



GREAT BRITAIN IX. IRANIAN STUDIES IN BRITAIN, THE ISLAMIC PERIOD

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ix. IRANIAN STUDIES IN BRITAIN: ISLAMIC PERIOD

British interest in, and scholarship on, Persia and Persian culture in the Islamic period goes back to the first formal contacts between the two countries, that is, at least to the 16th century and the growth of Britain's involvement in the Levant and East Indian trades. Since then, numerous individuals have contributed in different and fundamental ways to the development of Iranian studies in all its fields (Ṭāheri, *passim*). This survey, while trying to avoid being a catalogue of names and publications, will attempt to see how the institutional support for Iranian studies has built upon this legacy. Although the focus here is on British contributions, it should be borne in mind that in Britain research has always built on, and responded to, the work of foreign scholars. Many eminent foreign scholars, including Hermann Ethé (q.v.; 1844-1917), Charles Rieu (1820-1902), and Vladimir Minorsky (1877-1966), resided in Britain for many years and were associated with British academic institutions. More recently, many British scholars of Iranian studies have pursued their careers in North American and Canadian universities, as elsewhere.



FORMATIVE YEARS

Among the first British visitors to Persia who can be said to have shown an interest in a systematic study of the language was Sir Thomas Herbert (q.v.; 1606-82), who accompanied Sir Dodmore Cotton's embassy in 1627, and included a short English-Persian glossary and phrase book in his subsequent account of his travels, *Some Years Travels into Africa and Asia the Great . . .* (London, 1683; Perry, p. 271; Ferrier, *passim*). Not long afterwards, the Oxford scholar John Greaves (1602-52) completed a Persian grammar, *Elementæ linguæ Persicæ*, which was not published in London until 1649, owing to the difficulty of finding suitable type (Roper, pp. 317-18). Greaves, primarily an astronomer, subsequently published four Persian texts related to astronomy, including works by Naṣir-al-Din Ṭusi, Ulugh Beg, and Maḥmudšāh Kōlji, between 1648 and 1650 (Dresden, p. 179; Toomer, pp. 168-75). Another Oxford Arabist, Thomas Hyde (q.v.; 1636-1703), who composed a set of Persian poems for royal occasions, *Domiduca Oxoniensis* (Oxford, 1662), published an edition of Ulugh Beg's latitude and longitude tables in 1665, incorporating the earlier work of Greaves (*Sive tabulæ long. ac lat. stellarum fixarum ex observatione Ulugh Beighi Tamerlanis*, Oxford, 1665). Already, we find work in Persian being carried out by people for whom it formed only one part (and often only a minor one) of their interests. It is only in modern times that the field has begun to develop some independent life of its own.

The connection with Arabic, inevitably, has been the strongest and is evident from the start, as has the practical motive for study. The Oxford scholars mentioned above formed a group round the first professor of Arabic, Edward Pococke (1604-91), whose chair was established in 1636 by Archbishop Laud (Toomer, pp. 111-14). A few years earlier, in 1632, Thomas Adams (a draper, later Lord Mayor of London in 1646), founded a lectureship in Arabic at Cambridge, the first holder of which, Abraham Wheelock (1593-1653), translated the Gospels into Persian, published posthumously (*Quatuor Evangeliorum . . . versio Persica*, London, 1657). He was also involved in the production of the first Polyglot Bible to include a Persian text, published by Brian Walton (London, 1653-57; Toomer, pp. 202-10). Walton also wrote an introduction to reading Persian (included in his *Introductio ad lectionem linguarum orientalium . . .*, London, 1655) as a companion to his Polyglot (Toomer, pp. 202-3). Sir Thomas Adams's Chair in Arabic was later to be filled by a remarkable series of scholars whose main contribution was undoubtedly in the field of Persian studies (see below). Meanwhile, further intermittent



progress was made by the beginning of the 18th century, hampered by the slow development of Persian printing, for which there was no commercial demand (Roper, pp. 320-22).

