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# Force Majeure: Alexander Hamilton and the Start of Sanskrit Studies in Continental Europe

**Abstract.** Alexander Hamilton's pivotal role in the beginnings of Sanskrit studies in continental Europe has been well covered in Rosane Rocher's book and subsequent article on him. However, the role of historical accident in catalysing this and similar processes is worth emphasising. For Hamilton, who had gone just to consult manuscripts, detention in Paris for three years (1803–1806) because of the worsening political situation between Britain and France meant that he used his enforced stay on the continent, among other things, to teach Sanskrit to a number of scholars, in particular Friedrich and August Wilhelm von Schlegel. But the influence on Friedrich of the deployment of the older Schlegel brother, Carl August, to Madras with the Hannover Regiment is also relevant. The contrast in attitudes towards Indology in this period between continental European nations and Britain with its imperial outlook will also be noted.

**Keywords.** Sanskrit, Alexander Hamilton, Paris, Napoleon, Schlegel, Bopp

If the worsening political situation between Britain and France in the early years of the nineteenth century had not detained the Scotsman Alexander Hamilton in Paris, the start of Sanskrit studies in continental Europe would have been very different.[1] That is, of course, a considerable oversimplification but together the politics of nationality and militarism have clearly had a significant role in the process. The encounters between the various individuals have been well documented but the role of the political situation in bringing them about and the overall picture of the various interactions has been less studied and is the focus of this contribution.

1 I shall for convenience, though reluctantly, use hereafter simply Europe to designate continental Europe in contradistinction to Britain.



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# 1 Background

At the beginning of the nineteenth century, intellectuals and Romantics in Europe, though keen to have access to oriental languages and literature, had much less access to Sanskrit than the British, so the arrival in Paris of someone who had been in India, had learned Sanskrit, and belonged to the circle of Sir William Jones (1746–1794) prompted a number of them to seek him out. When the British became the dominant power in India, various officials had begun collecting and disseminating information on its culture, mainly through the Asiatick Society (as it was then spelt), founded by William Jones in 1783 under the patronage of the Governor General Warren Hastings.[2] There had been earlier individuals who gained at least some knowledge of Sanskrit but their impact in the West was minimal and in most instances their contributions remained unpublished.[3]

At first British knowledge of Sanskrit texts had mainly been gained through Persian sources—examples are John Zephaniah Holwell's *Interesting Historical Events* of 1767 and Alexander Dow's *History of Hindostan* of 1768—but the situation changed when Warren Hastings became Governor General (1774–1785, preceded by two years as Governor of Bengal). The first significant attempts to study Sanskrit started with compiling a Hindu legal code under his patronage (he was opposed to the idea of imposing the British legal code on Indians). The transition

2 Hamilton in his periodical contributions paid extensive tribute to Jones's work but was also willing to disagree with him. For example, his 1809 review of Charles Wilkins' Sanskrit Grammar in the *Edinburgh Review* (13: 366–381) upholds the usefulness of studying Sanskrit by defending Jones' conclusions about the affinities of certain European languages with Sanskrit, but elsewhere he expresses doubts about Jones' conclusions on the origin of nations. Similarly, in two reviews in 1802 he severely criticised Francis Buchanan's claim that the antiquity of Hinduism was a spurious myth invented by brāhmans.

3 Roberto de Nobili (1577–1656) learnt enough Sanskrit to participate in debates with *paṇḍits* (and also knew Tamil and Telugu); Heinrich Roth (1620–1668) compiled a Sanskrit grammar as early as 1660 (the manuscript is now in the Biblioteca Nazionale Centrale, Rome); Johann Ernst Hanxleden (1681–1732) compiled a Sanskrit grammar, *Grammatica Grandonica*, published only in 2013 from the manuscript preserved in a Carmelite monastery; Jean François Pons (1688–1752) in 1733 sent a large number of manuscripts to the Bibliothèque du Roi, including a Sanskrit grammar which is probably by Pons himself. A later missionary scholar was Paulinus à S. Bartholomaeo (born Filip Vesdin, 1748–1806), who drew on Hanxleden's work and himself published a Sanskrit grammar in 1799. As late as the start of the nineteenth century, Abraham Hyacinthe Anquetil-Duperron (1731–1805), despite having learnt some Sanskrit in India, translated several Upaniṣads into Latin from Dārā Shukōh's Persian translation, *Sirr-i-Akbar,* as *Oupnek'hat (id est, secretum tegendum*, Paris, 1801–1802), by which Arthur Schopenhauer first became acquainted with the Upaniṣads. Anquetil-Duperron's more significant earlier work, his *Zend-Avesta: ouvrage de Zoroastre* (Paris, 1771), had been promptly but mistakenly denounced by William Jones as based on manuscripts which were modern forgeries, since he did not appreciate the complexities of the situation. See Brockington 1989: 98.

