

PAUL ANTON DE LAGARDE

(1827-1891)



P. de Lagarde (Paul Bötticher) was an outstanding German orientalist, philosopher and theologian whose studies until today remain as milestone for modern Orientalistics.

P. de Lagarde studied oriental languages, as well as in philosophy and theology first at the Humboldt University of Berlin (1844– 1846) then the University of Halle-Wittenberg (1846–1847). From 1869 until his death P. de Lagarde worked at the University of Göttingen as a lecturer.

His scholarly activities embrace both academic studies and politics, the latter aimed at the establishment of the so-called German national religion as a special form of Christianity (“Über das Verhältnis des deutschen Staates zu Theologie, Kirche und Religion. Ein Versuch Nicht-Theologen zu orientieren” and “Über die gegenwärtige Lage des deutschen Reichs. Ein Bericht”), the idea which became milestone for German nationalism and expansion.

A significant place of P. de Lagard’s studies were devoted to the Bible. Among them should be distinguished the Aramaic translation (known as the Targum) of the “Prophets” (1872), “Hagiographa chaldaice” (1874), “Arabic translation of the Gospels” (1864), “Der “Pentateuch koptisch” (1867), etc. He dealt also with Iranian studies (“Persische Studien”, 1884).

Armenological studies of P. de Lagarde were published in two monographs - the pre-history of Armenians (1854) and in extensive work which deals with Armenian linguistics (1877). In the latter about 1000 Armenian words were examined. He came to conclusion that about 1/3 of the old Armenian words are of Indo-European origin. According to his periodization the history of the Armenian language should be divided into three periods - Haikanisch (Haykazean), Arsacid, and Sassanid. Although all three periods are closely related to Iranian languages, unlike F.Bopp, F.Müller and many other linguists of the XIX century who regarded Armenian as simply a branch of Iranian languages, P. de Lagarde concludes that Armenian stands between Iranian and some other Indo-European languages. The main achievement of P. de Lagarde’s Armenological studies was the compilation of the first Armenian etymological dictionary.

STUDIES

Vergleichung der Armenischen Consonanten mit denen des Sanskrit, ZDMG 4, 1850, 347-369.

Zur Urgeschichte der Armenier, Berlin, 1854.

Armenische Studien, Göttingen, 1877.