



# NÖLDEKE, THEODOR

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### ii. AS AN IRANIST

As a pupil of Heinrich Ewald (1803-1875), Theodor Nöldeke ([FIGURE 1](#)) had the benefit of a sound training in Oriental philology, linguistics, and history, all of which contributed to his becoming the most renowned Oriental scholar in the second German Reich. It was fortuitous for Iranian studies that he included them in his Arabic studies; he was the greatest authority in the field of Iranian national epic literature and in general one of the leading Iranian scholars of his day. His scholarship is distinguished by its meticulous precision in philological matters, by a very wide range of reading, and by its pragmatic approach, which eschewed any unwarranted speculation. His search for the Persian sources of Ṭabari's account of Sasanian history led him to the study of the *Šāh-nāma* and of Pahlavi writings such as the *Kārnāmag ī Ardašīr* (qq.v.). To accomplish this he taught himself Middle Persian, as he had done before in the case of New Persian. His major works on the Sasanian sections of Ṭabari's "History" (Nöldeke, 1879a) and on the Iranian national epic (Nöldeke, 1896, 2nd. ed., 1920) remain vital to the field to this day.

Overall, Nöldeke made a fundamental contribution to our understanding of the early medieval Iran of the Sasanian and early Islamic periods through his analysis and evaluation of the Arabic and Aramaic sources. As a close friend of the Dutch editor of Ṭabari, [Michael Jan de Goeje](#), Nöldeke participated in that monumental task and took on the responsibility for the volume on pre-Islamic



Iranian history. He was thus obliged to deal with the Iranian sources and their languages in detail. Apart from some short articles (Nöldeke, 1861a; 1861b; 1877), his first contribution to this field was the annotated German translation of the *Kārnāmag* (Nöldeke, 1878a), based primarily on two Munich manuscripts (M 74, and the incomplete M 60, both copied in India for [Martin Haug](#)). In the introduction Nöldeke discussed also the date and the surrounding background to the text and through that came to an appraisal of its textual history. The detailed commentary not only developed the historically relevant points, but also explained linguistic features, morphology, questions of historical geography, and the like.

A most decisive contribution was that Nöldeke could now convincingly prove the thesis already proposed by Niels Ludvig Westergaard (1815-1878) that Middle Persian was not an Irano-Semitic hybrid language, but an authentic Iranian dialect, the phonetic forms of which were “obscured by a partly cryptographic, partly extremely historicizing spelling” (Nöldeke, 1878a, p. 33; cf. also “Pehlevî” in Nöldeke, 1887, pp. 150–58). Remembering that [Ebn al-Moqaffa](#) (quoted in Ebn al-Nadim, tr. Dodge, I, pp. 24-27) was still aware of the fact that in the Pahlavi script many words were written differently from the way they had to be read, Nöldeke found the decisive evidence in seemingly hybrid, half Persian, half Semitic spellings of toponyms (Nöldeke, 1878a, pp. 47 f., n. 4; p. 48, n. 4, etc.), which clearly demonstrated the heterographic character of the Aramaic word-forms (see [HUZWĀREŠ](#)). For this reasoning one had only to make use of the transcriptions found in the *Frahang ī Pahlawīg* to realize that the language is entirely Persian and is a direct predecessor of New Persian.

Nöldeke’s *Kārnāmag* study was the first attempt ever undertaken to translate a Pahlavi text without making use of the Parsee tradition, for Nöldeke relied exclusively on his own familiarity with the Aramaic and New Persian languages and on the writings of Edward William West and [Friedrich Carl Andreas](#). The study of this historical romance concerning the founder of the Sasanian empire, which among the Pahlavi sources of the *Šāh-nāma* is almost the only text preserved, was instigated by Nöldeke’s work on Ṭabari’s monumental chronicle *Ta’riḵ al-rosul wa’l-muluk* and his search for its Iranian sources. The *Kārnāmag*, a short account of Ardašir I in prose, with its unpretentious, and often dry and awkward style, is obviously based on ancient, orally transmitted, authentic traditions, written down in late Sasanian times, perhaps in the reign of Ḳosrow II Parvēz. In one of his notes (Nöldeke,



1878a, p. 50, n. 3; cf. in detail also Nöldeke, 1880), he was also the first to prove that the name of Āḍarbāyjān, the ancient *Atropatene* is derived from the anthroponym Iran. \*Ātr-pāta-, Gk. *Atropátēs* (see [ATROPATES](#)), the name of the leader of the troops from Media at the battle of [Gaugamela](#) whom Alexander had reinstated as the satrap of Media.