stage is seen in Nathaniel Brassey Halhed's *Code of Gentoo Laws* (1776), which was a digest made in Sanskrit by a group of *paṇḍits* from various Hindu legal texts, translated via Bengali and Persian into English, but this was soon followed by his *Grammar of the Bengal Language* (1778), in which the remarks on Sanskrit rather than its actual subject matter excited interest among reviewers and scholars in Europe. Warren Hastings introduced Jones to the *Bhagavadgītā*.[4] Hastings also encouraged Charles Wilkins (1749–1833), the first British civil servant to learn Sanskrit, to produce his *Bhagavadgītā* translation of 1785, followed after he left India by his *Grammar of the Sanskrita Language* of 1808, using type which he carved and cast himself.[5] Then in 1789 came the publication of Jones's translation of Kālidāsa's *Śakuntalā*, which roused Johann Wolfgang von Goethe (1749–1832) to such enthusiasm, while more generally British orientalists in India provided Johann Gottfried von Herder (1744–1803) with the material for his idea of India as the cradle of civilisation.

## 2 Alexander Hamilton

Alexander Hamilton (1762–1824) started his career as a cadet in the Bengal army, arriving in Calcutta in 1783, was promoted to ensign in 1785, and at some point became a government interpreter and, it seems, a secretary to the Governor General, Lord Cornwallis.[6] He joined the Asiatick Society in 1785 within a year of its establishment (but did not contribute to *Asiatick Researches*). He soon became interested in Sanskrit, seeking but apparently failing to get dispensation from military duty in order to pursue his studies in it,[7] since he resigned from government

4 Jones's wider agenda for his activities in India meshed well with Hastings's fostering of orientalist scholars as a means to understand and so control the people he was governing. Typical of this and his judicial background is his decision to learn Sanskrit in order to read a copy of the Laws of Manu (*Mānavadharmaśāstra*) presented to him; his translation (*Institutes of Hindu Law*) was published in 1794. Regarding the publicity given to Jones's remarks in his "Third Anniversary Discourse" to the Asiatick Society (February 1786) on the relationship of Sanskrit to other Indo-European languages we should note the—admittedly rather less specific—comments made independently a couple of centuries earlier by Thomas Stevens (in 1583) and Fillipo Sassetti (in 1585).

5 Brockington 1989.

6 The principal sources for Alexander Hamilton are the various excellent studies by Rosane Rocher (1968, 1970, 2002, 2004), on which I base the main facts about him in this contribution; these will not usually be separately footnoted hereafter. Also, for details on various minor figures I have used Klaus Karttunen's online database *Persons of Indian Studies* at https://whowaswho-indology.info/.

7 He wrote to Lord Cornwallis, on 4 March 1790, asking for facilities to pursue his study of Sanskrit, citing both the example of the salary granted to Charles Wilkins for that purpose

service in October 1790 in order to concentrate on them (and no doubt the private trade which must have financed his later lifestyle). Presumably, he studied with a *paṇḍit*, as William Jones, Charles Wilkins, Henry Thomas Colebrooke (1765–1837), and Horace Hayman Wilson (1786–1860) all did. He returned home to Greenock in Scotland in 1795.

