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HISTORICAL BIBLIOGRAPHY OF UPANIṣADs IN TRANSLATION

Karl Potter’s *Bibliography of Indian Philosophies* opens with the first appearance of non-anonymous writers, around the beginning of the Christian Era. Potter elucidates this as follows: ‘Classics such as the Upanishads, the Pali and Jain canons, the Prajñāpāramitā literature etc., are not listed since though they contain philosophical material they are not sustainedly polemical and not systematically philosophical throughout’. The Buddhist literature that he mentions has been covered elsewhere ([Shinsho Hanayama, Bibliography on Buddhism](#)), but regarding the Upaniṣads I don’t know any exhaustive bibliographical survey. Maybe the Upaniṣads are ‘not systematically philosophical throughout’, but I consider them (that is, the pre-Buddhist ones) to be the root of all philosophical thought in India. They contain a storehouse of philosophy in its true sense.

In this respect it is interesting to bring up the question to which degree the later Indian philosophy is ‘philosophy’ in the sense Potter describes. In a remark about Śaṅkara Daniel Ingalls writes: ‘He [Śaṅkara] concentrates on what he considers the heart of the matter, the teaching that is necessary for *mokṣa* [. . .]. His followers, while deeply attracted by this attitude, were forced to construct a metaphysical system that is in all respects logically coherent’. On this Jonathan Bader comments: ‘This is not to say that metaphysics were unimportant for Śaṅkara. It is simply that he did not see the development of a metaphysical system as an end in itself. The point is that liberation (*mokṣa*) is at the very apex of Śaṅkara’s metaphysical thought. He maintains that release from the rounds of transmigration is the direct result of the intuitive knowledge (*anubhava*) of Brahman. This ultimate reality is expressed in the mahāvākyā “Thou art that,” indicating the essential unity of the Self with Brahman. Where Śaṅkara’s emphasis on liberation is regarded primarily as a religious concern, it is not surprising to find that the subject is overlooked in favour of his discussion of more concrete philosophical issues’. This emphasis on liberation has, in my

opinion, been the quintessence of Indian philosophy from its very beginning, so in this sense there is no fundamental difference between teachers like Yājñavalkya, Śaṅkara or Vidyāraṇya.

It is from the feeling of a lacuna in the possibility of surveying the publication-history of the Upaniṣads in Western languages, that I started the bibliography that is offered here. It is a bibliography of translations. I agree with R.D. Ranade, where he writes: ‘The most important work that has been hitherto done on the Upaniṣads is the work on Translation’. Where the work on editions is mainly for scholarly purposes, it is through translations that the general reader in the West is able to get acquainted with the philosophy of the Upaniṣads.

Besides one translation in Latin the languages of the translations listed here are limited to English, French, German and Dutch. There are a few Italian and Swedish translations known to me, and a Danish two-volume collection by Poul Tuxen, but to include them here felt too arbitrary at this moment. I hope some other researcher will give supplemental material on this, so that this bibliography may become an exhaustive survey on Western Upaniṣad-translations.

The choice for a historical approach has been made out of a need for some insight into the development of the philosophical and linguistic aspects of the translations. Well over two centuries this work has been adding to our knowledge of the core of Indian philosophy (and possibly to our knowledge of the core of our being), and this historical review might be seen as a tribute to all the people that contributed to this knowledge. In this way it is something like a ‘History of the Upaniṣads in the West’. For reasons of availability an alphabetical Index has been added.

The mentioning of the names of the major Upaniṣads, often designated as the ‘Principal’ Upaniṣads, would become too repetitious in a list like this, so, from a certain moment (1884, the year of the publication of the second volume of Max Müller’s translation), the names of eleven of these Upaniṣads are abbreviated, at least in numerations. Abbreviations are listed below. The title ‘The Ten Principal Upaniṣads’ means the eleven ones mentioned here, minus the Śvetāśvatara. In ‘The Thirteen Principal Upaniṣads’ Kauśītaki and Maitri are added.