To de Goeje's edition of the Arabic text of Ṭabari (*Annales quos scripsit Abu Džafar Mohammed Ibn Džarir at-Tabari*), Nöldeke contributed the Sasanian section (First series, pp. 813–1072, Leiden, 1881–82; repr., 1964); and he was the only collaborator who added a translation as well as a historical study to his edition (Nöldeke, 1879a), and an excellent and exemplary translation at that, which remains of fundamental importance to this day, since Ṭabari is still the principal Arabic source available for the history of the Sasanian period and in particular for the foundation of the Sasanian empire. Even though the book might have given the appearance of being only an annotated translation, it was in reality a comprehensive account of the history of the Sasanian period that embraced the latest research available at the time. This participation in de Goeje's large-scale project proved to be of great formative significance for Nöldeke's further studies, for it led him to the field of Iranian studies and made him realize that he was more drawn to historical research than to linguistics. Nöldeke was the ideal scholar for the task, for he was well acquainted not only with all the Oriental sources, but also with the Greek and Latin evidence, and thus his detailed explanatory notes made Ṭabari accessible to all historians, orientalist and non-orientalist alike.

In his substantial introduction, Nöldeke confirms his credentials as an eminent expert of Sasanian and early Islamic history and throws light on the literary-historical context and, for the first time, also on the history of the origin of the Middle Persian *Xwadāy-nāmag* "Book of Kings" and its relation to the early New Persian and the Arabic treatment of Persian history. Through his conjectures suggesting that such a Book of Kings had been compiled under Yazdegerd III, he drew attention to the indigenous traditions of Sasanian history in their authentic form. This enabled him to lay down the initial stages for source criticism and he was able to take a look at Ferdowsi's method of working, because both the *Šāh-nāma* and Ṭabari are, ultimately, based on the *Xwadāy-nāmag*, which had summarized the Iranian tradition from the perspective of the nobility and the Zoroastrian clergy.

In addition to explaining the facts mentioned (for example, the exact forms [i.e., the pronunciation] of personal and place names), the extremely valuable



detailed annotations, which are as extensive as the translation of Ṭabari's text itself, aim to supply a full commentary on Sasanian history by discussing historical questions, explaining titles, identifying the people mentioned, and in general by clarifying details of the empire's constitution, social order and administration, its historical geography—in short, by giving a historical assessment of all the information found in Ṭabari. For this he took into account other available historical evidence: coins and inscriptions, the writings of Greek and Latin as well as Armenian historiographers, Syriac and Jewish sources, and of course all the Arabic and Persian traditions mentioning the persons, countries, and events in question, thus demonstrating his astonishingly wide range of reading and thorough familiarity with the sources. But Nöldeke pointed also to other accounts of similar content and to data lacking in Ṭabari or omitted by him, examined other secondary literature, and tried to clear up contradictions among the various sources. A number of excursuses goes into those problems in more detail, especially regarding the chronology of the Sasanians according to the king-lists recorded, which all go back to one and the same basis (whereas the synchronisms calculated by Syriac and Arabic authors cannot be relied upon), the internal conditions of the empire and the rebellions of Mazdak, *Anōšazād*, and *Bestām*. In excursus no. 6 (pp. 474–78) Nöldeke was also the first to draw attention to the late-Sasanian romance of the life and deeds of Bahrām Čōbīn (see *BAHRĀM vii*) that can be reconstructed from its continuants in Arabic authors and in the *Šāh-nāma*. In clearing up the correct form of names he always paid special attention to rhymes (above all in the *Šāh-nāma*), where the names in question appear.