At this point a comment on the degree of interest in India shown in Scotland is relevant. The background is the high proportion of young Scots, like Hamilton, among the recruits to the East India Company in its early years. The generally sympathetic attitude of the Scottish Enlightenment towards Indian culture during most of the eighteenth century began to change towards its end. This change is reflected in *An Historical Disquisition* by William Robertson (1721–1793),[8] the noted historian and former Principal of Edinburgh University, which is written from the earlier sympathetic standpoint but is aware of and indeed explicitly rejects the attitude of European supremacy so soon to become standard, which is exemplified in James Mill's (1773–1836) *History of British India* (1817). Some Scots at least seem to have retained the more sympathetic attitude longer than the English, many influenced by the teaching of Dugald Stewart (1753–1828) at Edinburgh in the 1790s.[9] For example, Vans Kennedy pointed out Mill's lack of knowledge of Indian languages in a paper to the Bombay Literary Society in February 1820 and Mountstuart Elphinstone was motivated to write his *History of India* (1841) by realising the weaknesses in Mill's work.[10]

In 1798 Hamilton moved to Edinburgh and became one of the founders of—and a frequent contributor to—the *Edinburgh Review*, contributing also to the *Monthly Review* and the *Asiatic Annual Register*, as well as engaging in research in the British Museum. His reviews in these journals show the breadth of his learning and his wide interests in literature, travel, and Scottish affairs in addition to Indian politics, while his Sanskrit scholarship earned him the nicknames "Sanscrit Hamilton" and "the Pundit". His Indological research led to his visit to Paris in 1802, as soon as the Peace of Amiens (signed 25 May 1802) promised better relations between Britain and France, to consult Sanskrit and Bengali manuscripts in the Imperial Library. However, he had to remain for some considerable time because of the worsening political situation; in the event, he used the enforced stay to teach Sanskrit to a number of scholars and to compile (with Louis-Mathieu Langlès, 1763–1824, the curator of oriental manuscripts and a Persianist) a catalogue of the Sanskrit manuscripts stored in the Imperi-

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and "the importance of the Sungscrit in a political view [. . .], it being the only language universally diffused over every part of Hindustan". Rocher 1968: 6–8.

8 Robertson 1791.

9 Rendall 1982.

10 Rendall 1982: 67–68.

al Library,[11] thus initiating the first significant encounter of European scholarship with the Sanskrit tradition. Through the influence of French scholars (in particular the senator Constantin François de Chassebœuf, Comte de Volney, 1757–1820) and an appeal to Talleyrand (1754–1838) by his American cousin, also named Alexander Hamilton (1757–1804), he was exceptionally allowed to remain in Paris, rather than being detained at Fontainebleau, and indeed to lodge in Friedrich Schlegel's house for some months. The imminent publication of the catalogue probably influenced his release from France in 1806 on the intervention of the orientalist Antoine Silvestre de Sacy (1758–1838). Hamilton also began to teach Sanskrit to Volney, Claude Fauriel (1772–1844), another lodger Gottfried Hagemann,[12] and most significantly to Friedrich Schlegel himself.

When Hamilton finally returned to Britain in 1806, he took up the post "to teach the Sanscrit and other Hindoo Languages"[13] at the newly established East India College (located briefly at Hertford Castle but moved to new buildings at Haileybury in 1809), to which he was appointed even before leaving Paris (another reason for de Sacy's urging his release). The College was oriented more to practical than academic concerns, to training "writers" (junior clerks) for service in India and not for academic careers, which points up very clearly the contrast in attitudes between Britain and the rest of Europe.

The background to its establishment was that the Governor General, Lord Wellesley, had unilaterally declared the founding of Fort William College in Calcutta in 1800 as an "Oxford of the East", which the East India Company (EIC) threatened to close, but as a compromise it was downgraded to a school for Indian languages, and the East India College was set up to give three years of teaching to all "writers" appointed to its civil service, focusing mainly on Western subjects but including elementary teaching in Indian languages. Hamilton was the author of a report on the state of oriental learning in France which Charles Grant, a Director of the EIC, presented as part of his case for the establishment in England of the East India College; his candidacy for the post at the college was supported by Charles Wilkins, at this period Librarian to the East India Company and named as Oriental Visitor for the college. The relative prominence given to Sanskrit at Haileybury

11 Hamilton/Langlès 1807. However, the Vedic manuscripts sent by the Jesuit missionary, Jean Calmette (1692–1740), were omitted from their catalogue because they were mostly not in *devanāgarī* (Sweetman 2019: 800). As a result of France's colonial position in Asia, large numbers of Asiatic manuscripts had arrived at the Bibliothèque Nationale under an acquisition programme instituted in 1718 by the Abbé Bignon as the director of the then Bibliothèque du Roi, which acted as a magnet for scholars from elsewhere.