The increase in British interests in India in the latter half of the 18th century brought a change of pace, providing a vital impetus to the study of Persian language, history, and culture for merchants, administrators, and diplomats (Arberry, 1942, pp. 11-17). Recognizing this already in the late 1760s, Warren Hastings put forward a proposal to the directors of the East India Company (q.v.) to establish “a professorship of the Persian language at the University of Oxford” (Bodleian pamphlet, 8o Z.459.Th., dated ca. 1765-69), but nothing came of this. Sir William Jones (q.v.; 1746-94), who nevertheless learned Persian at Oxford, is the outstanding figure of this period, with his *Grammar of the Persian Language* (London, 1771), his translation of Mirzā Mahdi Khan’s *Jahāngošā-ye nāderi* into French as *Histoire de Nader-Chah . . .* (Paris, 1700), which he later translated into English in an abridged form (*The History of the Life of Nadir Shah, King of Persia*, London, 1773), and studies of Persian poetry the following year. Despite its linguistic flaws, his grammar was the first effort to put the study of Persian on a systematic basis, and it was not superseded for several decades (Arberry, 1942, pp. 12-14; idem, 1960, p. 51; Tāheri, pp. 34-60; Cannon, 1958, passim; Trautman, pp. 94-95). His lead was followed by a succession of scholars in the fields of literature and history, particularly the history of India. Among the more notable achievements of this period are John Richardson’s *A Specimen of Persian Poetry* (London, 1774) and his monumental *A Dictionary, Persian, Arabic, and English* (2 vols., London, 1777-80); works on Persian script by Sir William Ouseley (*Persian Miscellanies: An Essay to Facilitate the Reading of Persian Manuscripts*, London, 1795) and by Francis Gladwin (q.v.; *The Persian Moonsee*, Calcutta, 1795); and, in the field of literature, Gladwin’s edition and translation of Sa’di’s *Golestān* (q.v.; *The Gulistan or Rose Garden*, Calcutta, 1806-8) and Turner Macan’s first complete edition of Ferowsi’s *Šāh-nāma* (*The Shah Nameh . . .*, 4 vols., Calcutta, 1829). These and other poets, notably Ḥāfeẓ, became household names in England thanks to the work of a succession of translators, including James Atkinson (q.v.; Yohannan, p. 481).

The servants of the East India Company (q.v.) and other merchants also greatly advanced historical studies through their research and their own direct observations of events in Persia. Among these may be noted *The History of Nadir Shah* (London, 1742) by James Fraser (1713-54), grandfather of the well-



known author and traveler, James Baillie Fraser (q.v.; 1783-1856), Jonas Hanway's (q.v.; 1712-86) *Historical Account of the British Trade over the Caspian Sea* (4 vols., London, 1753; Lockhart, 1938, pp. 304-6, 308-10) and William Francklin's *Observations Made on a Tour from Bengal to Persia 1786-7* (London, 1790). Francis Cunningham Belfour's edition and translation of *The Life of Sheikh Mohammed Ali Hazin* (2 vols., London, 1830-31) can also be mentioned in this context.

Important in these developments were the formation of the Asiatic Society of Bengal in Calcutta in 1784, with its journal and series *Bibliotheca Indica*, which saw the publication of numerous Persian texts and translations and the foundation of the College of Fort William in Calcutta (1800) and of the East India College at Hertford, now Haileybury School (1806), both of which provided a professorship in Persian. In 1823, the Royal Asiatic Society of Great Britain and Ireland (shortened to the Royal Asiatic Society in 1991) was formed, providing a stimulus to Persian studies in London to match those undertaken in India (Arberry, 1942, p. 15; Dresden, p. 180). The creation of the Oriental Translation Fund in 1828, under the auspices of the Royal Asiatic Society, was another major step in introducing Persian literature and history to a wider audience. Also in London, a professor in Oriental languages was appointed at the newly founded University College, London (1825). The first incumbent was the German Friedrich August Rosen (1805-37), who later became professor of Sanskrit (1834-37). In 1855, a new chair in Arabic and Persian was established, due to the inauguration of examinations for the civil service of the East India Company. The second incumbent, Charles Rieu, held the post from 1856 to 1895, when it was divided into two. The chair in Persian was held by several well-known Persian scholars until teaching was transferred to the new School of Oriental Studies in 1917 (see below; Bellot, pp. 42, 264, 385, 408 and chart ii). The scene was set for the great flood of interest in and publications on Persia that characterize the British contributions of the 19th century, fueled by intense diplomatic and later commercial interest in Persia and the security of India.

British diplomats, from the start of the 19th century, left several works of importance, either in the form of accounts of their travels in Persia, or by more serious efforts at historical writing. Sir John Malcolm's (1769-1833) *History of Persia* (2 vols., London, 1815) is the outstanding work of the period though, as emphasized by Malcolm Yapp (pp. 346-51), its scope is restricted by the author's professional concerns and personal preconceptions. Sir Harford



Jones Brydges' (q.v.; 1764-1847) translation of 'Abd-al-Razzāq Beg Donboli's *Ma'āṭer-e solṭāniya* as *The Dynasty of the Kajars* (London, 1833), is also noteworthy. The mission of Sir Gore Ouseley (1770-1844), who replaced Harford Jones (1811), marked the start of a permanent British representation in Tehran. One of the founders of the Royal Asiatic Society, Ouseley was a considerable Persian scholar and author of *Biographical Notes on Persian Poets*, published posthumously in London in 1846 (Wright, p. 12). The importance of William and Gore Ouseley as collectors of Persian manuscripts is discussed elsewhere (see xi. below).

