What Friedrich Schlegel could have learned from Alexander ("Sanscrit") Hamilton besides Sanskrit

by Frans Plank (Konstanz)

1. In the preface of his *Ueber die Sprache und Weisheit der Indier* (1808/1975: 107), and similarly in one advertisement of this book and in several letters, Friedrich Schlegel acknowledged his debt to one Alexander Hamilton:

> Die Kenntnis, die es mir davon [i.e. of the Sanskrit language and of Indian antiquity] zu erwerben gelang, verdanke ich vorzüglich der Freundschaft des Herrn Alexander Hamilton (Mitglied der Calcuttaischen Gesellschaft, und jetzt Professor der persischen und indischen Sprache in England), der mir seinen mündlichen Unterricht vom Frühjahr 1803-1804 schenkte.

During his lifetime, this Alexander Hamilton (1762-1824), member of the Asiatick Society founded by Sir William Jones in Calcutta in 1784, prolific contributor to the «Monthly Review», the «Asiatic Annual Register», and the «Edinburgh Review», cataloguer of the Sanskrit manuscripts at the Bibliothèque Impériale at Paris, Professor of Sanskrit and Hindu Literature at the College of the Honourable East India Company at Haileybury, and Fellow of the Royal Society and of the Bavarian Academy of Sciences, was widely recognized as one of the British pioneers of Indian studies. The Scotsman, however, never enjoyed the fame of a William Jones or a Friedrich Schlegel. In fact, he soon fell into oblivion when Indian studies, and Sanskrit philology in particular, were turned into an academic discipline by a new generation of scholars, some of whom (including Franz Bopp) owed much to Hamilton's help and encouragement. It was only in the twentieth century that his name was firmly put back on the historiographic record, thanks to Chambers & Norman (1929) and especially Rocher (1968, 1970). But after more than a century of neglect, much of his life and work was bound to remain enigmatic; even the date of his birth can only be inferred.

One of the things brought to light by Chambers & Norman and Rocher is that Friedrich Schlegel's seemingly candid acknowledgment in his *Indier* book and elsewhere somewhat understates how much he really benefited from his intimate acquaintance with Alexander Hamilton at Paris. Not only is Hamilton, who had spent some 15 years in India in the services of the Bengal Army and the East India Company, very likely to have played a role in the shaping of Friedrich Schlegel's originally rather mythical image of India; he also was demonstrably the direct inspiration of his pupil's recognition of particular lexical and structural correspondences between Sanskrit and several other languages (not all of which count as Indo-European today).

What remains to be explored is whether Alexander Hamilton's influence on Friedrich Schlegel could have been more profound than that of a mere language teacher in yet another respect. Friedrich Schlegel's *Ueber die Sprache und Weisheit der Indier* not only inaugurated Indian studies and comparative – or more precisely, historical-comparative Indo-European – philology in Germany, it has also received great acclaim as the foundation-charter of a further comparative enterprise, viz. linguistic typology. Could it be that Hamilton has also had a hand in the typological exploits of his Sanskrit pupil? After all, Friedrich Schlegel's claims to originality as a typologist have not gone entirely undisputed, and there may even be a possibility of Alexander Hamilton leading the way to one of his suspected sources in Scotland. Tracing the flow of ideas here, however, is very much an exercise in conjectural history.

2. In *Ueber die Sprache und Weisheit der Indier*, subtitled *Ein Beitrag zur Begründung der Alterthumskunde*, Friedrich Schlegel's primary concerns were oriental and historical-comparative rather than typological. The relationship between his two comparative concerns, the historical and the typological, is rather intricate. [1]

What seems relatively transparent, however, at least in retrospect, is that his structural classification, as set out in particular in Chapter 4 of Book I, is not in all respects dependent upon all the languages whose genealogical connection he sought to establish. In principle, a distinction like that between «Sprachen durch Affixa» (Schlegel's "affixes" subsuming both «angehängte Partikeln», i.e. agglutinative bound morphemes, and separate function words) and «Sprachen durch Flexion» (whose hallmark is «innre Modification der Wurzel», often accompanied by bound morphemes) could have been induced from a data base not including languages once spoken in India such as Persian and in particular Sanskrit, the pivot of the new historical-comparative scenarios. The comparison of ancient and modern European languages plus some more exotic tongues sufficiently well known at the time would have presented the aspiring typologist with enough structural variety to recognize, perhaps among others, two classes of languages of roughly this kind. (This is not to say that Schlegel's particular bipartition, tied up with his conception of an all-embracing contrast between the organic and the mechanical, was uniquely determined or even particularly well supported by his empirical data). It is primarily the recognition of a subordinate typological distinction, of «Modifikationen und Nebenarten» of the flexional «Hauptgattung», which on the face of it is directly attributable to Friedrich Schlegel's familiarity with Sanskrit. In comparison with Ancient Greek and Latin, Sanskrit set new standards of flexional purity, and corroborated the conception of the flexional principle as a matter of degrees, with «Sprachen durch Flexion» differing from one another in the extent to which «innere Flexion» is supplemented and perhaps even replaced by auxiliaries and prepositions. August Wilhelm Schlegel's contribution, a few years later (1818), was to give terminological recognition to this distinction of "synthetic" and "analytic" subtypes of «langues à inflexions» which was clearly perceived in his brother's work on the language and wisdom of the Indians.

Since it was Alexander Hamilton who taught Friedrich Schlegel Sanskrit, he should be credited with having supplied the empirical material which crucially furthered this subclassification of «Sprachen durch Flexion» on the part of his pupil (whose notion of «Flexion», by the way, rather puzzled some of his fellow typologists, including Wilhelm von Humboldt). If Hamilton's sole merit, however, was to have acted as linguistic informant, there would be little reason to detract from Friedrich Schlegel's reputation as an original typological theorist.