12 Though planning to become an Indologist, Hagemann died young in 1809 before publishing anything. Another lodger with Schlegel was Helmine von Klencke (1783–1856), soon to marry A.-L. de Chézy.

13 Rocher 2002: 383, citing India Office Records J/2/1, 150–151.

compared with Fort William seems to have been due to both Wilkins's influence and Hamilton's personal status, but Hamilton had repeatedly to urge its continued support there and at Fort William. Besides the Sanskrit language, Hamilton also taught Bengali, Indian literature, and Indian history, as well as publishing a number of works for the use of the students, including his *Hitopadeśa* edition published in 1810 and grammatical analysis of 1812. He also used his acquaintance with Grant to request copies of grammars and dictionaries from India. Hamilton taught at Haileybury until his retirement in May 1818.[14] He was a founder member of the Royal Asiatic Society, established in 1823, but died the following year in Liverpool.

## 3 European Sanskrit studies

Karl Wilhelm Friedrich Schlegel (1772–1829) had not planned to study Sanskrit when he went to Paris in June 1802—initially to study Persian with Antoine-Léonard de Chézy (1773–1832)—but then stayed till mid-1804, Hamilton's presence there encouraging him to do so. In 1796–1797 he was in Jena, joining the literary circle round Goethe and Friedrich Schiller (1759–1805), to which his brother August Wilhelm Schlegel (1767–1845) already belonged, but soon quarrelled with Schiller and moved to Berlin until late 1799. The brothers were leading figures within Jena Romanticism and founders of the *Athenaeum* (1798–1800) as a mouthpiece for it, thus setting the tone of German Indology for many years, although in the case of Friedrich this was later modified by a move towards a more conservative Roman Catholicism than he had at first adopted when he and his wife joined the Catholic Church in 1808.[15] Around 1817 he was appointed by Klemens von Metternich (1773–1859), the legation secretary to the Imperial Diet in Frankfurt am Main. However, he never gained a university post, either in Sanskrit or in European literature.

14 He was succeeded by Graves Chamney Haughton (1788–1848), who had learnt Sanskrit at Fort William; like his predecessor, much of his energy went into producing textbooks for his students. Subsequently, in 1832, Haughton was a candidate for the first Boden Professorship of Sanskrit at Oxford but withdrew in favour of Horace Hayman Wilson. Later Sanskrit teachers at Haileybury were Francis Johnson (1795/96–1876) and Monier Monier-Williams (1819–1899).

15 Friedrich also established during his stay in Paris the journal *Europa* with the intention of introducing German readers to the best of French culture, reflecting his vision for a Europe united under German leadership based on the supposed harmony of the Middle Ages (Tzoref-Ashkenazi 2006). Equally unrealistic was his view of Sanskrit as the source of all languages and all ideas and his placing European medieval feudal society and the Indian caste system on an equal footing.

Friedrich Schlegel's *Ueber die Sprache und Weisheit der Indier* (1808) stems from Hamilton's teaching of Sanskrit and comparative philology—perhaps including his concern with linguistic typology[16]—and had an enormous impact through the prestige of the Schlegel family, establishing him as the first serious student of Sanskrit in Germany; for example, large parts of it had been translated into French by the following year.[17] Schlegel's initial interest in India may have come from the great popularity of Forster's translations of Jones's English translation of Kālidāsa's *Śakuntalā* (1791)[18] and of *Bhagavadgītā* selections, as well as from occasional Indian themes in the work of his friend Novalis (pen-name of Georg Philipp Friedrich, Freiherr von Hardenberg, 1772–1801). Hints of this can be found in his *Gespräch über Poesie* of 1799. However, there was then a further factor. In 1782, a year before Hamilton's arrival in Calcutta, Karl August Schlegel (1762–89), an older brother of August Wilhelm and Friedrich, had arrived in Madras as part of the two Kurhannoversche Regiments recruited by George III (both King of Great Britain and Elector of Hanover) to assist the East India Company against the French in India and Hyder Ali in the Second Mysore War (1780–1784). He also worked as a cartographer for the Governor of Madras and compiled his *Versuch einer militärischen Geographie des Carnatiks*[19] and died in Madras on 9 September 1789.