THE GOLDEN AGE OF THE AMATEUR

The Victorian era saw important advances in the academic study of Persian language and lexicography by scholars including Edward Henry Palmer's (1840-82) *Concise Dictionary of the Persian Language* (London, 1876), Arthur Naylor Wollaston's (1842-1922), *Complete English-Persian Dictionary* (London, 1889), Duncan Forbes' (1798-1868) *Grammar of the Persian Language* (London and Calcutta, 1862), John Thompson Platts' (1830-1904), *Grammar of the Persian Language* (London, 1894) and Douglas Craven Phillott's (1860-1930) *Higher Persian Grammar* (Calcutta, 1919). All of these made other contributions, among them Platts's edition and translation of Sa'di's *Golestān* (*The Gulistan of Shaikh Muslihu'd Din Sa'di*, London 1872), and Phillott's edition of the *Memoirs of Shah Ṭahmāsp*, published in Calcutta in 1912 (Arberry, 1942, p. 29). But the period is perhaps most notable for the work of editing and translating Persian poetry, undertaken, as John D. Yohannan says (p. 484), by "the sahibs of the British colonial enterprise." The most celebrated of these amateur efforts is Edward FitzGerald's (q.v.; 1809-83) translation of *The Rubaiyat of Omar Khayyam* (London, 1859). In the present context it is worth recalling first that FitzGerald learned Persian at Oxford with the help of Edward Byles Cowell (1826-1903), later professor of Sanskrit at Cambridge (see below), who himself made several translations of Persian poetry, and secondly the influence of FitzGerald on another great amateur, Gertrude Bell (q.v.; 1868-1926), whose translations of Ḥāfeẓ were published in 1897. These and other early works on Persian poetry are listed by Arthur John Arberry (1942, pp. 20-23) and George Michael Wickens (pp. 499-508). As in linguistic studies, the lasting influence of William Jones can be discerned here providing inspiration for the Romantic movement in English (and German) poetry (Yohannan, pp. 483-89; Mukherjee, p. 42; Cannon, 1990, pp. 238-39).

British travel literature on Persia throughout the 19th century is voluminous



and rightly regarded as a valuable source of information about the state of the country under the Qajars. Despite their usefulness, not least for their descriptions of historical monuments, these travelogues suffer from the limitations of the genre and few could (or would) claim to make a serious scholarly contribution to the study of Persian history or culture in the Islamic period. The same is not so true of researches in-to pre-Islamic Iran and the contributions of pioneering scholars such as Henry Rawlinson. The work of the Sistan Arbitration Commission (*Eastern Persia, an Account of the Journeys of the Persian Boundary Commission, 1870-71-72*, ed. F. J. Goldsmid, 2 vols., London, 1876), of Albert Houtum-Schindler (q.v.; 1846-1916, German by origin but naturalized British) and George Nathaniel Curzon's (q.v.; 1859-1925) celebrated *Persia and the Persian Question* (2 vols., London, 1892) are among the exceptions in this respect. An account of some of these travelers is given by Denis Wright (pp. 149-70). Further bibliographical information can be found in Arnold T. Wilson's *Bibliography of Persia* (Oxford, 1930).

In the field of Persian historical literature, apart from the publication of a number of texts, the main achievements are in Indian history, notably the monumental *History of India as Told by Its Own Historians: The Mohammadan Period*, ed. H. M. Elliot and J. Dowson (8 vols., London, 1867-77). Among the studies of Persian history, Clement Roberts Markham's (1830-1916) *General Sketch of the History of Persia* (London, 1874) and Robert Grant Watson's (d. 1892) *History of Persia from the Beginning of the Nineteenth Century to the Year 1858* (London, 1866) can be mentioned. The latter was much relied on by Sir Percy Sykes (1867-1945), whose influential *History of Persia* (2 vols., London, 1915, 2nd ed., 1921) is now considered (Yapp, pp. 355-56) to be a typical product of a late Victorian public school morality.

Even after the formal establishment of Persian studies in British universities (see below), there was plenty of scope for important work to continue outside a professional academic context, particularly while Britain retained her intimate connections with Persia and India. Three individual contributions characteristic of this situation may be mentioned. Guy Le Strange (1854-1933), a man of independent wealth, studied in Paris under Jules Mohl and others and visited Persia in 1877-80. After 1907, he settled in Cambridge and worked with Edward Granville Browne (q.v.; 1862-1926) on the Gibb Memorial Trust (q.v.; see below). He pioneered the study of the historical geography of Persia, notably in his *Lands of the Eastern Caliphate* (Cambridge, 1905), as well as in his edition and translation of important geographical and historical sources by