He also tracked down Avestan parallels for the Iranian prehistory; for example, by joining the Avestan tradition about the Kavi dynasty (see *KAYANIANS*) with the later sources he recognized the exact genealogy of that legendary dynasty (see Nöldeke, 1878b); and he identified the legendary “best Aryan archer” (Avest.) *Eraxša-* (as soon as this form of his name had been recognized) with Ṭabari's *Areš* (see *ĀRAŠ*) and shed light on the relation between the various accounts of the events in the mythical past (see Nöldeke, 1881).

Among the sources from which Ṭabari has compiled, even if indirectly, his detailed account of the Sasanian history, the lost, late-Sasanian *Xwadāy-nāmag* “Book of Kings” is the most important, and this is likewise true for all the other Arabic (in particular Ebn al-Moqaffa's *Siyar al-muluk*) and Persian renderings



of the pre-Islamic Iranian history, not least among them the *Šāh-nāma* (see below) itself. All the problems of the interrelations between those (partially lost) Middle Persian, New Persian, and Arabic works were taken up by Nöldeke, who reviewed every piece of information with regard to its origin and reliability.

He also recognized that the Sasanian “Book of Kings” is compiled from a variety of sources, among them foreign literary works like the *Alexander Romance* (the Pahlavi version of which according to Nöldeke [1890] is faithfully reflected by the Syriac translation). For it was clear to Nöldeke that the Iranians had not preserved their own recollections of Alexander (who in Middle Persian is always called *Rumi* “the Roman”), but heard of him only at the time when the Roman Empire was Iran’s adversary.

Nöldeke dealt frequently with Middle Persian (Pahlavi) language and literature at a time when it had scarcely been studied at all. In the interpretation of Sasanian coins and their legends he was critical of Andreas David Mordtmann’s readings, particularly those of the mint names (see Nöldeke, 1877; 1879d). When Franz Stolze published photographs of Middle Persian (as well as of cuneiform and Arabic) inscriptions from Persepolis and elsewhere in Fārs for the first time, it was Nöldeke who scrutinized the previous interpretations and suggested improved readings for the two texts from the reign of Šābuhr II (1882a). Nöldeke’s review of F. C. Andreas’s *Mēnōg ī xrad* (1882b) is also of some importance because of his renewed discussion of the use of heterograms and the development of Pahlavi script and language according to the newly edited material. In particular, there is a meticulous discussion of the graphical variation with phonetic versus heterographic writing, illustrated by a number of examples.

When Wilhelm Geiger’s translation of the *Ayādgār ī Zarērān* appeared, Nöldeke commented on it at once (1892a, pp. 1–12; 1892b), proposing several improvements in readings and interpretation and recognizing its importance for literary history as another indirect source of the *Šāh-nāma*. Another article was provoked by Carl Salemann’s treatment of Middle Persian in the *Grundriss* (vol. I [1901], pp. 249–332), to which Nöldeke (1902) contributed a number of annotations and corrections, particularly in the light of Aramaic and New Persian, thus highlighting the difficulties in the linguistic analysis of Middle Persian still existing at the time (on the eve of the first discoveries in the Turfan oasis).



