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GEOGRAPHY I. EVOLUTION OF GEOGRAPHICAL KNOWLEDGE

GEOGRAPHY of Persia and Afghanistan.

i. EVOLUTION OF GEOGRAPHICAL KNOWLEDGE

The concept of Iran and ancient Iranian geography (Justi; Spiegel, I, pp. 188-243 and especially pp. 210-12; Herzfeld, pp. 671-720; Gnoli, 1980, 1989). The concept of Iran was an ethnic one to start with. It was "the land of the Aryans" (derived from the adjective *aryāna*, "belonging to the Aryans," "the land of the Aryans," which became *ērān* in Middle Persian and *īrān* in modern Persian (Lommel, p. 33). The term was preserved by the Iranian tribes and certainly existed in this sense during the 3rd millennium B.C.E. in western Siberia, in the cultural region of Andronovo where the Iranian tribes came from (Sergent, p. 175). After the migration of the Iranian tribes, their arrival on the present Iranian plateau, and the birth of the Median and Persian empires, the term acquired a more precise geographical meaning: It appeared in the Achaemenid inscriptions as the name for the entire territory of the empire, with its provinces already enumerated in detail (as in Greek authors such as Ptolemy or Armenian ones such as the pseudo-Moses of Khorene; cf. Markwart, 1901), and was passed on to the Muslim geographers writing in Arabic in the form of *Ērānšahr* (see ĒRĀN, ĒRĀNŠAHR); while legendary tradition identified it with the name of a man, the eponymous king (Yāqūt, tr. Barbier de Meynard, pp. 64-65). At the same time, it remained incorporated in

the artificial name of the mythical country of origin of the Aryans: Ērān-wēz (q.v.) < OIr. **aryānān waiǰah*, Av. *airyanəm vaējō* (probably X̱ᵛārazm, or rather the lower Oxus), as opposed to Anērān or Tūrān, the country of Iran's adversaries. But in the geographically more or less stabilized empire of the Achaemenids and their successors, the concept was to acquire a more specific geopolitical connotation: It expressed the existence of a major political entity which asserted itself as opposed to its neighbors and which its inhabitants, following a common tendency of all great nuclei of civilization, were to consider as the center of the world. The empire was thus divided into seven (originally three) parts, *kešvar* < Av. *karšvar* "surrounded by a furrow," with Iran as the central element, and each part depending on a planet. The lists of these seven parts were transmitted by later authors and differ somewhat from one another, thus expressing a progressive awareness of the singularity of the countries surrounding Iran and the complexity of the map of the world. One list enumerates the seven parts as Hindustan (assigned to Saturn), China and Khotan (Jupiter), Turkestan (Mars), ʿErāq (Iran) and Khorasan (the central part attached to the Sun), Transoxiana (Venus), Greece/Rūm (Mercury), and the hyperborean regions (the Moon). Another list mentions Arabistan, Africa, Rome, the Turkish countries, China, and India as surrounding Iran, and it is still quoted by Mostawfī (*Nozhat al-qolūb*, ed. and tr. Le Strange, II, p. 20), with Syria included within Africa. However these variations may be, the basic fact remains that Iran, in its ancient scientific tradition, forms a distinct object of geographical knowledge.

Iran in classical Muslim geography. The Arab conquest and Islamization were to eliminate this concept for several centuries, at least in scientific literature. The Moslem geographers followed the Greek tradition of dividing the world into *eqlīm*s, i.e. climes (q.v.), essentially arranged according to the latitudes, among which Iran, which was by then split up, lost all its individuality. This transformation was not immediate, however. Traces of the old Iranian conception of the organization of the world were left here and there for some time. Thus an author such as ʿAlī b. Moḥammad b. ʿAbd-Allāh Madāʾenī (b. 135/752) still knew (as recorded in Ebn al-Faqīh, p. 161) ʿErāq (the Arabic term for Iran) as a particular entity of considerable dimensions, extending from Hit on the Euphrates to China and India, and comprising Ray, Khorasan, Deylam, Gīlān, the Jebāl, and Isfahan. For Masʿūdī, who wrote his *Morūj al-ḏahab* in 943-56 C.E., the seven climes still had a geographical connotation similar to that of the *kešvar*s. The first clime, assigned to the planet Jupiter, still largely corresponded to Iran (with the exception of Deylam, which belonged to the