Ḥamd-Allāh Mostawfi (q.v.) and Ebn al-Balkī (q.v.; Ross 1943, pp. 67-68). By contrast, Hyacinth L. Rabino (1877-1950) was a professional diplomat who spent many years in Persia in a variety of consular posts, particularly at Rasht. In addition to his many studies of the Caspian region written both in French and English, including *Mázandarán and Astarábád* (London, 1928), his *Coins, Medals, and Seals of the Shahs of Iran, 1500-1941* (2 vols., Hertford, 1945) remains an indispensable work of reference on numismatics. Thirdly, Laurence Lockhart (1891-1975), a student of Browne's at Cambridge, returned to academic research after a career first at the Foreign Office in the First World War, and then at the Anglo-Persian Oil Company (q.v.), of which he became its first official historian. These were routes by which so many contributors to the study of Persia acquired their familiarity with and interest in the country. Although he never held a university post, he wrote several valuable books, of which *Nadir Shah* (London, 1938) and *The Fall of the Ṣafavī Dynasty and the Afghan Occupation of Persia* (Cambridge, 1958) remain standard works. He was also a brilliant photographer of the Persian scene.

Collection of Research Materials. An important legacy of this scholarly activity, and of the large-scale acquisition of books and manuscripts by British officials in India and Persia, was the formation of the rich library collections that now sustain academic research in Persian studies in Britain (and internationally). The cataloguing of these collections in itself stimulated great advances in the knowledge of all fields of Persian literature. The most important collections of Persian manuscripts are to be found at the British Library in London, the Bodleian in Oxford, the University Library in Cambridge, the John Rylands in Manchester and the Chester Beatty Library (q.v.) in Dublin. The growth of these collections is to some extent documented by their cataloguers, notably in Charles Rieu's account of the growth of the British Museum collection, which took place almost entirely within the 19th century and owed much to the Indian connection (Rieu, *Persian Manuscripts* III, pp. x-xxiv, Suppl., pp. v-viii).

The British Library now houses also the former India Office collection, so thoroughly catalogued by Ethé (q.v.; *Catalogue*) and completed by Edward Edwards in 1937. The illustrated manuscripts in the collection have been described by B. W. Robinson (*Persian Paintings in the India Office Library: A Descriptive Catalogue*, London, 1976). Basil Robinson has also carried out the same task of cataloguing illustrated manuscripts for two other collections, the Bodleian Library (*A Descriptive Catalogue of the Persian Paintings in the Bodleian Library*, Oxford, 1958), and the John Rylands Library (*Persian*



Paintings in the John Rylands Library: A Descriptive Catalogue, London, 1980). Ethé also completed the catalogue begun by Eduard Sachau of the Bodleian collection in Oxford (*Catalogue of the Persian, Turkish, Hindustani and Pushtu Manuscripts*, Oxford, 1889). The foundation of these holdings owes much to the initiative of Archbishop Laud and was solidly established by the end of the 17th century, thanks to the collections and donations of individuals like Narcissus Marsh, bishop of Armagh (Toomer, pp. 287-89). The name of later donors is provided by the third volume of the catalogue by A. F. L. Beeston (*Catalogue III*, Oxford, 1954, p. 178).

Cambridge was slower off the mark than Oxford, though Wheelock was successful in acquiring some of the manuscripts of Thomas Erpenius (d. 1624) for the University in 1632 (Toomer, pp. 91-93). The slow growth of the collection after that date is detailed by Browne (*A Catalogue of the Persian Manuscripts in the Cambridge University Library*, Cambridge, 1896, pp. xxii-xxxi), whose own bequest is the most outstanding contribution to the library and was given a very detailed catalogue by Reynold A. Nicholson (*A Descriptive Catalogue of the Oriental Mss. Belonging to the Late E. G. Browne*, Cambridge, 1932). Browne's later hand-lists (*A Hand-list of the Muhammadan Manuscripts*, Cambridge, 1900, and *A Supplementary Hand-list of the Muhammadan Manuscripts*, Cambridge, 1922), also give some details of the provenance of the collections, particularly in the College libraries.

A more recent collection of Persian and other Oriental manuscripts was formed in 1901, a year after the official opening of the John Rylands Library in Manchester. The bulk of the Persian manuscripts, over 900 in number, were acquired by Mrs. Rylands from Lord Lindsay, who in turn had purchased the collections of Nathaniel Bland and Col. G. W. Hamilton in 1866 and 1868 respectively (Taylor, pp. 464-65). The bulk of Hamilton's collection went to the British Museum (Rieu, *Persian Manuscripts III*, pp. xx-xxii). There is no published catalogue of the more recently acquired manuscripts.