But there are indications that Alexander Hamilton's services of intellectual midwifery were not quite so humble as that. Though admittedly «unambitious of the reputation of a linguist» (1809: 371) and without ever having «devoted a moment . . . to the science of philology» (loc. cit.), Hamilton in fact also drew on his «tolerable knowledge of Sanscrit, Arabic, Latin, German, and the modern language of Persia», his «slender» knowledge of Greek (loc. cit.), his first-hand acquaintance with various contemporary vernacular dialects of India, and last but not least on his native tongue, for comparative purposes other than purely historical ones. Since the books which he

[1] And is, incidentally, not dissimilar in spirit to the relationship between historical and typological comparison as once conceived of by another Scot, viz. James Burnett, Lord Monboddo (cf. Plank, 1987b: § 3.3), the German reception of whose two serial publications, *Of the Origin and Progress of Language* (1773-92) and *Ancient Metaphysics* (1779-99), would merit closer examination.

reviewed in the «Monthly Review» included grammars of Spanish and Malay as well as a collection of Italian prose and poetry in the original language and one or two works of Scots poetry (cf. Rocher, 1970), his linguistic pursuits really were relatively wide-ranging. It is true that his primary purpose in his anonymous review of Charles Wilkins's *A Grammar of the Sanskrita Language* (London, 1808) in the January 1809 issue of the «Edinburgh Review» was to support William Jones's identification of the genealogical position of Sanskrit. But to achieve this purpose he deemed it necessary to consider not only the lexical but also the structural «analogy of the Sanscrit with other languages» (1809: 371), and thus could not help but notice certain major structural differences between the languages he was able to compare. Significantly, it is a historical comparison of ancient and modern languages, yielding similar overall patterns in the East (India) and the West (Europe), which appears to have suggested to Hamilton the «distinctive characters» of two structurally different classes of languages. Without going into great detail, he notes that in the «original» ancient languages cases render the use of prepositions superfluous, which in the «derivative» modern languages commonly accompany nouns often unmarked for case, and that the presence of case-marking further entails «the feedom of... transpositions», whereas its absence subjects the words to «settled collocation in the composition of each sentence» in order to render the sense perspicuous (1809: 381). He also evaluates the two kinds of languages and sees the greatest excellence of those with cases and free word order in their «energetic conciseness», with languages with prepositions and rigid word order, however, surpassing them in «elegance», «precision», and «perspicuity» (loc. cit.).

Even though his interest in language structures as such was limited, Alexander Hamilton in this particular article was not content merely to describe in their own terms the languages of which he professed some knowledge and to establish genealogical and other historical connections, but also attempted to arrange the structural variety he encountered under two general heads. [2] The structural features Hamilton exploits for his classification partly resemble those used by Friedrich Schlegel to subdivide his «Sprachen durch Flexion». A salient criterion employed by both authors is the use of

[2] "Type" is not used as a technical term by Hamilton; Schlegel's term is «(Haupt-) Gattung». In a later anonymous article on two works by Franz Bopp, Hamilton speaks of the «genius», as opposed to the «mechanism», of a language (1820: 432); but it is not clear whether he intended this term in the technical sense it had been given by influential writers on language in 18th century France, such as Gabriel Girard and Nicolas Beauzée, whose typological ideas were extremely popular in Scotland (cf. Plank, 1987b).

cases or prepositions, i.e. of bound or free morphemes, to express the grammatical relations of nominals. Schlegel extends this formal contrast to the verbal sphere and analogously distinguishes the expression of «Verhältnisse und Nebenbestimmungen der Bedeutung» of verbs by (bound) inflexions or (free) auxiliaries, on the apparent assumption that for each language the formal kind of expression preferred will generally be the same for nominals and for verbs. While Schlegel's scheme of systemic typology is more comprehensive in this respect, it is less comprehensive than Hamilton's in another: he completely disregards the further criterion of the freedom or rigidity of word order, even though some correlation between this and the segmental marking preferences should have been pretty obvious, and had in fact not eluded typologists *avant la lettre* in the 18th century (cf. Plank, 1987b). But Schlegel's most significant innovation vis-à-vis Hamilton evidently is the recognition of an additional, superordinate typological contrast, with a further «Hauptgattung», «Sprachen durch Affixa», in opposition – not necessarily categorically, though – to all more or less pure manifestations of the flexional type.

As to their evaluation of the two kinds of languages distinguishable on the criterion they share, Schlegel's ascription of «kunstreiche Einfachheit» (1808/1975: 153) to Sanskrit and its kind probably bears comparison to Hamilton's characterization of the same languages as "energetically concise". Schlegel's evaluation of the grammar of languages with prepositions and auxiliaries instead of inflexional morphology as short and convenient («gleichsam eine Abbreviatur zum leichten allgemeinen Gebrauch» (1808/1975: 143) too does not sound entirely different from Hamilton's, who attributes to these languages greater «elegance» (as well as «precision/perspicuity»), but is based on functional rather than aesthetic criteria, viz. formal economy and learnability. [3]

May we conclude, then, on the basis of one substantial common denominator of their typological schemes and of a certain, but perhaps superficial, similarity of the evaluation of the structural contrast they both consider typologically relevant, that Friedrich Schlegel must also have had tuition in typology from his Sanskrit teacher Alexander Hamilton? Tempting though this conclusion is on textual and biographical grounds, further circumstances should be taken into account before the charge can be considered proved.

