On January 8, 1967, the world lost Walter Bruno Henning, who died at the age of 58 in Berkeley, California, from complications resulting from an accident which had occurred two weeks earlier. As one who had the fortune and privilege of being among his pupils, I cannot escape the conviction that no biography or eulogy can amply express the magnitude of Professor Henning's genius, or the enormity of the loss to scholarship his death entails. It is with this qualification that the following brief account of his life and works is offered.

Walter Henning started his academic career in mathematics, but through an interest in the history of this subject and geography in the Near East, he soon made Iranian and Arabic his major fields of study, working under the illustrious F. C. Andreas at the University of Göttingen (it may be noted that Prof. Henning never completely put aside his earlier interests; among his books one finds current tomes on problems of advanced mathematics). After some time as Assistant to the Concordance of Islamic Tradition at Leiden, he obtained his PhD. summa cum laude from Göttingen in 1931, his dissertation bringing an award from the Faculty of Philosophy.

He was then appointed Editor of Manichean manuscripts for the Prussian Academy at Berlin, a position he held until 1936. During these years the young scholar produced the following books, today indispensable for the study of Manicheism and Iranian historical linguistics: Das Verbum des Mittelpersischen der Turfanfragmente (1933) (his doctoral thesis); Mitteliranische Manichaica aus Chinesisch-Turkestan, I-III (1932-1934) which he edited posthumously from the notes of Andreas; Ein manichäisches Bet- und Beichtbuch (1937), as well as seven articles dealing with the Manichees, and Sogdian (and Arabic) philology. Not only was this period the beginning of his lifelong work on Middle Persian, Parthian, and Sogdian, but it also saw the pioneering study of Khwarezmian
(ZDMG, xc, 1936, pp. 30-34); I shall have more to say later on his unraveling of this language.

In 1936 he left Germany; he would make no compromise with the Nazi régime. Upon arriving in England he became Parsee Community’s Lecturer in Iranian Studies at the School of Oriental Studies, University of London. In 1937 he married Maria Polotsky (sister of the eminent Coptologist and Aramaist Hans Jakob Polotsky); in the next year their child Anne was born. In 1940 Sogdica was published, with its annotated edition of Sogdian-Parthian-Middle Persian glossaries, Sogdian translations of Kuchean, the Manichean Sogdian Confessional, etc.

In 1946 he taught Sanskrit and Iranian as Visiting Professor at Columbia, and two years later was made Professor of Central Asian Studies at the School of Oriental and African Studies, London. During 1949 he was Ratanbai Katrak Lecturer at Oxford, and his lectures were published two years later as that lively little book, Zoroaster — Politician or Witch-Doctor? Here he not only criticizes, with his usual brilliant wit, two mutually opposed interpretations of Zoroaster, whom he champions as a great religious thinker, but brings fresh reasoning to the dating of Zoroaster (and introduces new materials for the dates of Mani), and, in search of the homeland of Zoroaster, re-examines the Avesta both for its geographical references and its linguistic position, demonstrating its affinities with Khwarezmian; the book ends with the publication of a previously neglected Middle Persian text giving details on Zervanism otherwise known only from Christian apologists.

In 1950 he accepted an invitation from the Imperial Government of Iran to visit that country; among the many results of his journey, we may mention two books, The Inscription of Sar Maşhad and The Inscription of Naqş-i Rustam (= Corp. Inscr. Iran., iii/ii, portf. i, 1955 and ii, 1957 resp.). He also deciphered the inscription of Tang-i Sarvak on the basis of his knowledge of numismatics (one of his hobbies), showing it to be Aramaic (Asia Major, ii/2, 1952); he had already distinguished himself in the comprehension of the intricacies of Aramaic epigraphy and dialectology by his proof that Asoka’s inscription at Lampāka is not in Iranian, but Aramaic (BSOAS, 1949, xiii/l, an article important for Middle Indic studies as well). Another inscription receiving his attention during his Iranian sojourn was that of Firūzābad, which proved to be erected not by Abursām, as thought by distinguished archeologists, but by Mihr-Narsēh; the resulting date — 5th century — making the inscription unique (Asia Major, iv/l, 1954). A sidelight to the trip was a visit to the village of Tākistān (approx. 25 miles SW of Qazvin), where a two and a half hour...