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KANDAHAR III. EARLY ISLAMIC PERIOD

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iii. Early Islamic Period

The 9th-century historian Aḥmad Balāḏori mentions that ʿAbbād b. Ziād, the ʿOmmayad governor of Sistān under the Caliph Moʿāwia, made an attack on "Qandahār" (Kandahar) and conquered it (Balāḏori, *Fotuḥ*, p. 434, ed. Monajjed, part 3, p. 532; *Tāriḵ-e Sistān*, p. 95). Thenceforth, the name Qandahār is not frequently encountered in the sources of the pre-Mongol period except for some references in the Arabic geographies (cf. Ebn Ḵordāḏbeh, pp. 56, 68; Yaʿqubi, *Boldān*, pp. 281, 287, 289; Ebn Rosta, p. 90; Masʿudi, *Tanbih*, p. 43; Moqaddasi, p. 60), where, however, two different Qandahārs seem to be mentioned under the same name: one is Qandahār in Sind, namely our Kandahar, and the other is Qandahār in Hind, which could mean, as Josef Markwart suggests (p. 271), Gandhāra in northwest India (cf. Gardizi, ed. Ḥabibi, p. 288).

It is, rather, the name Roḵḵaj (or Roḵuḏ, < Arachosia) that is used for the area around present-day Kandahar. As K. Fischer (1967, pp. 210-11) points out, the name Qandahār almost disappears from the sources in the 10th-12th centuries, in which period Panjwāy, the administrative center, and Teginābād are named as two chief cities in Roḵḵaj (Eṣṭaḵri, pp. 250, 251; *Ḥodud al-ʿālam*,

ed. Sotuda, p. 103; tr. Minorsky, p. 111). Vladimir Minorsky suggested the probable identification of the latter with historical Kandahar (*Ḥodud al-ʿālam*, tr. Minorsky, p. 345). Svend W. Helms, who excavated the site of Old Kandahar in the 1970s, also surmises that Teginābād was the name for the city in the early Islamic period (Helms, 1982, p. 350; for the reports of the British excavations at Old Kandahar, see McNicoll et al.; Helms, 1997). Eṣṭaḵri (p. 250), the first geographer who mentions Teginābād, states that the distance between Bost and Banjwāy is four days march, and one more day to the east lies the city of Teginābād. According to Helms, the distance between present Panjwāy, a village and a district (*woleswāli*), and the site of Old Kandahar is about 20 km (Helms, 1982, p. 350; *Gazetteer of Afghanistan* V, p. 380), which roughly fits the description of the geographer.

As to the origin of the name Teginābād, "the city of Tegin," there seems to be no established explanation. That the city was named after Sebüktegin, the first ruler of the Ghaznavids, who conquered the area around 980, is rejected simply because Eṣṭaḵri's mention precedes him. Another possible eponym of the city is the Samanid general Qarātegin, who rebelled against the Samanid Amir Naṣr b. Aḥmad and fled about 930 to Bost, where he died around 932 (Bosworth, 1994, pp. 284-86). Nevertheless, some uncertainty remains, as his presence there was rather brief, and it was almost simultaneous with the composition of Eṣṭaḵri's book, if we follow the dating of 930-31 suggested by S. Maqbul Ahmad (p. 581). Helms suggests the possible connection of the name "Teginābād" with the Torkšāh dynasty, which ruled Kabul and Gandhara from the mid-7th to the mid-9th centuries (Helms, 1982, p. 349). According to the somewhat vague report of Ṭabari (I, p. 2706), a member of the Torkšāh royal family fled to the south and became independent at Zābol (i.e., Ḡazni, although the text gives "Āmol"; see Markwart, p. 38) in the 680s. The ruler of Zābol was called *rotbil* in Islamic sources, which is now considered to be a corrupted transcription of the Turkish title *iltäbär* (Inaba, 2005, p. 2; Bosworth, 2008, p. 106). The rule of the *rotbil* extended to the south as far as Roḵḵaj, which was a region disputed between Muslims and *rotbil*s thereafter (Balāḏori, *Fotuḥ*, ed. Monajjed, part 3, pp. 489-93.