Note, first of all, that Friedrich Schlegel's typological views appeared in print earlier than Alexander Hamilton's. The manuscript of his *Indier* book was sent to the publisher in September 1807 from

[3] See Plank (1987b: § 3) for the 18th century Scottish history of these exceptionally tangible evaluational criteria.

Cologne and was published in the spring of 1808, while Hamilton's review of Wilkins, written at Haileybury, only appeared in January of the following year. To base judgements about intellectual influence exclusively on publications and the dates of their appearance, however, would seem particularly inappropriate in this case. There are no indications that Hamilton had seen *Ueber die Sprache und Weisheit der Indier*, his former pupil's first and only exposition of his typological scheme, in a published or manuscript version before he published in the «Edinburgh Review» his own major contribution to historical-comparative philology enriched by a structural-typological aside. After he had become aware of the *Indier* book, he did mention it favourably, calling to the attention of his British audience its author's «high rank amongst the literati of the Continent» (Hamilton, 1820: 432). Friedrich Schlegel, vice versa, could not avail himself of relevant writings by Hamilton during the actual preparation of his *Indier* book, the Wilkins review of 1809 being Hamilton's only work displaying typological inclinations. Chambers & Norman's advice, therefore, is well taken: «The question of influence ... must be referred back to Paris, and the time when Schlegel was receiving instruction from the Englishman [sic]» (1929: 465 f.).

What went on between Alexander and Friedrich *et les autres* at Paris between the spring of 1803 (or perhaps a little earlier) and the end of April 1804, and in particular after August or September 1803 when Hamilton had become a boarder of the Schlegels, can be gleaned from memoirs (especially Helmina von Chézy's) and correspondence of almost all members of this circle except Alexander Hamilton. [4] The combined evidence of this kind leaves little doubt that Schlegel's practical knowledge of Sanskrit benefited greatly from Hamilton's instruction, which at its most intensive lasted three hours daily. There is also ample testimony that the issue of genealogical connections between languages crucially involving Sanskrit was a favourite topic of discussion among the students of Sanskrit at the house of the Schlegels (which also included Gottfried Hagemann, a young orientalist from Hannover (cf. Rocher, 1968: 54)) and of course in the entire Parisian orientalist community. Although none of the available sources explicitly says so, the inference is no doubt legitimate that on this count too, with regard to points of detail as well as the overall historical-comparative conception, it was primarily Schlegel who profited from Hamilton rather than vice versa (cf. Chambers & Norman, 1929: 466). After all, Hamilton had an immense empirical advantage and also was thoroughly familiar with the philological

[4] The best account available, distilled from these sources, is Rocher (1968: 34-63).

work of William Jones and other British Indian scholars. [5] Hamilton certainly advised his pupils on the relevant Indian and other literature, which they would usually consult in the Bibliothèque Impériale. He may in addition have placed at their disposal manuscripts and books which he happened to have brought with him. Thus, one of Friedrich Schlegel's sources on the Celtic family was the article "Remarks on some Corruptions which have been introduced into the Orthography, and Pronunciation of the Gaëlic; with Proposals for Removing them, and Restoring the Purity of the Language" by Capt. Donald Smith, published in volume 1 of the *Prize Essays and Transactions of the Highland Society of Scotland* (Edinburgh, 1799, pp. 324-343), which was no longer available to Schlegel at the time he prepared his *Indier* book for publication (cf. 1808/1975: 186 f.). According to Jean Rousseau (personal communication), who identified this source, Schlegel cannot have consulted this work in the Bibliothèque Impériale, which did not acquire it until 1817. Of all his acquaintances Hamilton would seem to be the one most likely to have owned the transactions of his native Highland Society.

With regard to potential typological influences, the web of inferences is more tenuous. Judging from letters and memoirs, typology or structural language classification as such was not high on the agenda of the circle of fledgling Sanskritists around Alexander Hamilton. Thus, it is primarily the subsequent publications of the protagonists (Hagemann did not live to produce any) which must be relied on as witnesses to the exchange of ideas that may have taken place during their gestation. What is perhaps most revealing here is the way historical comparison interrelates with typological comparison in Friedrich Schlegel's *Indier* book.

There is, firstly, the heuristic value of historical comparison, which should not be neglected as a contributory factor in the genesis of typological classifications. If the particular structural contrast which both Hamilton and Schlegel came to consider typologically relevant had only been observed in some ancient European languages and their modern derivatives, it could easily have been taken for no more than an accidental areal peculiarity. The recurrence of the same overall pattern in the ancient and modern languages of distant India is, therefore, likely to have inspired greater confidence in the general applicability of this contrast for purposes of language classification. This must have dawned first on Hamilton, whose acquaintance with the linguistic situation in India by far surpassed Friedrich Schlegel's.

[5] It would be interesting to determine what inspiration Friedrich Schlegel could have drawn from the Indian experience of his older brother Karl August, who had died in Madras in 1789, as recorded in the preface of his *Indier* book.

It seems reasonable to assume, then, that this heuristic impetus of the Indian experience has reached Friedrich Schlegel (and later August Wilhelm) via Alexander Hamilton.

