *Wolfgang* read *Veenker*, *Wolfgang* etc. These objections are not intended to question the indisputable value of this important collection of documents and resources for the development of the further estate, since they are oversights which can easily occur when creating registers.

The collection represents – especially in combination with the two volumes by H. Walravens mentioned at the beginning – a valuable addition to the materials for a detailed biography of this unusual scholar, whose life and work are described in the volume discussed here. Some new facets, which are probably only known to very few, have also been added. Apart from the fact, that the documents edited here represent valuable source material for a wide range of Heissig's



research areas, the provisional finding aid is a valuable tool for anyone interested in the history of science. One can only hope that the volume will be followed by edition(s) of further materials from the estate – the author/editor has aroused the attention of all interested readers with this preliminary overview. In addition, the completion of the renovation work of the State Library, which, as stated in the margin (p. 11), stood in the way of the installation of the former Leipzig/Jena material, can be expected at some point. Congratulations on the volume discussed here and at the same time we look forward to the editions of further pieces from Heissig's rich estate by Mr. H. Walravens.