A second focus of Nöldeke's research was the Iranian national epic, resulting in the magnificent monograph, *Das iranische Nationalepos*, that emerged from his relevant *Grundriss* article (1896; 2nd ed., 1920). For this he had read through the entire *Šāh-nāma* several times and had already carried out preliminary research in "Persische Studien. II" (1892a). But one must also bear in mind that the question of Ferdowsi's sources was a topic to which he had already made a significant contribution in his commentary on Ṭabari's *History* (1879a), where he had clarified Ferdowsi's method by bringing out the similarities and differences with older sources like the *Kārnāmag* when studying this text (see Nöldeke, 1878a). Nöldeke's account begins with uncovering the traces of ancient Iranian epic stories as they can be identified in texts of the Avesta corpus or recovered from accounts by Greek authors like Herodotus (gleaned directly or indirectly from their Persian informants) concerning the portrayal of mythological figures, even minor ones, from the creation of the world up to Zarathushtra and Achaemenid times. But those narratives were still extant in the Sasanian period, when works such as the *Ayādgār ī Zarērān* were produced, recounting a single episode out of a legendary cycle (which he assumed was known in its entirety), or the *Kārnāmag* with its popular fictitious stories. From all this it became evident that on the one hand the national epic tradition developed long before the fall of the Sasanian empire and that, on the other hand, the records of the chronicle (lists of names, etc.) of the kings made no distinctions between mythical and historical times and persons. The information given regarding a comprehensive chronicle of the Persian kings that had been written down in the reign of Yazdegerd III seemed reliable to Nöldeke; and he thought it feasible to deduce the content and the form of that Sasanian "Book of Kings" (*Xwadāy-nāmag*) and its epic tone from the often literal agreements between the *Šāh-nāma* and historical sources, in spite of the fact that both the original Middle Persian text and Ebn al-Moqaffa's Arabic translation were no longer extant. But he proved that other historiographical writings as well as other novels (such as the one on Bahrām Čōbīn [see above]) must have existed, and these taken together (and including independent minor stories, too) formed the basis of the (lost) original 10th-century prose *Šāh-nāma* reportedly put together for Abu Maṣur 'Abd-al-Razzāq from Ṭus (Tōs) from accounts supplied by four Zoroastrian men.

Turning then to the *Šāh-nāma* itself, Nöldeke examined first the information on Daqiqi (q.v.), particularly on his (much more stereotyped) style and the relationship between him and Ferdowsi who continued his work, even in



matters of language. After a sketch of Ferdowsi's life and character, his patriotism, and religious beliefs, in a sensitive and subtle analysis, he set forth how Ferdowsi had enlarged and embellished his model in order to put together the whole national tradition in one single large-scale work. One of these enlargements, as he saw it, was in the story of Rostam's fight with the "White Dēv" of Māzandarān, reminiscent for him of the struggle between the Mazdayasnian religion and the still living former Daēvian religion of that region (see Nöldeke, 1915; 1923a). For his view of these embellishments Nöldeke relied most of all on the correspondences between the *Šāh-nāma* and Ṭa'ālebi, whose work *Ġorar akbār moluk al-fors* seems to be based on the prose *Šāh-nāma* compiled from the accounts of the four men mentioned above, since only such a comparison with Ṭa'ālebi could make clear how independently the poet had dealt with his material.

In all, Ferdowsi's description, which in part fitted together various pieces only somewhat loosely and in any case reflects the state of affairs and views of the Sasanian period (i.e., the time of his models), is greatly indebted to his predecessors and continued rather faithfully the extant tradition in style and language. The thorough study of Ferdowsi's language brought out the simplicity of its style, which, while avoiding an over-ornate style, is rich in hyperboles. It also pointed out the existence of many partially identical verses containing set phrases and imagery, a feature typical of oral epic literature. In particular Ferdowsi liked using archaic words and also indulged in alliteration, whereas plays on words are rarely found in his verse.

In view of the greatly varying wording and size of the surviving manuscripts, which is shortly dealt with in the section about the history of the transmission of the *Šāh-nāma* and its manuscripts, Nöldeke rightly felt the time was not yet ripe for constituting a reliable text and for any textual criticism of the *Šāh-nāma* at all, which in his eyes "is in a rather bad way" ("Das iranische Nationalepos," 1920 ed., p. 84). As regards interpolations and, still more, the deletion of passages, he urged to be careful, because in several cases the very existence of deleted passages could be proven for the original text by referring to parallels that indeed have become known subsequently. Of course part of his observations have become dated and in need of revision, above all owing to the discovery of the earliest extant manuscript of the first half of the *Šāh-nāma* in the National Library of Florence (MS Cl.III.24).