Schlegel's typologizing is also informed by diachronic considerations in a non-heuristic respect, and on this count parts company with Hamilton's. Note that Hamilton is not bothered by a discrepancy between his structural and his genealogical classification: the languages whose common origin he attempts to establish fall into different classes on the structural criteria he regards as most important (cases and free word order vs. prepositions and rigid word order). Schlegel, on the other hand, by subsuming the very languages structurally distinguished by Hamilton and himself, i.e. pure flexional (synthetic) languages and (analytic) languages with «Konjugation vorzüglich durch Hülfsverba» and «Deklination durch Präpositionen», under one head and by opposing these «Sprachen durch Flexion» on a higher level to all «Sprachen durch Affixa», manages to re-align structural and genealogical classes at this additional, superordinate level of structural classification. This is true at least of the «Hauptgattung» he was primarily interested in, «Sprachen durch Flexion», the «innere Verwandtschaft» (1808/1975: 161) among which he regarded as sufficiently close to assume that they form one genealogical «Sprachfamilie». He in fact denied that all «Sprachen durch Affixa» are genealogically related, but he also seems less than fully convinced that they really belong under one structural group either. (Ten years later, August Wilhelm Schlegel consequently splits them into «langues qui emploient des affixes» and «langues sans aucune structure grammaticale» (1818). Friedrich Schlegel could thus claim with some justification that his guiding principle in genealogical comparison was «die innre Struktur der Sprachen oder die vergleichende Grammatik» (1808/1975: 137). Whether his parallel structural and genealogical classifications are empirically appropriate is of course another thing. Without a deep, romantic commitment to the premiss that an "organic" flexional language, despite its exchange of inflexional morphology for separate function words characteristic of one kind of affixing languages, may never lose its genius entirely and turn "mechanical" (i.e. affixing), it could certainly have proved difficult on occasion to draw a structural dividing line between analytic flexional languages and affixing languages of the function-word variety. [6]

On the evidence of his own writings Hamilton clearly cannot

[6] It is instructive to compare Schlegel's position on this point with that of 18th century French authors such as Gabriel Girard (1747), who denied that languages structurally as divergent as Latin and French could possibly be genealogically related other than by lexical borrowing.

claim intellectual parentage of Schlegel's hierarchical scheme of structural classification with affixation vs. flexion as the dominant and synthesis vs. analysis as the subordinate distinction (within flexion), nor of its underlying motivation of structural-genealogical harmony. It is interesting to note, though, that Schlegel's ideas only took shape after his acquaintance with Hamilton and Sanskrit. He initially tended to exaggerate the diachronic significance of Sanskrit; as late as September 15, 1803, in a letter to Ludwig Tieck (Holtei, 1864: III, 328 f., quoted by Chambers & Norman, 1929: 466 and Rocher, 1968: 47), he declared it to be «die Quelle *aller* Sprachen» (emphasis added). His subsequent adoption of a more realistic view of the genealogical connections of Sanskrit, no doubt under the influence of Hamilton, then, must have gone hand in hand with, or indeed have pushed ahead, the elaboration of his complex typological scheme. Genealogical comparison, in this process, seems to have been the guiding principle in working out his framework of structural classification, rather than the other way round. There is no reason to suspect that in this his model was Hamilton, who was content with a simpler classificational scheme (which lacked Schlegel's superordinate distinction) and did not subscribe to the parallelism of structural and genealogical classifications. It has been claimed by an eye-witness (Helmina von Chézy, 1858: I, 270) that Friedrich Schlegel took a truly active part in the Sanskrit lessons taught by Hamilton and occasionally «belehrte seinen Meister von seiner Seite». The typological points at issue, however, do not seem to have been broached in their sessions; if they were, Hamilton must have remained unimpressed by the ideas of his pupil. The most plausible inference perhaps it that Schlegel's typological views took longer to unfold and matured only after he had left Paris. (The letters he wrote and the notebooks he kept during his period at Paris indicate that his comparative interest at the time was exclusively historical, focusing originally on Persian in comparison with German and "Indian".) It seems also plausible to assume, however, that these views were developed in reaction to ones he was confronted with at Paris. His complex typological scheme would, thus, be interpretable as his response to simpler structural classifications like that accepted by Hamilton, inspired by a desire to reconcile structural and genealogical affinities. If it was his Sanskrit teacher who familiarized him with the position he then found unsatisfactory and sought to amend, as is quite likely, Alexander Hamilton's contribution to the history of linguistic typology would have been to set Friedrich Schlegel thinking on these matters.

3. At this point, however, it is appropriate to take a wider perspective, to avoid the impression that our protagonists were trafficking in

ideas in complete intellectual isolation. Although Hamilton's role indeed may have been to arouse Schlegel's curiosity about linguistic matters about which he had cared but little before, the views Schlegel eventually reacted to with his own elaborate typological scheme need not exclusively have been those expressed by Hamilton in their conversations at Paris, at the Bibliothèque Impériale or No. 19, rue de Clichy. Comparing languages, with varying degrees of sophistication and for different reasons, had been *en vogue* in the 18th century, and whoever consulted such earlier treatises on general/universal or comparative grammar (the more empirically minded ones at least), on the origin and progress of language(s), or on the relative aesthetic or other merits of ancient and modern European languages, inevitably met with views on purportedly major structural contrasts and similarities between languages essentially similar to those shared by Hamilton and Schlegel. Such views had been expounded most systematically by Gabriel Girard (1747) and Nicolas Beauzée (1765, 1767) and numerous others who had followed their lead (cf. Plank, 1987b). Especially at Paris, it would seem to have been difficult to remain totally unaware of this tradition (brought to prominence in the linguistic articles in the popular encyclopaedias), even if one's philological concerns were primarily Indological and historical-comparative. The extent of Hamilton's and Schlegel's familiarity with such 18th century sources, however, is not easy to ascertain precisely.

