Jürg Schneider, *Vom Gebrauch der Philologie: Der Luzerner Sprachforscher Renward Brandstetter (1860–1942)*. Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag, 2019, xiv + 162 pp. ISBN: 9783447112482, price: EUR 34.00 (paperback).

Building on the pioneering works of Jan L.A. Brandes and Hendrik Kern, Renward Brandstetter laid the foundations of Austronesian linguistics and philology with almost 50 monographs during the transition to the twentieth century, and Otto Dempwolff followed in his footsteps. The author of the presently reviewed book, Jürg Schneider, organized a conference in Lucerne in 2010, dedicated to Brandstetter's 150th birthday (Adelaar 2013). A Swiss anthropologist who did his PhD on the subject of rice agriculture in Southwest Sumatra (Schneider 1995), Schneider worked as coordinator of Swiss development cooperation with Indonesia. He is thus uniquely qualified to describe how life, the world, and particularly Indonesia must have appeared in Brandstetter's perspective.

His book is much more than a detailed professional and personal biography of Renward Brandstetter. Brandstetter's views were formed not only by nineteenth century philology (including linguistics) and its orientalist applications (pp. 1–7), but also by socio-political incidents and developments in Switzerland and in Europe in general (pp. 35–38). Nonetheless, the author is not a linguist, and Brandstetter's comparative studies and historical phonological reconstructions are not illustrated in this book by citations of relevant data—with few exceptions, e.g. the root *pit* and the word base *sempit* (p. 83).

The actual recount begins with Brandstetter's childhood and youth in Münster (presently Bero-Münster) in the Canton of Lucerne, moving at age seven to Malters further south in the same Canton. It notes his interest in the genealogy of the Brandstetters, and their engagement for research and knowledge. It was a period when Switzerland experienced strong political and religious conflicts that did not pass unnoticed by young Brandstetter. Then at age 19 he begins to study philology in Basel, completing his doctor's thesis in 1883 (pp. 19–30). He would also acquaint himself with contemporaneous and historical wordlists from German-Swiss dialectal and standard speech forms (pp. 39–49).

The author notes a turning point in Brandstetter's work after meeting the Dutch 'indology' expert Georg Karel Niemann in Lucern, resulting in a lasting fascination for languages and cultures of Indonesia (pp. 51–53). Besides learning several of the languages, he deepens into the beginnings of faith, particularly animism (pp. 54–56), specializing as a regular 'orientalist' studying cultures beyond Sri Lanka (*Taprobana*) and publishing translations of Malay, Buginese, and Makassarese literature by the end of his 'formative' years around 1900 (pp. 56–69).

BIJDRAGEN TOT DE TAAL-, LAND- EN VOLKENKUNDE

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Then came Brandstetter's main works on the comparative linguistics of Malayo-Polynesian which he names 'Indonesian' (*Indonesisch*), particularly in isolating historical roots of basic words (pp. 71–79). After calling attention to Ferdinand de Saussure's doubts about objectivity of linguistic terms, and to Robert Blust's theory about Austronesian roots (pp. 79–83), the author notes how Brandstetter distinguished between an empirical 'Common Indonesian' (*Gemeinindonesisch*) and hypothetical 'Proto-Indonesian' (*Urindonesisch*), which Dempwolff (1934) then replaced by a single protolanguage reconstruction (pp. 83–85). It might be added here that this already happened earlier (Dempwolff 1923: 250), inspired by the 'as if' (*als ob*) philosophy of Vaihinger (1911).

Brandstetter seems to have severely suffered psychologically from what he considered to be the collapse of European culture in World War I. Parallel to Indonesian studies, his attention turned to the basics, whether concretely with the decrease of millet cultivation in his Lucerne homeland, or abstractly with issues such as honor, peace, faithfulness, and truth in previous military conflicts in that region (pp. 87, 89–90). This then led to his defense of the equality of all peoples as the basis for a new series of works titled 'We the people of the Indonesian earth' designed to prove their intellectual maturity (pp. 92–95). Unfortunately, old age seems to have prevented him from completing that series as planned with a Malayo-Polynesian comparative dictionary, despite the possible support of Christiaan Snouck Hurgronje (pp. 95–99).

Meanwhile, the author also notes Brandstetter's continued interest in dialects and languages of his own country, such as for example Rhaeto-Romance, as also his contacts with orientalist linguists and anthropologists, including the Sarasin cousins who had done research about the Veddas in Sri Lanka, and the Toálas and other peoples of Sulawesi (pp. 99–102), and other elderly colleagues (pp. 103–112). The author takes special note of the non-Europeans amongst them, such as José Rizal, a native speaker of Tagalog, famous for his novel *Noli me tangere* (pp. 113–121). Although it was originally published in Spanish (Rizal 1886), a Tagalog edition soon followed (Rizal 1899). The author also notes the Philippine doctoral student in Hamburg, Cecilio Lopez, who became Brandstetter's (and Otto Dempwolff's) informant for Tagalog (p. 111).

The book ends in a generous epilogue with further insights into the developments in Malayo-Polynesian linguistic studies (pp. 126–143). Brandstetter's bibliography is also very useful for researchers (pp. 152–155).

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