Special attention is paid to metrics, in particular to the influence of meter on the linguistic form of the words, and also to the use of rhyme, for which he



provides many details, even if not in a systematic manner. This metric section is found in the 2nd edition (1920, pp. 91–107) in a separate appendix in an expanded form. It is an important contribution to Persian metrics in general and stressed especially the adaptation of the linguistic form to the foreign meter (*motaqāreb*), wherever this had become necessary because of the too great number of short syllables of the New Persian language or other peculiarities of its phonetic structure. The various changes made for this reason (e.g., syncope of vowels, shortening, metathesis, but also simplification of consonant groups or geminates), which are found also in names of all kinds, are demonstrated by citing instances and providing ample examples; and since Nöldeke had the benefit of a good classical education, he provided apt parallels in the language of the early Greek epics of Homer. It is an important aspect of Nöldeke's masterly treatise that he adopted a comparative perspective in general and frequently cited *Šāh-nāma* parallels and analogues in relation to the form and content of the epic poems of other peoples. He thus drew attention to the epic literature of the Greeks, the ancient Germanic peoples, and others or uncovered agreements of particular motifs and expressions (e.g., the motif of the sun that has been darkened by the foe's barrage of arrows, as it is attested in both the *Šāh-nāma* and in an anecdotal story found in Herodotus, the Iranian origin of which is likely; see Nöldeke, 1923b). Because of overall careful philological treatment of the *Šāh-nāma*, his monograph was to become the basis for later scholarly studies of Iranian epic literature (for a further discussion of selected questions see also Nöldeke, 1944).

Apart from the *Šāh-nāma* Nöldeke dealt also with other works of early classical Persian narrative literature. In one of his articles (Nöldeke, 1891) he examined a Leiden manuscript (Codex 593 from 695/1295–96) of the popular collection of moralizing tales called *Bak̄tiār-nāma*, and he presented lengthy selections of it and compared its version of the text with the various Arabic recensions of the *Book of the Ten Viziers*. But his thesis that we have here an imitation of the *Sendbād-nāma* of the Arabian Nights and that this is of Indian origin has not won acceptance.

Nöldeke's studies in the field of comparative Oriental literature and in the narrative genre are also relevant to Iranian studies. Instigated by E. A. W. Budge's edition of the Syriac version of the *Alexander Romance* by Pseudo-Callisthenes (see [CALLISTHENES](#)), Nöldeke published his *Beiträge zur Geschichte des Alexanderromans* (1890), in which he showed how this was a



work of pseudo-erudition that had nothing to do with folk literature or folk tradition. By identifying Persian “glosses” as well as the mixing up of certain letters and by recognizing misunderstood passages he was able to make it quite probable that the Syriac version (which cannot be a translation from Arabic) is translated from a Middle Persian text and not directly from the Greek original, a fact of some import for the cultural history of Sasanian Iran. In addition he compared this text with the description in the *Xwadāy-nāmag* and with subsequent Persian adaptations of the subject, which were afterwards inserted into the national epic. Here Alexander’s mother became a Persian princess, thereby shedding a more favorable light on Alexander himself, who thus became a celebrated Iranian king.

Contributions to the Oriental books of fables and fairy-tales spreading from India (especially the famous *Pañcatantra*) via Iran to the Near East (e.g., *Kalila wa Dimna* [see [KALILA WA DEMNA](#)]) are found also in Nöldeke’s studies about the story of the “king of mice” (see Nöldeke, 1879b) and about [Borzuya](#)’s introduction to *Kalila wa Dimna* (Nöldeke, 1912). The fable of the “king of the mice” had come to light then for the first time in an original form in a Syriac version, itself derived from a Pahlavi text, and Nöldeke argued that the passage in question (which is also found in several manuscripts of *Kalila wa Dimna*) is a Persian addition and did not belong to the Indian original of the text, as proven by various Iranian names and above all by the way the central characters behave and think. He devoted a special study to the introduction by the physician Borzuya, who under *Ḳosrow I Anōšravān* had translated the collection of Indian fables into Middle Persian (see Nöldeke, 1912). That introduction is preserved, however, only in the Arabic adaptation of Ebn Moqaffa’. Nöldeke translated this introduction (and its Syriac version) and clarified the differences between the Persian and Arabic recensions. In a short article (1894) he was also able to show that not all narrative subjects and gnomic sayings found in Iranian collections of fables and fairy-tales are of Indian origin, but that stories of Iranian origin also survived and were recorded by Greek authors, e.g. [Herodotus](#).

