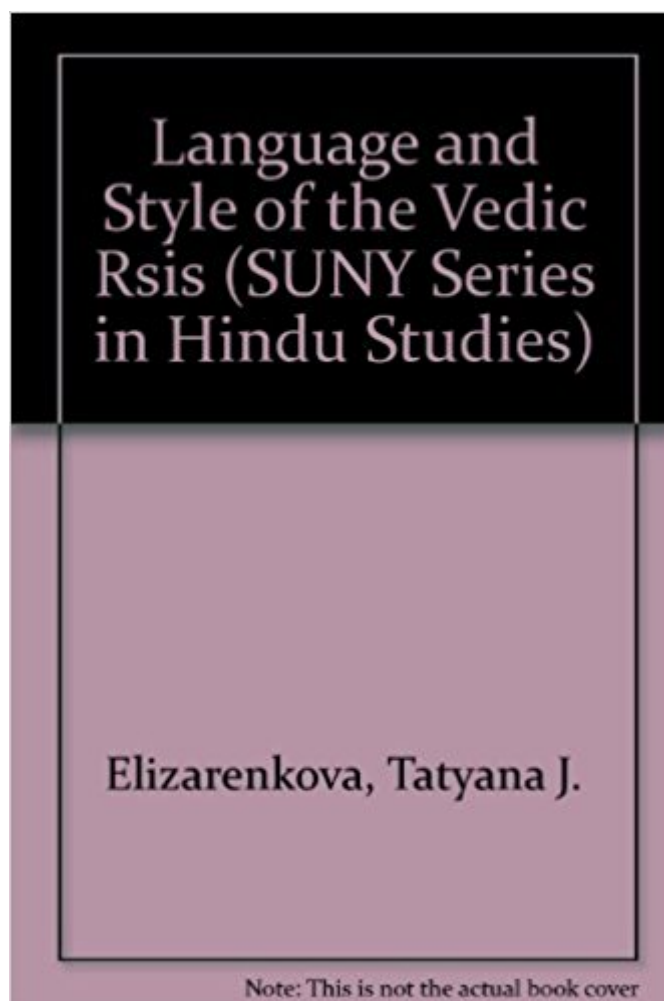


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Language And Style Of The Vedic Rsis (S U N Y Series In Hindu Studies)



Synopsis

"This is an extraordinary book, which could have been written by no one but Tatyana Elizarenkova. It is extraordinary because it combines two disciplines that no one else would dream of combining, or be able to combine: the modern, trendy, obscure discipline of semiotics, and the ancient, dusty, arcane discipline of Vedic philology. It is even more extraordinary because it combines them in such a way that they become mutually illuminating, that the obscurity of the one is not compounded by the arcanity of the other but, on the contrary, clarified by it." -- From the Foreword by Wendy Doniger Elizarenkova, perhaps the greatest living scholar of the Rand certainly its greatest linguist, explains here the relationships between a very complicated grammatical system and the peculiarities of style of the archaic religious poetry. The laudatory hymn is treated as an act of verbal communication between the poet Rand the deity, with the hymn itself transmitting certain information from man to god. From this viewpoint, the hymn is used as a means to maintain a circular exchange of gifts between the Rand their gods. Many peculiarities of the functioning of the grammatical system of the Rare interpreted in connection with the model of the universe of the Vedic Aryan. For example, the concept of time as a circular process bears closely on the use of the verbal grammatical categories of tense and mood; the personification of some abstract forces can explain some irregularities in the functioning of the nominal category of gender; and the idea of magical power attributed to the Sacred Speech in general, and to the name of a god in particular, underlies the magical grammar of this religious poetry. --This text refers to the Paperback edition.

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Customer Reviews

The Rig Veda is written in the oldest Old Indian language, and what's more it is a unique even if quite extensive document, hence with nothing else from the same period to compare it with. Ms Elizarenkova refused - and she is 200% right - to retrospectively project what we may know about this language from some less old Old Indian documents to assess this unrivalled language of the Rig Veda. Consequently she has to study this language from inside. Her method is then very simple. She will not build a grammar of the language of the time when the Rig Veda was composed, but rather a stylistic study of the syntax of the particular language of the Rig Veda. First we have to understand the context in which this language was produced. She studies the Rsi, the poet-incantator-priest of those distant days, the way he worked and his social position, a hereditary quasi-divine position. Then she can enter the language itself since she understands the discursive situation that produced it. And she does it logically: vocabulary, metrics and phonetics, morphology and syntax. Every detail, every remark is deeply embedded in and enriched with the heritage collected from all the linguists who studied this language before her. That enables her to show the real position that is hers and to support it with heavy arguments contrasting it with those of her predecessors. I was very fascinated by her study of theonyms, and that of metrics in general based on the use of the repetition of some names or words, or some paradigms of names or words, to build a highly expressive oral language that can be used as an incantation in some religious ritual.

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