In the preface to his *magnum opus* Friedrich Schlegel mentions Karl's death after spending the final years of his brief life to travel in and study of the genius of India[20]; the perhaps romanticised example of his older brother was clearly a major factor in stimulating Friedrich's interest in ancient India, which began to be realised on his arrival in Paris. Also in the preface, he acknowledges his indebtedness to Hamilton[21] and expresses the hope that Indian studies will lead to a transformation of European culture comparable to the enthusiasm for the Greek world in

16 Plank 1987.

17 It also contains translated extracts from several Sanskrit works in an appendix.

18 Certainly, writing in May 1803 to his brother August Wilhelm, Friedrich expresses hopes of soon being able to read *Śakuntalā* in the original. Johann Georg Adam Forster's (1754–1794) translation also aroused the enthusiasm of major literary figures like Goethe (seen in his adding "Vorspiel auf dem Theater" as the second of three prologues to *Faust*, as well as in his often quoted epigram on "Sakontala") and Herder, to whom he sent a copy.

19 The German text and an English version, also written by Schlegel, have both recently been published, along with a study on them by Dietmar Rothermund and Schlegel's own map (Ahuja/Christof-Füchsle 2020: 79–91, 93–152, 153–200; map at 148–149). Other officers in these Hanoverian regiments also published material from their time in India, including Carl Conrad Best, Friedrich Ludwig Langstedt, and some anonymous authors. See Tzoref-Ashkenazi 2009.

20 Schlegel 1808: xii–xiii.

21 Schlegel 1808: iv.

the Renaissance.[22] August Wilhelm dedicated a poem to Karl August in his 1800 collection of poems.

August Wilhelm Schlegel was first known as a literary figure, as a poet and translator, and in 1796 at the invitation of Friedrich Schiller he had settled in Jena, joining the circles round Goethe at Weimar and Schiller at Jena. In 1804 he became tutor to the children of Baronne Anne-Louise-Germaine de Staël-Holstein (Madame de Staël, 1766–1817), travelled Europe with her, and remained intimate with her until her death.[23] Inspired by his brother Friedrich's work, by 1815 he was learning Sanskrit in Paris with de Chézy and Franz Bopp (1791–1867). In 1818 (coincidentally the year of Hamilton's retirement) Schlegel was appointed to the first chair of literature and art history (Lehrstuhl für Literatur und Kunstgeschichte) at the University of Bonn, which during his tenure became virtually a chair of Sanskrit. The post was created by the King of Prussia[24] at the instigation of Wilhelm von Humboldt (1767–1835), who did much to promote Sanskrit, which he had learnt from Bopp while he was the Prussian ambassador to Britain, and from August Wilhelm Schlegel in Paris. August Wilhelm edited and translated into Latin several major Sanskrit texts (*Bhagavadgītā*, an incomplete *Rāmāyaṇa* and *Hitopadeśa*[25]), as well as establishing the *Indische Bibliothek* (1820–1830), the first German journal solely on India. In connection with his Sanskrit studies he visited Paris in 1820–1821 and London (accompanied by his student assistant Christian Lassen[26]) in 1823, mainly in order to meet Henry Thomas Colebrooke, with whom he exchanged correspondence from 1820 to 1827,[27] despite their very different approaches to Sanskrit.[28] August Wilhelm visited London again in 1832, on which occasion he met Ram Mohan Roy (1772–1883).[29]

In this way Hamilton became directly or indirectly the teacher of almost all the first generation of German Indologists. For example, Bopp was stimulated to study

22 Schlegel 1808: x–xi.

23 Paulin 2016.

24 The Rhineland, held by the French between 1797 and 1814, was promised its own university in the proclamation which marked its recovery in April 1815 by Frederick William III of Prussia, who later was persuaded by Humboldt also to set up a chair of Indology at Berlin.