Hamilton apparently did not attach much importance to typological comparison. He never took up this issue again in his writings, and when praising Mr Frederick Schlegel as the pioneer of the study of Indian antiquity in Germany (Anonymous, 1820: 431 f.), made no mention at all of the typological by-products of his former pupil's temporary infatuation with the East. He may have known that what he himself had to offer on this topic was not very remarkable because it was in no way novel. In that case, he would nevertheless have been in a position to point out to Schlegel the potential significance of previous writings on structural language classification and perhaps to direct his attention to further relevant sources. The alternative is that he really was philologically as ignorant as he once claimed (1809: 371), which would suggest that the typological sketch in his 1809 article was entirely of his own making, his personal views thus being the only lead he could have given Schlegel. Since Hamilton tended to understate his linguistic expertise, his admission of ignorance should be taken with care: He was probably not well-read in philology, but it is unlikely that he was entirely unread outside his special field of interest, viz. all matters Indian. Note that he in fact does refer approvingly to the coalescence theory of the origin of inflexions of the «ingenious writer Mr. Tooke» in his Wilkins review of 1809 (p. 380);

the reading of John Horne Tooke's «admirable treatise» *Diversions of Purley* (1786/1805) can hardly have left him unaware of some key controversies of 18th century grammatical theory. But otherwise his publications and his biography indeed provide preciously few clues to his intellectual formation.

There is little unequivocal evidence of debts to typological ancestors in Schlegel's case too. Schlegel gives the impression of having induced his structural generalizations from a relatively wide variety of descriptive grammars available to him (many by courtesy of Alexander von Humboldt). Various motives of his final conception of structural types and their relationship to genealogical classification seem to suggest, however, that he had familiarized himself also with some relevant theoretical literature, possibly including typological work in the vein of Girard and Beauzée. One work in this tradition has gained some notoriety as an alleged source of Schlegel's typological thinking: Adam Smith's "Considerations concerning the First Formation of Languages, and the Different Genius of Original and Compounded Languages", first published fairly inaccessibly in 1761, but since 1767 readily available as an appendix to his *Theory of Moral Sentiments* (3rd edition, the basis of the German translation) as well as independently in various French translations. [7] There are circumstantial and textual indications that Friedrich Schlegel knew Adam Smith's essay when he was working on his *Indier* book. The most telling textual clues probably are his emphasis on the distinction between "organic" (flexional) and "mechanical" (affixing) languages, which can be construed as a rejection of Smith's global characterization of all languages as mechanical, and his use of formal economy and learnability as evaluational criteria, criteria which recall an innovatory aspect of Smith's approach to the distinction between "original" languages (with the more inflexional morphology the purer they are) and "compounded" languages (i.e. mixed languages relying on function words instead of morphology). But in spite of such evidence, suggestive thought it may be, the dependence of Friedrich Schlegel on Adam Smith the typologist is still a matter of opinion. The discovery of further links in this supposed connection would be most welcome because it would also corroborate the continuity of typological thought between the 18th century French and Scottish Enlightenment and 19th century German Romanticism.

It is tempting to speculate that one such link was the person of Alexander Hamilton, Adam Smith's compatriot. Obviously his Scottish origin alone does not prove him an expert on Smith, the less so

[7] Cf. Plank (1987a) for a detailed account of the Smith-Schlegel connection and its historiographic treatment (with further references).

as the philosopher-economist's fame in Scotland at large had been waning towards the end of his life (he died in 1790). But conclusive proof is again impossible to come by, and even conjectures are extremely hazardous because Hamilton's biography is fragmentary in crucial respects. Since probably the best opportunity for Hamilton to have become acquainted with Smith's ideas would have been as a student at a Scottish university, in particular Edinburgh or Glasgow, it is disappointing to find his biographer admitting that «we are left completely in the dark as to what and where Alexander Hamilton studied» (Rocher, 1968: 4). More recently, however, news seem to have emerged about this dark period before Hamilton's arrival in Calcutta (not before the end of 1783), enabling Cain (1986: 90) to assert that «Hamilton had been a pupil of Dugald Stewart at Edinburgh University, who taught many men who would one day go out to India, and who was particularly interested in historical philology; many of his students made important contributions along these lines». Cain unfortunately does not quote any sources in support of his claim, which is not, however, necessarily incompatible with Rocher's negative findings. Since Rocher had attempted to trace Hamilton's presence in any British university from the various catalogues of graduates kept at the British Museum, the implication of Cain's disclosure would be that Hamilton attended but did not graduate from the University of Edinburgh.

If Cain is right, Hamilton could have been a student at Edinburgh University sometime between the mid-1770s (he was 13 in 1775) and his departure for India in 1783/84. Dugald Stewart had been lecturing on mathematics there since 1772, had become Professor of Mathematics in 1775, and Professor of Moral Philosophy in 1785, having before, in the session 1778/79, already taught once the class of Moral Philosophy *in lieu* of Adam Ferguson. As a student of one of Stewart's mathematics classes there would presumably have been little opportunity for Hamilton to be introduced to Adam Smith's work on language. In his writings on moral philosophy, however, Dugald Stewart frequently dealt with linguistic matters, [8] commonly taking Adam Smith's "Considerations" as his point of departure. That he did so in his teaching as well is attested to by the notebooks of a student recording his moral philosophy lectures of the session 1789/90, where large parts of Smith's "Considerations", especially

[8] His fullest account may be found in Volume III of his *Elements of the Philosophy of the Human Mind* (1827/1854: 5-115). The manuscript of his "Conjectures concerning the Origin of the Sanskrit" only dates from late 1824 and early 1825 (cf. 1827/1854: 78-105), but his Indian interest clearly is of an earlier origin; his intention as a student had been to seek employment in India as an engineer.