THE DEVELOPMENT OF PERSIAN STUDIES IN BRITISH UNIVERSITIES

The current state of documentation and the scattered nature of surviving records and biographies make it hard to provide more than a brief outline of the main developments in the formal teaching of Persian studies in Britain. As noted above, many of the earliest Arabists at Oxford and Cambridge certainly knew and probably taught Persian, as did the already mentioned scholars E. H. Palmer, Lord Almoners' professor of Arabic at Cambridge (1871-81), and



Edward Cowell, professor of Sanskrit at the same university, but there were no posts devoted specifically to the subject. Two Tripos courses in Semitic languages (1878) and Indian languages (1879) were established at Cambridge, the latter taken by Browne but by very few others (Brooke, pp. 428-30). Between 1883 and 1888, Persian was taught at Cambridge for the Board of Indian Civil Service Studies by C. E. Wilson (1848-1938), who had studied under Jules Mohl and Nicolas de Khanikoff and later went on to be professor of Persian at University College, London, from 1903 to 1917 (also for the ICS, see below). Wilson was a translator of Rumi and Jāmi as well as Neẓāmi's *Haft Paykar* (*Haft Paikar*, 2 vols., London, 1924). In 1888, the first lectureship in Persian was established at Cambridge and Browne was appointed to the post, which he held until 1902. Browne's enormous influence on Persian studies hardly needs comment. He achieved work of fundamental and often pioneering importance in many areas of research, not least in the editing and translation of numerous texts for the Gibb Memorial Trust, of which he was a founder member and the moving spirit (Ross, pp. 54, 256). Perhaps the most enduring testament to his scholarship is the monumental *Literary History of Persia* (4 vols., London, 1902-24; Arberry, 1960, pp. 176-82; Dresden, p. 182; Tāheri, pp. 135-59).

In 1902 Browne became Sir Thomas Adams's Professor of Arabic, a post he held until his death in 1926. The previous incumbent (1894-1902) was Charles Rieu, the famous cataloguer (see above), and Browne was in turn succeeded by his former pupil, Reynold A. Nicholson (1868-1945). Despite his work in Arabic literature, he is celebrated chiefly for his studies of mystical poetry and especially the edition, translation, and commentary on the Maṭnawī of Jalāl-al-Din Rumi (*The Mathnawī of Jalalu'ddin Rumi*, 8 vols., Leiden and London, 1925-40; Arberry, 1960, pp. 221-23; Tāheri, pp. 249-50). Nicholson was followed in 1933 by another Professor of Arabic best known for his contributions to Persian, namely Charles Ambrose Storey (1888-1967), whose *Persian Literature: A Bio-bibliographical Survey* (London, 1927-), remains an indispensable research tool. His library and the bulk of his estate were left to the Royal Asiatic Society, London, which is still completing the work left unfinished on Storey's death (Serjeant, pp. i-ii). The final link in this chain of Cambridge professors is Arthur John Arberry (q.v.; 1905-69), who moved from London on Storey's resignation in 1947. His ready pen was employed largely in the work of translation, and he championed the cause of Arabic and Persian studies and strove to bring Middle Eastern literature to a wider audience (Arberry, 1960, pp. 240-56). He also contributed to cataloguing manuscript



collections in Cambridge and as well as the magnificent collection formed by the American Chester Beatty and now housed in Dublin. A lavish catalogue was prepared by Arberry and other scholars (A. J. Arberry, M. Minovi, and E. Blochet *The Chester Beatty Library: A Catalogue of the Persian Manuscripts and Miniatures*, 3 vols., Dublin 1959).

Arberry was also instrumental in the expansion of Persian studies at Cambridge. As part of this expansion must be mentioned the career of Reuben Levy (1891-1966), who was made *ad hominem* Professor of Persian in 1950. He translated and edited several Persian texts including the *Qābus-nāma* (ed. London, 1951; tr. as *A Mirror for Princes*, London, 1951) and an abridged prose translation of the *Šāh-nāma* (*The Epic of the Kings: The Shah-Nama, the National Epic of Persia*, London, 1967). He left part of his library and a handsome endowment to his Cambridge College (*Christ's College Magazine*, 1967, pp. 52-54).

Reuben Levy had studied in Oxford and taught Persian there (1920-23) before moving to Cambridge in 1926. The Honours School of Oriental Studies had been established in Oxford in 1886, with courses in Semitic and Indian languages, as in Cambridge. Although some of the Laudian professors gave less encouragement to Persian than their Sir Thomas Adams's counterparts, there were some notable exceptions, including the recently retired holder of the chair Wilferd Madelung, who has made valuable contributions to the history of religious thought in Persia (*Religious Trends in Early Islamic Iran*, Albany, N.Y., 1988). J. T. Platts, already mentioned, lectured in Persian from 1880 to 1894 (*Dictionary of National Biography* [DNB], 2nd suppl., vol. 2, London, 1912, pp. 119-20). Lt.-Col. George Ranking (1882-1934) followed him and completed Platt's Grammar with a second volume on syntax (*A Grammar of the Persian Language. Part 2: Syntax*, Oxford, 1911). Levy was followed by another Indian army officer, Lt.-Col. "Tiger" Harcourt. The post had evidently lapsed before World War II (see below), but was restored by the appointment of the ex-diplomat and Zoroastrian scholar Robert Charles Zaehner (1913-74) in 1950, who continued to teach classical Persian poetry and sufi texts after his promotion to the Spalding Professorship of Eastern Religions and Ethics two years later (Morrison, p. iv). The continuity of Persian teaching was maintained by the appointment of George Morrison (1919-96) in 1953, a post he occupied for thirty years. He translated Faḡr-al-Dīn Gorgānī's *Vis o Rāmin* (as *Vis and Ramin*, New York, 1972) and contributed to and edited the *History of Persian Literature from the Beginning of the Islamic Period to the Present Day*