25 See Brockington 2002.

26 Christian Lassen (1800–1876) was heavily involved in Schlegel's editing and translating of the *Rāmāyaṇa* and *Hitopadeśa*. Subsequently he was the first to decipher the Brahmī script and became Professor of Old Indian Language and Literature at Bonn (extraordinary in 1830, ordinary in 1840). Another of August Wilhelm's students was the poet Heinrich Heine (1797–1856).

27 Rocher/Rocher 2013.

28 Colebrooke corresponded with several other German Sanskrit scholars, including Othmar Frank and Friedrich August Rosen. A major attraction for European scholars was his Indian manuscript collection, which he donated to the East India Company Library in 1819.

29 Paulin 2016: 510–515.

Sanskrit by Friedrich Schlegel's work and, since London was ruled out by Napoleon's Continental System, studied Sanskrit largely by himself in Paris between 1812 and 1818 where he also taught August Wilhelm Schlegel. There he consulted Hamilton (then visiting Paris), and was later supported by him in London, as also was Othmar Frank (1770–1840, appointed to chairs at Würzburg in 1821 and then Munich in 1826, and compiler of a Sanskrit grammar). Bopp also met Wilkins and Colebrooke while in London from October 1818 to 1820. Bopp, having taught Sanskrit to Wilhelm von Humboldt, was recommended by him for the post in oriental languages and general linguistics at Berlin which he held from 1821 to 1867.[30] Bopp's *Über das Conjugationssystem der Sanskritsprache in Vergleichung mit jenem der griechischen, lateinischen, persischen und germanischen Sprache* of 1816 marks the true beginning of the discipline of comparative linguistics, started by Friedrich Schlegel, through the systematic grammatical comparison of the five languages studied. He broke completely with the Indian grammatical tradition, for example setting a new pattern by using Latin case names. His interest was not in what Sanskrit revealed about India but what it revealed about the origins of language, in contrast to Hamilton's more practical conception of Sanskrit as a key to all of classical Indian culture.[31]

In France itself Claude Charles Fauriel, one of Hamilton's students mentioned in the previous section, became professor of foreign literature at the Sorbonne in 1830. Mainly interested in Provençal but also on the editorial board of the *Journal Asiatique,* Fauriel assisted Schlegel in designing the *devanāgarī* type used for his *Indische Bibliothek*.[32] Volney, a professor of history at the École Normale, Paris, from 1794 and a member of the Académie Française from 1795, having studied with Hamilton, thereafter cited Sanskrit quite frequently in his writings, seeing it as the lost original "Scythian" of older theory. More significantly, Hamilton's

30 One of his students there was Theodor Aufrecht (1822–1907), first Professor of Sanskrit and Comparative Philology at the University of Edinburgh, appointed in 1862.

31 However, we may note that Bopp thought highly enough of Hamilton to seek his support for publishing his *Conjugationssystem der Sanskritsprache* and that Hamilton wrote a full review of it in the *Edinburgh Review* (33: 431–442). In 1819 Bopp published *Nalus, carmen sanscritum e Mahàbhàrato* containing text, Latin translation, and notes, setting a long-standing precedent for using the Nala episode as a text for beginners. It was from Bopp's *Nala* and Wilkins's grammar and dictionary that Friedrich Rückert (1788–1866), the poet and translator, learnt Sanskrit. Rückert is best known for his *Die Weisheit des Brahmanen* in six volumes (1836–1839), but also translated the *Bhagavadgītā* in 1837. One of Bopp's students was Friedrich August Rosen (1805–1837) who from 1828 was Professor of Sanskrit at the new University of London (later University College, London), to which were soon added Arabic, Persian, and Hindustani; he was primarily a Sanskritist, working on an edition of the *Ṛgveda*, left incomplete at his early death, although his translation of the first book was published posthumously; he also worked as a cataloguer for the British Museum. Another, and better known, student of Bopp was Theodor Benfey (1809–1881).

