



BARBIER DE MEYNARD, CHARLES ADRIEN CASIMIR

BARBIER DE MEYNARD, CHARLES ADRIEN CASIMIR, French orientalist (1826-1908). He was born at sea on a voyage from Istanbul to Marseilles on 8 February 1826. His maternal grandfather was a doctor practicing medicine at Istanbul, and his mother came from Therapia (Tarabya); about the rest of his family nothing is known. After winning a scholarship to pursue his secondary education at the Collège Royal de Louis le Grand in Paris, he took the college's training course in Arabic, Turkish, and Persian for "jeunes de langues," i.e., prospective dragomans.

In 1850 he was appointed dragoman and head of the chancellery at Jerusalem, but in the following year he was forced by ill health to return to France. He did not remain idle, however, but soon began to write articles for the *Journal Asiatique*, the organ of the Société Asiatique, of which he became a member in 1850 (and was ultimately elected chairman, in succession to Ernest Renan after the latter's death in 1892). This journal published his first important article, "Tableau littéraire du Khorassan et de la Transoxiane au IV^e. siècle de l'hègire," in 1853 (pp. 169-239) and 1854 (pp. 291-361), and his last research report, "Surnoms et sobriquets dans la littérature arabe," in 1907 (9, pp. 173-244, 365-428; 10, pp. 55-118, 192-273); he is said to have corrected the proofs of this report on his deathbed.

In 1854 Barbier de Meynard was attached to the French mission in Iran, the



secretary of which was Count de Gobineau. He resided in Tehran for a year or so, and took the opportunity to amplify the knowledge of Persian literature and history which he had acquired in Paris. Among other things, he embarked on the preparation of *Dictionnaire géographique, historique, et littéraire de la Perse et des contrées adjacentes, extrait de Mo'jem el-Bouldân de Yaqout*, which he brought out in 1861. This was also the year in which he and his collaborator Pavet de Courteille began to publish the work for which he is most widely remembered, the nine volumes of the text, translation, and index of Mas'ûdî's *Morūj al-dahab* (*Les prairies d'or*; Paris, 1861-77). Between 1856 and 1863, he studied with Jules Mohl, the Persian scholar engaged in the monumental task of editing and translating Ferdowsî's *Šāh-nāma*. He was greatly influenced by this master. After Mohl's death in 1876, Barbier de Meynard prepared his handwritten material for publication.

Barbier de Meynard's Persian studies did not prevent him from finding time for a sojourn in Istanbul prior to his appointment as professor of Turkish at the Ecole des Langues Orientales in 1863. He held this post for the rest of his life, combining it with the professorship of Persian at the Collège de France, to which he was appointed in succession to Mohl. In 1878, he was elected member of the Académie des Inscriptions et Belles-Lettres, at whose request he took part in the compilation of several volumes of *Recueil des Historiens des Croisades, Historiens Orientaux*, namely, volumes II, III, and IV, the last of which, published in 1896, contains the history of the reigns of Nūr-al-Dīn and Šalāḥ-al-Dīn from *al-Rawżatayn fī akbār al-dawlatayn* of Abū Šāma. Part of his time was spent in compiling and seeing through the press the two volumes of his *Dictionnaire turc-français*, which came out in 1881 and 1886 and which may be considered his most important scientific work. In 1885 the Collège de France transferred him, at his own request, to the chair of Arabic left vacant by the death of Stanislas Guyard. In addition he became the administrator of the Ecole des Langues Orientales in 1898.

After 1903 declining health compelled him to give up part of his teaching; but he continued to receive students in his room during his terminal illness. He died in Paris on the night of 30-31 March 1908.

The published works of Barbier de Meynard are relatively numerous; in the obituary written by P. Girard, thirty-six are listed. Several remain valuable and are still consulted, particularly his editions and translations of texts, though the *Morūj* requires some emendation to take account of 20th-century advances in Arabic studies. Although most of his works are in the Arabic field,



the above-mentioned *Tableau littéraire du Khorassan* and *Dictionnaire géographique* attest the excellence of his Persian scholarship. He also published the first French translation of Sa'di's *Būstān* in 1877 and contributed several articles on Iran to *Journal Asiatique*.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Paul Girard, "Notice sur la vie et les travaux de Barbier de Meynard," in *Comptes rendus des séances de l'Académie des Inscriptions et Belles-Lettres*, Paris, 1909.

(Ch. Pellat)