Nöldeke’s other publications concerning Iran are as follows: The *Aufsätze zur persischen Geschichte* (Nöldeke, 1887) contains revised and expanded versions of the original German text of several articles that had been published before in English in the *Encyclopaedia Britannica*. At the beginning are two longer surveys of Iranian history under the Medes and the Achaemenids (pp. 1–85) as well as under the Sasanians (pp. 86–134); between these articles the English



version of Alfred von Gutschmid's *Geschichte Irân's* had been inserted in the *Encyclopaedia Britannica*. Based on comprehensive knowledge of classical and Oriental sources available at the time, Nöldeke offered a precise outline of the political history of those periods, but omitted the religious and cultural history and also refrained from describing the ethnographic foundations. The outstanding feature of this carefully considered account is its restrained criticism of Herodotus and Ctesias in all matters regarding Median history. Shorter articles deal with Persepolis (pp. 135–46) and with the names “Persia” and “Iran,” which in Nöldeke's view should always be kept distinct from each other (pp. 147–49). Exhibiting remarkable scholarly foresight is the short survey of “Pehlevî” (pp. 150–58), in which Nöldeke expressly wanted to restrict this term to the writing system.

In the first installment of his “Persische Studien” (see Nöldeke, 1888) he discussed primarily linguistic problems and tried to bridge the gulf between Old Iranian and modern Iranian studies that were oriented rather one-sidedly towards the relations with Indo-Aryan and Arabic respectively. For the most part he dealt with personal names and above all with various types of hypocoristic or pet names. He compiled large numbers of such names ending in NPers. *-ōi*, *-ōē* together with their equivalents in Arm. *-oy* and Byzantine Gk. *-ōēs*, *-ō ēs* (from OIran. *\*-avya-*), but also of those ending in NPers. *-ai* (from OPers. *\*-aya-*; cf. Gk. *-aios*) and in *-ak* (from *\*-aka-*; cf. Gk. *-akēs*), and he connected them with full names, even those from older Iranian tradition including the indirect evidence of Greek, Syriac, and other sources, on which they are based or at least may be based. He was the very first to establish also for the Iranian languages the observation that hypocoristic names are formed by mutilation of the basic forms and stressed explicitly that those mutilations always are possible also in word-initial position. To buttress his argument, he referred to parallels from other languages too, and he illustrated this particular type of onomastic word-formation by pointing to his own surname *Nöldeke*, which is a diminutive (hypocoristic) form based on the name *Arnold* with the initial syllable apocopated. So this pioneering work with its pan-Iranian orientation is still today of fundamental importance for Iranian anthroponomastics, although in other chapters other topics are dealt with, such as the theonyms *Tīr* and [Av.] *Tištriia-*, their often maintained connection, and the personal names derived from *Tīr*. Of etymological interest are the remarks on NPers. *sepehr* “heaven,” which is from OIran. *\*spiθra-* and has nothing to do with Gk. *sphaîra*, and NPers. *zahr* “poison.” It may be noted that one often can find etymological comments by Nöldeke in publications of other

scholars, for example, in those of [Paul Horn](#) and [Heinrich Hübschmann](#), his colleagues at the University of Strasbourg.

Apart from a compilation of Greek and Aramaic borrowings in New Persian (as far as they had not passed through Arabic) on pp. 34–46, we find published in “Persische Studien. II” (see Nöldeke, 1892a) a number of studies concerning the Iranian national epic, including preliminary work for the *Grundriss* article. Here the short *Ayādgār ī Zarērān* is studied as a surviving piece of the Sasanian epic cycle and an essential document for Ferdowsi’s great national epic; for already here Nöldeke made clear the close relations between this text, the *Xwadāy-nāmag*, and the *Šāh-nāma*, and he described the poetic structure of all these epic poems. In the second section, on Daqiqi, Nöldeke contrasted this poet’s language with that of Ferdowsi. Based on his close familiarity with the text, he pointed out in particular the less vivid style of Daqiqi and his more mechanical descriptions, which seem to follow a fixed pattern. On pp. 20–26 follows the first appreciation of the small Middle Persian booklet about the Indian origin of [chess](#) entitled *Wizārišn ī čatrang* from the view of literary studies, after Peshotan Sanjana had edited this text for the first time in 1885. A number of random notes to the *Šāh-nāma* are devoted, among other things, to the double presentation of certain episodes—an outcome of compiling from different sources—and to the fact that Ferdowsi described the conditions of the Sasanian period and not of his own time, and to great Iranian families in the Sasanian empire such as the Kāren.