land of the Turks), including the country of Babylon (Bābel, Mesopotamia), with Khorasan, Fārs, Susiana (Ahvāz), Mosul, and Media (Arż al-jebāl; Masʿūdī, *Morūj*, ed. Pellat, I, p. 100). Echoes of this conception are still to be found in the 11th century works of Abū ʿObayd Bakrī. But almost none of the authors of the classical period (up to and including the 11th century) knew any more than the smaller administrative and provincial divisions, the mere fragments of a Muslim *mamlaka* which formed the only interesting geographical concept of their days (Miquel, *passim*). ʿErāq (=Īrān) as such was reduced to Mesopotamia, the seat of the caliphate, and was strictly distinguished from ʿErāq al-ʿAjam ("of the foreigners"), a term which only included the heart of the Iranian plateau (often called the Jebāl"the mountainous region"), excluding both the warm regions of the south and Khorasan (see these provincial enumerations in Schwarz, *Iran* and Le Strange, *Lands*). The term *Īrān* then only subsisted in the component *Īrānšahr*, an official and honorary name attributed to Nīšapūr, for example by Moqaddasī (Le Strange, *Lands*, p. 383). The new Persian geography faithfully followed these conceptions. Thus the term Iran does not appear in the *Hodūd al-ʿālam* written in 982-83 (cf. Miquel, I, p. 398).

The geographical revival of Iran: travelers and inventories. It was not until the collapse of the caliphate and the resurgence, together with the Turco-Mongol invasions, of major political centers on the Iranian plateau, that there gradually emerged—and that under unknown conditions—a concept of the geographical division which had probably never been blotted out from the popular mind but had left behind no written trace during the pre-Mongol period.

With Mostawfī, who was employed by the Mongol administration and wrote in 1340, Iran again clearly became an individualized object of geographical knowledge, even if it was confused with the Il-khanid domain, which extended beyond the Iranian world properly speaking, reaching the very heart of Anatolia, at Nīksār (*Nozhat al-qolūb,* ed. and tr. Le Strange, II, p. 23 ff.).

At about the same period, the Arab geographer Šams-al-Dīn Demašqī, who wrote between 1323 and 1327, still ignored the existence of Iran as a particular entity, and divided it into three parts. After Mostawfī, descriptions about the country regularly succeeded one another, strictly observing the political limits of the Safavid states, followed by those of the Qajars, both in western and eastern geography.

In Europe, geographical accounts were essentially based on the itineraries of

travelers (an exhaustive inventory clearly showing the stages of exploration and knowledge is provided in Alfons Gabriel's *Die Erforschung Persiens*, Vienna, 1952), sometimes assuming the form of overall descriptions of the country (Raphaël du Mans, Chardin). As early as the 17th century, these data had yielded an initial systematic summary, well-informed even if second-hand, produced by the Elzevir press in Holland (Laet, 1633). This kind of encyclopedic work covering all aspects of a country, above all geographic, but also historical, ethnographic, institutional and political, was to be continued regularly during the 19th century. It was provided by authors who had spent a long time in the country (Polak, Benjamin), or paid it a prolonged visit (Curzon, *Persian Question*).

But at the same time, Iran found its place in all the "universal geographies" published in the West, among them the monumental work of Carl Ritter (1838-40) and that of Elisée Reclus (1884, pp. 139-316); meanwhile, an attempt at a detailed inventory, though as yet strictly enumerative, appeared in the *Gazetteer* produced by the British Information Service of India, based on the reports of their agents (Simla, 1914). At the same time, the consular representatives of Great Britain wrote more and more detailed accounts of the kind about certain provinces (Rabino, 1917, 1928). This tradition lasted until the end of the Second World War in the *Handbooks of Naval Intelligence*, the last of which (Mason, 1945) produced an overall geographic description of the country from a modern scientific viewpoint, though still accompanied by a purely historical chapter. On the other hand, overall geographical accounts were, until very recently, combined with works of an encyclopedic nature about the country (Massé et al. ; Gehrke and Mehner; etc.).

In Iran, traditional geographical science developed within the same perspective (Ganjī), from the mid 19th century, when geography lessons were introduced in the 1850s at the Dār al-fonūn (q.v.). The aim was to achieve administrative documentation and political efficiency under the leadership of European, and especially Austrian, teachers. The voluminous inventories of Masʿūd Kayhān (*Jogrāfīā*) in 1310-11 Š./1931-32 and Ḥosayn-ʿAlī Razmārā (*Farhang*), in 1328-32 Š./1949-53 are recent examples of this tradition of compiling and enumerating.