those dealing with parts of speech and with the distinction between original/complex and compounded/simple languages, were reproduced more or less verbatim. But the only moral philosophy lectures by Stewart which Hamilton could possibly have attended before leaving for India were those of the session 1778/79. Of these only the second part is recorded in abbreviation in the notebook of a student (Josias Walker), making no mention of language. In a footnote in his *Elements of the Philosophy of the Human Mind* (1827/1854: 38), however, Dugald Stewart himself recalls these lectures of 1778/79 and remarks that he had there pointed out publicly «the extraordinary grammatical merits» of John Horne Tooke's "Letter to Mr. Dunning" only a few months after its publication (1778). [9] But if language indeed was a topic of these lectures, Smith's "Considerations", which were extremely popular for some time among the local literati, are unlikely to have been omitted from discussion entirely. Unfortunately, however, the Matriculation Roll of the Faculties of Arts, Law, and Divinity of the University of Edinburgh (Vol. II, 1775-1810) does not list Alexander Hamilton among the «Discipuli Moralis Philosophiae» (p. 374 f.) for this session where Dugald Stewart had substituted for Adam Ferguson during his absence in America. [10]

According to the Matriculation Roll there was only one Alexander Hamilton studying at Edinburgh University at the appropriate time, and he was for only one session, 1779/80, i.e. without graduating, among the pupils of Hugh Blair, Professor of Rhetorics and Belles Lettres (cf. Vol. II, p. 385). As is evident from student notebooks for 1765 and 1779 (kept at Edinburgh University Library), as well as from the published version of his *Lectures on Rhetoric and Belles Lettres* (1783), Blair too used to discuss Smith's "Considerations", disagreeing with Dr Smith on some points of his theory of word-class division but essentially agreeing with him on his structural-historical distinction of complex/original and simple/compounded languages (cf. in particular John Bruce's notebook for 1765, pp. 125-188). But of course we cannot be sure that the Alexander Hamilton who heard Professor Blair lecture on such matters in 1779/80 indeed was the one whose intellectual background we would like to elucidate, Alexander Hamilton being no uncommon name in Scotland. On the other hand, since Matriculation Rolls were no absolutely reliable record of the actual audience of a professor, we cannot be entirely sure either that our Alexander Hamilton was *not* among the students of Dugald Stewart, as asserted by Cain. But if Alexander Hamilton, the future tutor of Friedrich Schlegel, indeed was a student of some

[9] Recall from above Hamilton's similar appreciation of Horne Tooke.
[10] It does list a Charles and a George Hamilton.

such Arts subject at a Scottish university, some familiarity on his part with structural language classification, and in all likelihood with Adam Smith's ideas on this topic in particular, could be taken for granted, instruction in the general principles of grammar having been part of the regular Scottish university curriculum at this time (cf. Frank, 1986).

There are two pieces of evidence which might throw doubt on such conjectures about Hamilton's adolescence: Hamilton's own statement, already quoted above, that «to the science of philology he has never devoted a moment» (1809: 371), and Cockburn's assertion in his memoir of Francis Jeffrey (1872: 103) that Hamilton, returning from India, came to Edinburgh, eventually to join the circle of the *Edinburgh Reviewers*, a «stranger». It is not self-evident, however, what is actually being claimed here. Hamilton's intention merely may have been to deny that he had ever formally studied Classics, the usual reading of "philology" at the time being "philology of the Classical languages", i.e. Latin and Greek. In that case the implication would be that he was self-taught in these languages or had received instruction outside a university, perhaps in private tuition or, more likely, at a grammar school, where Latin and to a lesser extent also Greek used to be core subjects. As to Cockburn, his remark could be interpreted, not implausibly, as implying that Hamilton was a stranger to the people he associated with at Edinburgh around the turn of the century, Francis Jeffrey, Henry Cockburn himself, and most others of their group of Young Edinburgh Whigs being Hamilton's juniors by a decade or more. None of them presumably had known "Sanscrit" Hamilton, as the son of a merchant hailing from Ayrshire (cf. Rocher, 1970: 426f.) came to be called, before he had left Scotland for India, or could possibly have been his class-mate at university.

Judgement is, thus, best suspended on the question of what education Hamilton may have enjoyed. There was at any rate a later opportunity for him to become conversant with the ideas of Adam Smith: the years from sometime between 1797 and 1800 to 1802 or 1803 which he spent at Edinburgh in the company of the Young Edinburgh Whigs and in particular the circle of the *Edinburgh Reviewers*. Many of his acquaintances there (including Francis Jeffrey, his closest friend) had read Moral Philosophy with Dugald Stewart and were attending Stewart's lectures on Political Economy, given as a separate course since the winter of 1800. [11] In this intellectual and

[11] Several memoirs and similar publications have lists of Dugald Stewart's students, but none of those I have seen includes Hamilton. Cain's (1986: 90) assertion that Hamilton too was a pupil of Dugald Stewart may have been occasioned by the frequent mentioning of Francis Jeffrey and other acquaintances of his on such lists.