(HO I, IV/2, Leiden and Cologne, 1981).

It was not until the turn of the 20th century that London University developed a center to match the older established schools of Oxford and Cambridge. The chair in Persian at University College, London, though a useful stepping stone to further advancement, itself mainly served the Indian Civil Service probationer course. In the years between 1895-1903, it was occupied by Edward Denison Ross (1871-1940) and briefly by R. A. Nicholson (Bellot, chart ii.; Arberry, 1960, p. 201). However, it was not until the World War I that the long-felt need for a center dedicated to Oriental studies in the capital of the British Empire was translated into action, long after other European countries (Worrell, p. 195). As the result of the recommendations of a report by Lord Reay (1909), the School of Oriental Studies was established in London in June 1916 (for the background see Scarbrough Commission, p. 10; Philips, p. 10 ff.). The first director was Ross, who also became the first professor of Persian (1916-37). Among his most influential publications were his translation of Moḥammad Ḥaydar Duḡlāt's *Tārīḡ-e Rašīdi* (as *The Tarikh-i-Rashidi: A History of the Moghuls of Central Asia*, London, 1895) and his article "The Early Years of Shah Isma'īl: Founder of the Safavi Dynasty," *JRAS*, 1896, pp. 249-340.

Denison Ross was succeeded by the great Russian scholar, Vladimir Minorsky, who was evacuated briefly during the war to Cambridge, where he retired in 1944 but carried on working until his death (Bosworth, 1971, preface). There is hardly an area of Persian history and historical geography in which Minorsky did not make a decisive intervention, and his legacy has still to be fully exploited (Aubin, pp. 131-33). His Turkmenica series of articles on 15th-century Iran and his translation and commentaries on *Ḥodud al-'ālam* (*Ḥodud al-'ālam*, tr. Minorsky) and *Tadkerat al-moluk* (*Tadkerat al-moluk*, tr. Minorsky) can perhaps be singled out amongst his most enduring work. His publications to 1960 are listed in his collection of articles (V. Minorsky, *Iranica*, Tehran, 1960, pp. xii-xxvi).

Minorsky was followed as professor of Persian at the School of Oriental and African Studies (SOAS) by Arberry before the latter first took the chair of Arabic at SOAS and then moved to Cambridge (see above). After a short interval, the professorship of Persian passed in 1953 to Ann K. S. Lambton, the doyenne of British Persianists in the post-war era. Her *Persian Grammar* (Cambridge, 1953) is still an invaluable introduction to the language, but her main contributions have been in the areas of land tenure (Lambton, *Landlord and Peasant*), Persian and Islamic theories of government, and the



administrative and political history of the Saljuq, Mongol and Qajar periods (for a bibliography to 1986, see *BSOAS* 49/1, 1986, pp. 5-7). After Lambton's retirement in 1979, the statutory chair in Persian lapsed. In its place, there was a lectureship in Persian and a lectureship in Persian history. The last professor (in Persian and Turkish studies), T. O. Gandjei, was appointed ad hominem in 1985 to his retirement in 1990. His post, originally a readership in Persian, was not filled, a situation that became all too common elsewhere (see below).

Outside the university system, Persian studies were and are pursued by those connected with the major museums with holdings of Persian art and archeological material (Gray, 1985; see also section IX on pre-Islamic Iran and section XI on the Persian art collections in Britain). Some of the notable scholars associated with these institutions include Reginald Stuart Poole (1832-95), author of *The Coins of the Shahs of Persia* (London, 1887); the famous poet and art historian Laurence Binyon (1869-1943), Keeper of Prints and Drawings and co-author (with J. V. S. Wilkinson and B. Gray) of *Persian Miniature Painting, Including A Critical and Descriptive Catalogue of the Miniatures Exhibited at Burlington House, January-March, 1931* (London, 1933); and Basil Gray (q.v.; 1904-89) author of *Persian Painting* (Geneva, 1961) and many articles on Persian art (for his publications to 1977, see Rogers, pp. 5-8; Pinder-Wilson, pp. v-vi). Some of the contributions of Basil Robinson, the former Keeper of Metalwork at the Victoria and Albert Museum, have already been mentioned. A collection of fifty-four articles by him appear in his *Studies in Persian Art* (2 vols., London, 1993). The importance of museum collections in stimulating popular interest was recognized in the Scarbrough report (see below), which noted that over 250,000 people had visited the Burlington House exhibition cited above.