Contemporary analytical geography in Persia. The step towards a more advanced scholarly stage, that of scientific and analytical geography on the basis of a deeper knowledge of the physical milieu, of relations between man and nature, and correlation between various categories of phenomena,

appeared for the first time in Persia during the interwar years and was based on current Western scientific methods and theories. Prior to that, in the late 19th and early 20th century, scientific research and observation in Persia still essentially took place for political or pragmatic reasons, mainly on the occasion of frontier delimitations (Goldsmid) or missions combining geological and archaeological research (de Morgan). This already very substantial kind of research considerably improved knowledge within well defined geographic frameworks (eastern Persia, Goldsmid; northern and northwestern Persia, de Morgan), but the volumes bearing the title “Geography” (Goldsmid, I) or “Études Géo graphiques” (de Morgan, I, 1894) are still mainly concerned with exploration. The results obtained by Sven Hedin in 1905-6 in his great crossing of central and south- eastern Persia were still presented in the form of travelogues and commentaries regarding itineraries, maps, and panoramas (1910 and 1918-27).

It was not until 1934 that a new phase actually began with the works of the Austrian geographer Hans Bobek, who went beyond the stage of mere itineraries and systematically tackled the great problems of physical geography (especially glacial morphology, the evolution of landscapes in the Quaternary, and regional bio-climatic classification, in which his contribution was crucial; a chronological list of his publications in Ehlers, 1980, pp. 521-22). This led him to start research on human geography. After World War II, when Bobek was continuing his work and presented a first and valuable synthesis of the cultural geography of the country (1962), German geographers (Scharlau, 1958 onwards; cf. Ehlers, 1980, p. 558), French geographers (Planhol, 1958 onwards; see Ehlers, 1980, p. 553; Dresch, 1959 onwards, partly with Derruau and Péguy; Ehlers, 1980, p. 528), Italian (Castiglioni, 1960), and British scholars (Clarke, 1963, 1969), in their turn undertook advanced research in Persia. Their work proceeded actively, with scholars of all origins, during the next quarter of the century. There subsequently appeared, together with numerous detailed works, important regional or urban monographs (Planhol, 1964; English, 1966; Kopp, 1973; Bazin, 1973, 1980; Bonine, 1975; Seger, 1978; etc.). After several partial contributions of this type (1971, 1975, etc.), Ehlers produced an exemplary synthesis about the country (1980), with a well-nigh exhaustive bibliography of 53 pages, which for the first time met the needs of modern scientific geography. Meanwhile, the collaborative volume edited by W. B. Fisher et al. in 1968 (*Camb. Hist. Iran* I) in 1968 was somewhat hastily organized and uneven in content.

The 1979 revolution put an end to Western research in the country for a long time. There has recently, however, been a revival manifested in the cooperation of French and Persian social scientists in producing the country's first thematic atlas (Hourcade et al., 1998). Throughout this period, the *Tübinger Atlas des Vorderen Orients* (Tübingen, from 1977-) continued publishing numerous analytical maps that are fundamental for the geography of Persia, while a brief synthesis of cultural and political geography also appeared (Planhol, 1993, pp. 479-591).

From the mid-20th century, a modern and purely Persian geographical school was also founded (Ganjī), marked by the establishment, in 1956-58 at the University of Tehran, of a Center for Research on Arid Zones, under the impetus of Bobek and other European scholars who were working in Persia at the time. This center was soon transformed into an Institute of Geography, the first in the country. In 1973, the first Congress of Iranian Geographers was held in Tehran. Young scholars who had studied at European universities presented valuable works as their theses (Sahami, 1965; Momeni, 1976; Pour-Fickoui, 1978; Papoli-Yazdi, 1991). After several abortive attempts, a geographical review of academic and scientific value, *Taḥqīqāt-e jogrāfīāʾī*, edited by M.-Ḥ. Pāpolī Yazdī, began to appear regularly in Mašhad from 1985 onwards. At the same time, a major cartographic work, the *Aṭlās-e mellī-e Īrān*, was begun by the Sāzmān-e naqša-bardārī-e kešvar (Tehran, 1369 Š./1990-), and numerous school and university manuals inspired by modern geography and often directly adapted from western publications became widespread among the intellectual classes of the country.

Development of geographical knowledge about Afghanistan. Afghanistan did not appear as a particular geographical entity within the Iranian world until the emergence of Afghan tribes on the international political scene in the 18th century. Even this development long remained tentative, especially due to the extension of Afghan power towards the Indus basin until the early 19th century. The first general description provided by Mountstuart Elphinstone (q.v.; 1815, 1838) only dealt with "the kingdom of Caubul" with "its Dependencies in Persia, Tartary and India," although the title did include "a view of the Afghan nation." Carl Ritter, in his monumental work, was not yet aware of the unity of Afghanistan, at a time when Herat was still a bone of contention between Persia and Afghanistan. The country was thus split in two, the eastern part ("the mountainous system of the Hindu Kush, Kabulistan and Kafiristan") being included in volume VII (pp. 196-320) dealing with "the