It has been reported that many coins of "Iranian Huns" (as named by Göbl) have been unearthed from Old Kandahar, though their exact attribution is yet to be examined (McNicoll et al., pp. 305-11; Helms, 1997, pp. 95-99). In the meantime, Rika Gyselen has revealed three types of Arab-Sasanian coins that were issued in Zābol/Zābolestān (Gyselen, pp. 154-56). One of them has the

inscription *pangul*, which has been tentatively attributed to the first *rotbil* by A. Nikitin (1984, p. 237; see also Humbach, 1996 [1998]). The second type has the inscription *spur*, which, Gyselen suggests, belongs to the second *rotbil,* who succeeded his father about 687. The third type of the coin bears the inscription *tegin*, whose identity is not clear. The ruler of Kabul at that time was the king whose name was inscribed on the coin as "Horāsān Tegin Šāh" and transcribed in Chinese as "Wusan Teqin Sa" (Göbl, I, pp. 142-45; Humbach, 1966, p. 19). It is also recorded in the Chinese sources that in 720 the Tang authorized the rulership of Kabul to Gedaluozhi *tegin* and that of Zābol to Gedaluozhi *iltäbär* (Inaba, p. 5). Thus, the inscription *tegin* was most likely related to the ruler of Kabul. *Xin Tangshu*, the dynastic chronicle of the Tang, reports that some time after 710 Zābol became subjugated to Kabul (Kuwayama, 1999, p. 55), which will lead us to suppose that the *tegin* coins might be linked with that situation. On the other hand, Huichao, a Korean monk who traveled these regions in the mid-720s, says, "the king of Zābol was a nephew of the king of Kabul. Commanding his own people and army, he was not subject to any other countries, nor to his uncle" (cf. Fuchs, p. 448; Hye-Ch'o, p. 51; Kuwayama, 1992, p. 40). This may suggest that the subjugation of Zābol to Kabul was only temporary, or it was not a direct rule but just a suzerainty. The mint of the *tegin* coins known so far is Zābol/Zābolestān, but one coin of *pangul* was minted in Raxbad, that is, Roḵḵaj (Nikitin, pp. 234-35), which means that the city was one of the mints for the rulers of Zābol.

These pieces of evidence seem to indicate that the name Teginābād could, somehow, have originated from the *tegin* of Kabul. However, it still remains unexplained why that new name was recorded, not by the 9th-century geographers such as Ebn Ḵordāḏbeh and Yaʿqubi, who still mention Qandahār in Sind, but by Eṣṭaḵri in the first half of the 10th century. The answer should be sought in the history of the area from the mid-8th to the 9th century, in which period the conquest of eastern Afghanistan by Yaʿqub b. Layṯ in 864 is the only significant event we know so far, and Gardizi's mention of Teginābād in the description of this conquest is, chronologically, the earliest event in connection of which the name appears, though his chronicle was written two centuries later (Gardizi, ed. Ḥabibi, p. 179).

Kandahar and its surroundings have been an important junction connecting Iran and India since ancient times, a point which has been illustrated by Fischer (esp. pp. 170-99) with a thorough examination of the sources. *Ḥodud al-ʿālam,* a 10th-century Persian geography, calls Bost "the gate to India," because

it was the western entrance of the route from Kandahar to the lower Indus valley. Parvān, north of Kabul, is also called “the gate to India” in the same source, because it is located on another important route, which goes along the Kabul river and connects northwest India with Central Asia (*Ḥodud al-ʿālam,* ed. Sotuda, pp. 103, 105; tr. Minorsky, pp. 110, 112). The Ghaznavids, by possessing these two “gates to India,” could grasp control over the movements of people, goods, and information among Iran, Central Asia, and India. Seen in that light, the “eastern Afghanistan corridor,” connecting Kabul, Ḡazni, and Bost, was the most crucial political-strategic zone for the early Ghaznavids, and the place where the route leading to the lower Indus valley branches off from the Ḡazni–Bost road could not be of little importance. Teginābād is almost the only city mentioned in the 11th-12th century Persian chronicles between Ḡazni and Bost; and if it was identical with Old Kandahar, the account of Menhāj-e Serāj Juzjāni, the 13th-century chronicler, which reads “Teginābād is the place, the dispute over which and the consequent loss of which to the sultans of Ḡur caused the downfall of the house of Maḥmud, son of Sebüktegin” (Juzjāni, *Ṭabaqāt* I, p. 396), would then make good sense.

The name Kandahar reappeared in the sources, replacing Teginābād, from the 13th century on, after the destruction of Laškari Bāzār near Bost by the Ghurid ruler, ʿAlāʾ-al-Din Ḥosayn Jahānsuz (cf. Bosworth, 1978). However, the exact reason why the name of the city was changed again is not apparent.

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