Iranian studies in the post-Imperial world. Just as the Reay report of 1909, confirmed by the urgent need for linguists that was felt during World War I, was instrumental in the establishment of the School of Oriental Studies in London, so the struggle in the Middle East and Africa in World War II and the ensuing commitments to world peace and international understanding formed the background to the Earl of Scarbrough's Commission of Inquiry on Oriental Studies (p. 5). Significantly, the commission was set up by the Foreign Office. The Scarbrough report made a very strong case for a systematic and sustained government support for the study of the languages and cultures of Africa and Asia, as well as a number of recommendations that remain something of an ideal so far as their implementation is concerned.



In the case of Persian, some important gains were made. Describing the position in 1939, Scarbrough reported only four teaching posts in British universities: one at Cambridge and three at SOAS (pp. 80-81), and noted that since the war a group of oil companies (identified as one of the main interested parties in the development of a national expertise in Persian) had established two further posts at SOAS. In addition to strengthening existing Middle East departments there and in Oxford and Cambridge (see above), Scarbrough recommended a boost to at least one university in the north of England (Durham or Manchester) and one in Scotland (p. 38). In the event, all three gained new posts, thus creating the situation that broadly exists today.

In Manchester, John Andrew Boyle (q.v.; 1916-78), in the Foreign Office during the war, was appointed senior lecturer in Persian in 1950 and an *ad hominem* professor in 1966. His work, though wide-ranging, made many contributions to the study of the Mongols in Persia, including an annotated translation of 'Alā'-al-Din 'Aṭā Malek Jovayni (Jovayni, tr. Boyle) and the editing of the fifth volume of *The Cambridge History of Iran* (Cambridge, 1968).

At Edinburgh, Laurence Elwell-Sutton (q.v.; 1912-84) was appointed lecturer in Persian in 1952 and ultimately, like Boyle, gained a personal chair, in 1976 (Cachia, pp. 174-75). Elwell-Sutton had served in the Anglo-Iranian Oil Company, in the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC), London, and as Press Attaché to the British embassy in Tehran, 1943-47. He was interested in many aspects of Persian culture, including folklore, prosody, and modern politics as reflected in his many published works including *Persian Oil: A Study in Power Politics* (London, 1955), and *The Persian Metres* (Cambridge, 1976; bibliography in Bosworth and Hillenbrand, pp. xvii-xxv).

At Durham, the Department of Middle East Studies was a brand new creation in response to the Scarbrough report. Frank R. C. Bagley (1915-97), formerly in the Foreign Office, became lecturer in Persian in 1958 till his retirement (1981). He translated Moḥammad Ġazālī's *Naṣiḥat al-moluk* (as *Ghazali's Book of Counsel for Kings: Nasihat al-muluk*, London, 1964), and also published in the field of modern Persian literature.

The optimistic expansion in the wake of the Scarbrough report was short-lived. Grants ear-marked for Oriental Studies ended in 1952 and within a decade another government inquiry was commissioned, this time by the University Grants Committee. The report was submitted by Sir William Hayter (1961). It documented the initial rapid increase in posts following the



Scarborough commission, particularly in language departments, but without a commensurate increase in student numbers, and concluded that the need was now for area studies, with expansion in history, geography, law, and economics. The objective was to increase the total amount of knowledge about the regions under consideration (pp. 3-4). Persian was barely mentioned in the Hayter report and it is not clear that much came of it. Oxford created a post in Persian history and culture (in 1966), which is still maintained. At Cambridge, thanks to the efforts of A. J. Arberry, two lectureships were retained after the retirement of Reuben Levy in 1958. Hubert Darke (1919-98) was appointed to one of these in 1961. His chief contribution was his edition and translation of Neẓām-al-Molk's *Siar al-moluk* (2nd ed., Tehran, 1347 Š./1968; tr as *The Book of Government or Rules for Kings*, London, 1960). However, on Darke's early retirement in 1982, this post was suppressed.

Other losses followed in the bleak economic and intellectual climate of the early 1980s. Despite another government report in 1986 under the chairmanship of Sir Peter Parker, which concluded that a "second tier of languages," which included Persian, was only being learnt by "tiny numbers" and "staffing was precarious in the extreme" (p. 76), the Persian lectureship in Durham (along with most of the Middle East department) was closed in 1989, and the remaining lectureship in Cambridge was suppressed the following year, on the retirement of Peter Avery, author of *Modern Iran* (London, 1985) and translations from classical Persian poetry. Oxford was better able to maintain its position, filling the post left by the retirement of George Morrison in 1983. Edinburgh lost Elwell-Sutton's post on his retirement, but had previously promoted the Persian language assistant to lecturer. SOAS also lost a lectureship in Persian in 1986 but received a "new blood" training post in 1989, as a result of the Parker report, thus restoring its strength to two.