32 Paulin 2016: 498–499.

activities subsequently encouraged Antoine-Léonard de Chézy to start studying Sanskrit and de Chézy went on to become the first French professor of Sanskrit—indeed, the first on the continent—at the Collège de France in 1815.[33] Though in Paris during Hamilton's stay, and indeed introduced to his future wife Helmine by Friedrich Schlegel's wife Dorothea, de Chézy had not in fact attended Hamilton's classes, being too hesitant, reclusive, or just unwell, and only began the study of Sanskrit by himself after Hamilton had left. He was a prime exponent of the "Florist" approach to oriental culture in early nineteenth-century French scholarship which valued it for its romantic and exotic setting.[34] The "Florist" approach is also seen in other French Indologists such as Alexandre Langlois (1788–1854) and Garcin de Tassy (1794–1878), but a reaction against it set in from the mid-1820s, seen among others in the Persianist Julius von Mohl (1800–1876) and in Eugène Burnouf (1801–1852).

## 4 Conclusion

Whereas Indian studies in Britain were connected to colonialism, the situation was rather different in Europe (and indeed also in America), and this is reflected in the different approaches. There was not the same tendency to see the subject in purely practical terms, and chairs of Sanskrit were established somewhat earlier and became more widespread, particularly in Germany. European and especially German scholars were heavily influenced by classical philology and approached Sanskrit as an object of historical study, whereas early British orientalists, having learnt the language from *paṇḍits* in the same way as native students, were more attuned to the Sanskrit grammatical tradition and saw Sanskrit literature as a continuous, indeed living tradition. No doubt Alexander Hamilton too studied with a *paṇḍit* and so developed an interest in the language and culture broader than the purely philological.

33 Among others he taught were Johann Gottfried Ludwig Kosegarten, Eugène Burnouf (his successor at Paris), Alexandre Langlois, and Auguste-Louis-Armand Loiseleur-Deslongchamps.

34 McGetchin 2003. This is obvious in the opening of the debut article that as one of the editors he contributed to the first issue of the *Journal Asiatique* in 1822: "Les Muses grecques veulent bien aujourd'hui faire les honneurs à leur *sœurs* des bords du Gange, et suspendre un moment les doctes accords de la lyre, pour faire place aux accens, un peu légers peut-être, du luth indien" (*Journal Asiatique* 1: 3–4). The Société Asiatique, founded in 1822, was the earliest orientalist society in Europe, preceding the Royal Asiatic Society by a year and the Deutsche Morgenländische Gesellschaft (founded 1845) by over two decades.

The political and military background to the arrival of Sanskrit in Europe is the build-up to the Napoleonic Wars and the wars themselves. Improving relations between Britain and France following the Peace of Amiens allowed Hamilton to travel to Paris to consult manuscripts in the Bibliothèque Nationale but their worsening detained him there and resulted in his teaching Sanskrit to various scholars already interested in oriental studies. Among these, Friedrich Schlegel's interest in India had doubtless also been sparked by his brother Karl's service in India with the Hanoverian regiments—another consequence of the Franco-British hostilities. The humiliation of the German states by Napoleon, who defeated Prussia at the battle of Jena-Auerstedt in October 1806, perhaps encouraged Schlegel's more fanciful ideas about India and Germany as a counterbalance. Germans could substitute a kinship with India for the colonial ambitions that the French shared with the British. A positive aspect of the political fragmentation was that Prussia, under the direction of Sanskrit enthusiast Wilhelm von Humboldt, enlarged the concept of a university and established chairs of Indology, being imitated by the various German rulers within their own states. Romantic ideas were soon abandoned by German Sanskrit scholars from Bopp onwards but were stronger in France, where the less dynamic de Chézy perhaps retarded as much as he furthered the growth of Sanskrit studies.

In a very real sense, therefore, Alexander Hamilton's enforced stay in Paris was crucial for the history of Indology in Europe. His presence there was a catalyst for Indian studies and his legacy is one of personal influence through his teaching and example (in Paris even more than at Haileybury) rather than publication. Hamilton's longer stay in Paris with its results, as well as Karl Schlegel's service in India, were all triggered by Napoleon's imperial ambitions.

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