social ambience Adam Smith the philosopher and economist was a household name, though not necessarily Adam Smith the speculative grammarian – unless one actually read his *Theory of Moral Sentiments* (in the third or a later edition) from the preface to the appendix. It is not improbable that Hamilton, the expert on the original/complex and compounded/simple languages of India, got to know this appendix, the "Considerations", at first hand. What is extremely likely (though nowhere attested, so far as I know) is that he also made the acquaintance of Dugald Stewart, who shared with him a interest in India and, in particular, Sanskrit. In his own, not very distinguished later contribution to Sanskrit philology (where Sanskrit is argued to be an artificial language consciously invented by the Brahmins on the pattern of Greek), Dugald Stewart repeatedly refers to articles in the «Edinburgh Review» which had appeared anonymously but are correctly attributed to Hamilton. Stewart was presumably able to identify the author because he knew him personally. In his *Elements* (1827/1854: 76) he in fact acknowledges «the late Mr. Hamilton of Hertford College» as one of the two most competent judges to be found in this island to evaluate the attainments of the Reverend Alexander Murray as a polyglot on the occasion of Murray's candidacy for the chair of Oriental Languages at the University of Edinburgh in 1812. [12] And in 1814, when supplementary volumes were being prepared for the sixth edition of the *Encyclopaedia Britannica* and Dugald Stewart was asked for advice about prospective contributors, Mr. Hamilton was one of the names he suggested; Hamilton later declined the invitation to contribute (cf. Rocher, 1970: 447 f.). All this points to intellectual contacts between Stewart and Hamilton. If Stewart indeed sought Hamilton's advice on Sanskrit and historical philology in conversation or correspondence, Adam Smith's ideas on language were quite likely to be touched on, considering Stewart's indebtedness to Smith in this and other matters.

Hamilton's publications do not exactly wear their Smithian inspiration on their sleeve. A major theme of Smith's "Considerations" is the mixture of nations and languages. This gains particular prominence in his diachronic-typological scheme because it is only by intermixture that morphologically complex «original» languages may become grammatically simple, substituting prepositions and auxiliaries for inflexions. This is one of the points where Smith differs from

[12] Hamilton's not entirely unequivocal testimonial on behalf of Murray was published, together with further documents, in the «Scots Magazine» No. 74 of July 1812, pp. 507-539, and again in the memoir prefixed to Murray's *Posthumous Works* edited by Henry Moncreiff Wellwood. See also Rocher (1970: 446 f.) on this further Edinburgh connection of Hamilton.

French typologists, who did not entirely disregard mixture in typological comparisons, but nevertheless tended to deny the possibility of type changes (Girard) or to admit only the reverse development of morphologically complex «transpositive» from simple «analogous» languages (Beauzée). Language mixture and borrowing figure prominently in Hamilton's article of 1809 too. But his perspective is entirely empirical rather than conjectural, and mixture consequently is not seen as the only mechanism for the development of «derivative» languages from «original» ones. Hamilton's structural distinction of language types is less comprehensive than Smith's. The contrasts taken into account by both are those of rigid vs. free word order and prepositions vs. cases, but Smith (like Schlegel) in addition correlates with these contrasts that of auxiliaries vs. voice/tense/mood conjugations. This extension was in fact an innovation of Smith vis-à-vis Girard (1747), his undisputed French source, and it could seem, therefore, as if Hamilton was following in the footsteps of the French typologists rather than in those of his compatriot. But it should be borne in mind that Hamilton's intention was not to elaborate his structural classes in all details, his emphasis being on historical comparison. All in all, Hamilton's Wilkins review (1809) presumably shows enough similarity with Smith's "Considerations" to suspect some kind of intellectual debt, but also enough dissimilarities to render a verdict other than "not proven" unfair.

4. In what Rocher (1968: 115) considers the scientific testament of Alexander Hamilton, he demands, with regard to the transfer of scientific knowledge between India and Greece, that «it should . . . be very distinctly demonstrated, that the Greeks themselves possessed what they are said to have communicated» (1820: 442). What knowledge he himself possessed about the typological work of Adam Smith and perhaps other 18th century authors, and may be said to have communicated to Friedrich Schlegel, cannot be demonstrated very distinctly. Trying to make the best of the limited possibilities of the conjectural historian of the transfer of ideas we may nevertheless conclude, (1) that Hamilton is likelier to have been aware than to have been ignorant of Adam Smith's ideas on the structural-historical classification of languages as expressed in his "Considerations", (2) that his own suggestions of a major structural contrast between the ancient and modern Indian as well as European languages are likelier to have been inspired by the Girard-Beauzée-Smith tradition than to have been entirely original, (3) that Friedrich Schlegel is likelier to have elaborated his complex typological scheme in reaction to previous simpler schemes than to have developed it out of the blue, (4) that a most likely challenge to Schlegel were Hamilton's views of

structural language classification, (5) that Adam Smith's "Considerations" are likelier to have been one of Schlegel's further points of reference than to have been entirely unknown to him, and (6) that the significance of Smith's ideas could well have been pointed out to Schlegel by Hamilton during the months of their joint devotion to the cause of Sanskrit and comparative grammar at Paris, regardless of whether or not Smith's philosophical works had previously come to Schlegel's attention. It is, thus, not with absolute certainty that linguistic historiography may recognize Alexander Hamilton as a missing link in the evolution of typology. But it seems that he has already had his reward during his lifetime, unlike Friedrich Schlegel: as his admirer Helmina von Chézy saw it (1858: I, 270), «die Freude einen solchen Schüler zu haben, war seine Belohnung». [13]

REFERENCES

Anonymous [Alexander Hamilton] (1809), *Review of A Grammar of the Sanskrita Language*, by Charles Wilkins (London 1808), «The Edinburgh Review or Critical Journal», No. XXVI, Art. VI, 366-381.

Anonymous [Alexander Hamilton] (1820), *Review* of *Franz Bopp über das Conjugations System der Sanskritsprache* . . . (Frankfurt am Mayn), and *Nalus, Carmen Sanscriticum e Mahábhárato*, edidit . . . Franciscus Bopp (Londini 1819), «The Edinburgh Review or Critical Journal», No. LXVI, Art. VII, 431-442.