The only gain was in Manchester, which was able to reverse the suppression in 1981 of the lectureship originally held by Boyle. A Parker post in Persian was created in 1987. The Middle East Department also accepted the transfer of the post closed in Durham and has since been able to maintain it after the retirement of its incumbent, Paul Luft, in 1999. Manchester was also fortunate to have in Clifford Edmund Bosworth a professor of Arabic studies (1967-91) who devoted a considerable part of his research to medieval Persian history. Among his prodigious output, his studies on the Gaznavids (*The Ghaznavids: Their Empire in Afghanistan and Eastern Iran 994-1040*, Edinburgh, 1963, and *The Later Ghaznavids: Splendour and Decay*, Edinburgh, 1977), and on Sistān



(*Sistan under the Arabs: From the Islamic Conquests to the Rise of the Saffarids*, Rome, 1968, and *The History of the Saffarids of Sistan and the Maliks of Nimruz*, Costa Mesa and New York, 1994), are standard works of reference. A full bibliography of his publications to 1998 is given in the second volume of his *Festschrift* (Hillenbrand, pp. xix-xli).

In almost all cases, the practice of appointing native speakers as language instructors (“lectors”) ceased, thus reducing the size of the permanent faculty available for teaching Persian language and literature, and placing greater demands on the few surviving lectureships.

Against this picture of declining numbers in dedicated teaching posts in Persian should be set the continuing existence of researchers in related fields in other university departments, and elsewhere. In Durham, for example, William Bayne Fisher (1916-84), editor of the first volume of *The Cambridge History of Iran* (Cambridge, 1968), gathered an active group in the Faculty of Geography in the 1960s and 70s, with a strong interest in Persia (McLachlan, p. v). Institutional support is also provided by St. Antony’s College, Oxford, of which the Middle East section was established in 1955 (Richards and Stern, p. 191). Elsewhere, faculties of history or religious studies (e.g., at Bristol and Glasgow) currently house scholars whose primary interest is in Persia.

As a reflection of this upsurge of interest in Islam and Shi’ism since the Islamic Revolution, there is a recent tendency for the surviving posts in Persian to be linked with wider responsibilities, as in Edinburgh (Persian and Islamic Studies, since 1996). In Durham, where the suppressed lectureship was restored on a part-time basis in 1995 and then made permanent, it is also linked with Islamic Studies. Overall, the situation remains broadly the same as described in 1988 (*Guide to Iranian Studies*, pp. 42-49), though there are changes in detail. Currently, Persian can be studied as a single-subject degree only at Manchester and Oxford.

Finally, the role of the British Institute of Persian Studies (BIPS) may be mentioned. The establishment of such an institute as a foreign school of the British Academy was among the recommendations of the Scarbrough report (p. 42), but this was not realized until 1961. The Institute’s journal, *Iran*, is the only British academic journal dedicated to all aspects of Iranian culture (see Wheeler, pp. 76-84). Much of the work supported by the Institute has been in the field of archaeology and particularly pre-Islamic archaeology, but excavations at Sirāf and other medieval sites have also been undertaken (for



early activities, see P. R. S. Moorey, ed., *Excavations in Iran: The British Contribution*, Oxford, 1972). Despite the current difficulties of excavating in Persia, a wide range of research is still being assisted by BIPS grants allocated by the British Academy.

In conclusion, this survey cannot pretend to have done justice to the full range of the British contribution to Iranian studies. Both the Hayter and Parker reports drew very unfavorable comparisons with the situation in other countries, and at the end of 1999 the assessment of Scarbrough is as apt as it was when he wrote: “Although holders of individual posts have done much to keep these studies alive, in general there has been no systematic development” (p. 21). Nevertheless, Iranian studies, though greatly attenuated from its late 19th-century heyday, remains healthy. Among the encouraging signs are the revival of Persian studies at Durham. Elsewhere, expansion is only likely to come with resources raised from outside the universities, as in the recent establishment of the Nasser D. Khalili Chair of Islamic art and archaeology at SOAS (1990) and the Masoumeh and Fereydoon Soudavar Professorship of Persian studies at Oxford (1987), the only permanently endowed chair in the country. The late Mr. and Mrs. Soudavar (Sudāvar) had also made a testamentary bequest to establish a lectureship at Cambridge, where there is currently no tenured post in Persian—a poignant situation in view of the formative role of Cambridge in the development of Iranian studies.

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