transition of eastern Asia with western Asia," while the entire western part of the country, including Qandahār, was incorporated within the Iranian world (vol. VIII, 1838-40). The first Anglo-Afghan war in 1839-42 made Western scholars aware of the individuality of the country. In 1842, there thus appeared in Paris the first description of the country, with the subtitle "theater of war," bearing the author's name (Perrin), a work which was in essence merely a slightly updated translation of Elphinstone's book. In fact, the concept still took a long time to establish itself in terminology. It eventually did during the second Anglo-Afghan war (1878-80) and the Russian advance into lower Central Asia, making this country a major issue of world politics. Within this perspective of "military geography" there thus appeared an overall description in which Afghanistan was associated with the Turkmenian countries (Roskoschny, 1885). But at the same time, Afghanistan was treated as an entirely separate entity in the universal geography of Elisée Reclus (pp. 25-107), and never ceased being so in similar publications.

Geographical knowledge, however, long remained unreliable. The arrival of travelers, which was rare until 1880, completely ceased from that date on, when the country had become a jealously guarded buffer state closed to foreign missions for almost forty years. The only substantial contribution at this period was provided for the northern regions on the occasion of delimitation works on the Russo-Afghan border (A. C.Yate; C. E. Yate) in 1887, and for the heart of the country and the Kabul region as a result of the presence of a German military mission in this city during the First World War (Niedermayer, 1924). During this time, substantial documentation on Afghan population and their activities was collected by British intelligence agents of mainly Indian origin, and successively compiled in the gazetteers published in India (the first by C. M. MacGregor in 1871, the last in 1914, reprinted with additions in Adamec, *Gazetteer of Afghanistan*), but these extremely valuable volumes were restricted to British official use.

A new phase began when Amān-Allāh Khan (q.v.) opened up the country to foreigners soon after World War I. Already in 1928, a German traveler, Emil Trinkler, was able to make up his own itineraries from the existing literature, one of the first attempts to produce a specifically geographical sketch of the country as an independent monograph (and providing an exhaustive bibliography on earlier travelers; Trinkler, pp. 77-79). Up to the middle of the century, however, purely geographical works were very rare, and the ambitious summary provided by Johannes Humlum (1959) following the

Danish expedition of 1953-55, which was very enumerative, seemed too premature, although it contained photographic illustrations of great value. For a long time, works of an encyclopedic nature, in which the geographic part was very brief, were the only way of presenting the country to western readers (Dollot, 1937; Caspani and Cagnacci, 1951; Hilber, 1956; Kraus, 1972; Dupree, 1973). A thorough study of Afghan tribes began in the 1950s in ethnological works of great geographical scope (see bibliography for GEOGRAPHY iii, in particular the works of Ferdinand and Schurmann), but the first thorough geographical monograph, devoted to Kabul and its region (Hahn), did not appear until 1964-65. Subsequently, during the two decades 1960-80, geographical works were actively pursued, above all by Erwin Grötzbach who, after an initial detailed regional monograph (1972, about the northern slope of the Hindu Kush), wrote an important overall text on the cities (1979), and finally the first great summary of scientific geography about the country, with an exhaustive bibliography (1990). He thus furnished a full account of all that was known before his research was interrupted in 1980, to be completed soon afterwards by a survey of political geography (Planhol, 1993, pp. 593-678). In Afghanistan itself, geography had not yet reached a properly scientific and analytical stage and was still strictly reduced to enumerative inventories for administrative purposes (Kūškakī from 1925 for the north-eastern provinces, following a survey made by Moḥammad-Nāder Khan, the then minister of war and future sovereign of the country; Anjoman-e Āryānā, for Afghanistan in general).

Tajikistan. The development of geographic knowledge about the northern Tajik countries has been an inseparable part of the progress made by the Russian exploration of Central Asia (Fedchina, 1961; Azat'yan and Dontsova, 1961), for which they have never really been acknowledged until very recently. The Iranian populations of the area under Russian influence have only formed the object of somewhat hasty ethnological and anthropological studies (Ujfalvy, 1896, Part I, pp. 89-234). Long after the creation of the republic of Tajikistan (see geography iv), no attempt at a particular geographic description has been made, and its study within Soviet research was included in general works about Central Asia (Murzaev, 1958; 1961). An individual approach with the practical aim of regional development was the atlas of I. K. Narzikulov and K. V. Stankuyovich, published in 1968. The first works begun after the demise of the Soviet Union were exclusively placed within a perspective of political geography, confronting purely geographical data with the political cleavages they engendered within the framework of a very

artificial territorial division (Dudoignon, 1994; Dudoignon and Rubin, 1993-94; Jahangiri, 1994.)

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