Based on texts which had recently been published by scholars like Paul de Lagarde or Carl Salemann (several of which he had reviewed) Nöldeke, dealt in detail also with [Judeo-Persian](#) (see esp. Nöldeke, 1897), since the importance of this language for the linguistic history of Persian was self-evident to him. He added his remarks to those publications and worked out the linguistic peculiarities which show that the various local dialects (e.g., that of the Jews of Bokhara) are only varieties of New Persian distinguishing themselves by a particular local color and in general by some archaisms. Wherever possible, his relevant studies start from the original language and not from translated texts, since the linguistic form of the translated biblical texts in part has many distortions (and Hebrew influences) embedded in it.

It is surprising that Nöldeke, who was so drawn to historical research, dealt with the Achaemenid inscriptions in Old Persian language only marginally and in a summary fashion in one single review. In these few lines that he dedicated to them we see that he had recognized the inherent difficulties



posed by these inscriptions more clearly than many others, and one would have hoped that these were intimations for subsequent important contributions from him. It is therefore a cause for regret that he did not give more attention to that language.

For the field of onomastics one has to speak, apart from the studies already mentioned above, first, once more, of Ṭabari's *History* (Nöldeke, 1879a), in which Nöldeke used, not the often rather distorted Arabic forms of the names, but Persian ones as they must have sounded in the late Sasanian or early New Persian period. This work led him also to the first detailed study of the toponyms in *-kert/-gird/-jird* (see Nöldeke, 1879c), a type of names that appear only after Alexander, seems to be created in Parthian times, and obviously is a genuine Iranian formation. He tried to compile the material as fully as possible from Greek and Latin, Armenian, Syriac, Arabic and other sources, as well as from Iranian sources; he drew especially upon the *Geography* of Ptolemy and the medieval Arabic geographical writers.

A true model of an onomastic study for an ethnonym may be seen in the article about the name appearing in Greek as *Kardoûchoi* (in Xenophon and others), as *Gordiaîoi* (Arrian, etc.), as *Gordyaîoi* (Strabo; inclusive of *Gordyēn* in Plutarch and Diodorus), and as *Kordyaîoi*, that is, as a stem *\*Kardū* (see Nöldeke, 1898). From the full survey of the evidence in the classical languages as well as in Armenian (*Kordow-k'*) or the Semitic languages (e.g., Syr. *Qardō*, etc.) and from the assessment of all the attested forms in every passage, Nöldeke inferred that the tribal name is primary and that it only secondarily is transferred to the country, where it was kept longer, however. He held the view that *\*Kardū* has nothing to do with the Kurds, whose ancient name is *Kýrtioi* in Greek. He also discussed (Nöldeke, 1874) the Greek names of the Susiana and its inhabitants (*Sousís*, *Sousian*, *Kíssioi*, *Kossaîoi*, *Oúxioi*, *Elymaîoi*), and dealt with the Greek forms of the ethnonym *Assýrioi* or *Sýrioi* (Nöldeke, 1871) and made it probable that *Sýrioi* is of the same origin as *Assýrioi* and only a shortened form of it. His authoritative view that the aphaeresis of the initial vowel is genuine and not only a Greek phenomenon, has been confirmed subsequently by Aramaic evidence for both *sr-* and *'sr-* side by side in Neo-Assyrian times and has been established beyond any doubt recently by a Hieroglyphic-Luwian and Phoenician bilingual.



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