Beauzée, N. (1765), *Langue*, in: *Encyclopédie, ou Dictionnaire raisonné des sciences, des arts et des métiers, par une Société des gens de lettres*, ed. by Denis Diderot & Jean le Rond d'Alembert, Vol.9, 249-266.

— (1767), *Grammaire générale, ou Exposition raisonnée des éléments nécessaires du langage, pour servir de fondement à l'étude de toutes les langues*, Paris, Barbou, 2 vols.

Blair, H. (1765), *Lectures on Rhetoric and the Belles Lettres*, Vol. I.st, Lecture notes by John Bruce, Edinburgh University Library Mss. Dc. 10.6.

— (1779), *Lectures on Rhetoric and Belles Lettres*, by Hugh Blair D. D., Professor of these arts in the University of Edinburgh, Volume Second, Anonymous lecture notes, Edinburgh University Library Mss. Gen. 1990.

— (1783), *Lectures on Rhetoric and Belles Lettres*, London, Strahan, Cadell, 2 vols.

Cain, A. M. (1986), *The Cornchest for Scotland. Scots in India*, Edinburgh, National Library of Scotland.

Chambers, R. W. & Norman F. (1929), *Alexander Hamilton and the Beginnings of Comparative Philology*, in: *Studies in English Philology*, a Miscel-

[13] The research for this paper was conducted while I was a Fellow at the Institute for Advanced Studies in the Humanities of the University of Edinburgh, taking part in IPSE 86 (Institute Project Scottish Enlightenment), directed by David Daiches and Peter Jones. Intellectual stimulation from my co-fellows and financial support from the Institute and the Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft are gratefully acknowledged. I am particularly grateful to Rosane Rocher, Alexander Hamilton's biographer, for valuable comments on an earlier version.

lany in Honor of Frederick Klaeber, ed. by K. Malone & M. B. Ruud, 457-466, Minneapolis, University of Minnesota Press.
Chézy, H. von (1858), *Unvergessenes*. Denkwürdigkeiten aus dem Leben von Helmina von Chézy. Von ihr selbst erzählt (Ed. by Bertha Borngräbr), Vol. I, Leipzig, Brockhaus.
Cockburn, H. (1872), *Life of Francis Jeffrey* (Lord Cockburn's Works, Vol. I), Edinburgh, Adam & Charles Black.
Frank, T. (1986), *The Study of Language during the Scottish Enlightenment: Campbell, Beattie and Blair*, To appear.
Girard, G. (1747), *Les vrais principes de la langue françoise: ou la parole réduite en méthode, conformément aux loix de l'usage, en seize discours*, Amsterdam, Wetstein.
Holtei, K. von (ed.) (1864), *Briefe an Ludwig Tieck*, Vol. 3, Breslau.
Plank, F. (1987a), *The Smith-Schlegel Connection in Linguistic Typology: Forgotten Fact or Fiction?*, «Zeitschrift für Phonetik, Sprachwissenschaft und Kommunikationsforschung» 40, 196-214.
— (1987b), *Whence Typology? Language Geniology in Eighteenth Century France and Scotland*, To appear.
Rocher, R. (1968), *Alexander Hamilton (1762-1824). A Chapter in the Early History of Sanskrit Philology* (American Oriental Series, 51.), New Haven, Conn., American Oriental Society.
— (1970), *New Data for the Biography of the Orientalist Alexander Hamilton*, «Journal of the American Oriental Society», 90, 423-448.
Schlegel, A. W. (1818), *Observations sur la langue et la littérature provençales*, reprinted in *Oeuvres* de M. Auguste-Guillaume de Schlegel, écrites en français, ed. by E. Böcking, Vol. 2, 149-250, Leipzig, Weidmann, 1846.
Schlegel, F. (1808), *Ueber die Sprache und Weisheit der Indier. Ein Beitrag zur Begründung der Alterthumskunde*, Heidelberg, Mohr & Zimmer. Reprinted in *Kritische Friedrich-Schlegel-Ausgabe*, 8. Band, *Studien zur Philosophie und Theologie*, ed. by E. Behler & U. Struc-Oppenberg, 105-433, München, Schöningh, 1975.
Smith, A. (1761), *Considerations concerning the First Formation of Languages, and the Different Genius of Original and Compounded Languages*, in «The Philological Miscellany» (London) 1, 440-479. Reprinted as an appendix in his *The Theory of Moral Sentiments*, to which is added a Dissertation on the Origin of Languages, London & Edinburgh, Millar, Kinkaid & Bell, 1767, 3rd edn.
Stewart, D. (1778/79), *Abbreviation's from Lectures on Moral Philosophy*, Delivered by Dugald Stewart, Professor of Mathematics in the University of Edinburgh, Josias Walker scripsit, Vol. II, Lecture notes, Edinburgh University Library Mss. Gen. 2023.
— (1789/90), *Lectures on Moral Philosophy* Delivered by Professor Dugald Stewart, Session 1789 & 1790, Anonymous lecture notes, 3 vols., Edinburgh University Library Mss. Gen. 1987-9.
— (1824/25), *Conjectures concerning the Origin of the Sanscrit*, Edinburgh University Library Mss. Dc. 8. 177.
— (1827), *Elements of the Philosophy of the Human Mind*, Vol. III. Reprinted in his *Collected Works*, ed. by W. Hamilton, Vol. IV, Edinburgh, Constable, 1854.