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RESEARCH IN IRANIAN HISTORY

I

Tracing back to the last century the traditions of historical studies of Iran we come across a noteworthy fact: from the very beginning, all these traditions of studying Iranian history were methodically tightly linked with other branches of human sciences or even originated from them. Antiquities - this is to say: early and ancient history, classical and Near Eastern archaeology, classical philology, religious studies and linguistics - formed the cradle of any historical research concerning pre-Islamic Iran, and even today all these disciplines maintain a tight connection with research in ancient Iranian history. This fact is well illustrated by the organization of subjects of the well-known and very valuable *Abstracta Iranica* published by the Institut Français d'Iranologie de Téhéran: the original separation of pre-Islamic historical matters from archaeology, art history, epigraphics and linguistics obviously turned out to be rather inefficient. Within the last issues of the *Abstracta Iranica*, therefore, history of the pre-Islamic period is now combined with art and archaeology. What had been developed originally as specifically Iranian peripheral branches of traditionally well-established classical aspects of antiquities still remains an ample playground for interdisciplinary co-operation: studies in pre-Islamic Iranian history cannot be confined to the methodical instruments of an historian in the general, occidental sense. Historians concerned with ancient Iranian civilizations still must be competent in methods of philology and linguistics, this is to say Iranian, classical and Semitic as well, archaeology, art history, and quite of course general ancient history. A precise definition of research methods of pre-Islamic Ira-

nian history would, therefore, diminish the actual scope of this field.

What about the history of what we usually call Islamic Iran and which I shall concentrate on? As far as the beginnings of studying this period are concerned our statement will be similar to what has been mentioned above: the history of Islamic Iran - as well as Islamic history in general - was throughout generations regarded as a subordinated aspect of the so-called Islamic studies, especially attached to Arabic, Persian and Turkish philology, also similar, in this point, to the position of research in Persian literature. Obviously the dependence of various branches of antiquities on classical, Greco-Roman philology for the Islamicists of earlier generations served as a kind of model for their perception of their own field. Islamic-Iranian history of political events and institutions, and also the history of thought, culture and literature, were conceived as dependent offshoots of Islamic-Oriental philology, in some cases even up to our days! This may be one of the reasons for the still existing high sensitivity in the philological treatment of historical sources by Orientalist scholars. One often notices that the philological interest in chronicles and other historical texts surpasses the interest in the substantial contents and critical analysis of these texts. In our circles, the term "critical" in connection with sources refers commonly much more to critical text-edition than to critical analysis and evaluation of facts and contents! The mostly philological and literary conception of Iranian history, as dating from the beginning of our century, is strikingly illustrated by Paul Horn's sketch of *Geschichte Irans in islamitischer Zeit*, in the well-known and almost classical *Grundriß der iranischen Philologie*. Extracting the contents of a considerable number of Persian and Arabic chronicles, he takes over from his sources a lot of evaluations and judgements and presents them in a very naïve manner, even in comparison of the historiographical standards of his time. The same attitude is expressed by E.G. Browne who insisted in writing not any history, but "A Literary History of Persia", obviously taking this approach as the proper one for a serious Orientalist. General historians of his generation might have expected other aspects - history of events, institutions, ideas, or national history, based not only on narrative sources but also on archive material, documents, coins etc. - but Browne, the eminent Oriental philologist and friend of Iran, remained true to his learned traditions and offered a "literary his-

tory". Until today, this philological understanding of history has marked the traditions of research in Iranian history. Many scholars of Iranian history, among them a considerable number of our Iranian colleagues, may feel themselves still indebted to this tradition. Thanks to this tradition we have a remarkable amount of mostly narrative historical sources made available through critical text editions by Iranian as well as Western scholars; not to forget the excellent bibliographical evidence of Iranian chronicles as presented by Storey's famous survey and its equally, if not more important, enlarged Russian version by Bregel'.

II

In spite of all these substantial achievements, the claim for a more thorough application of the methodological necessities of general history to the study of Iranian history became louder and louder. In other words, this was the claim for untying Iranian history from the strait jacket of Oriental philology. This challenge was put into a precise wording by Vladimir Minorsky as early as about half a century ago. This is not very astonishing: Minorsky belongs to the Russian tradition of research in Islamic history. In spite of their philological inclinations, Russian Orientalists had started quite earlier their endeavours in favour of the scholarly emancipation of Oriental history, especially history of the Eastern Islamic World as a discipline of its own. This is corroborated by eminent names like Bernhard Dorn and, the most famous of all, Wilhelm Barthold, not to forget the ingenious early Khanykoff, who, at his time, enriched the history of the Islamic East by applying even ethnographic aspects.

In the meantime, Minorsky's wish for the methodical and thematic independence of historical research concerning Islamic Iran was by and large realized without neglecting the genetic philological element of this field. Allow me, please, to describe some major stages of this process and, in addition, to mention some important actual trends, especially those relevant to general historical research, as far as they touch certain aspects of the mediaeval and modern history of Iran.

One of the most basic preconditions for any study in history is to make accessible the various kinds of sources. In this field, the

philological traditions of the historians concerned with Iran proved to be very fertile. In the realm of critical editions and scholarly translations of Islamic-Iranian classical texts into European languages, the Western Orientalists of the 19th and the 20th centuries were pioneers. They created models for later developments. The progress of research in the early Islamic history of Iran, for example, would have been impossible without the achievements of generations of Western Islamicists, especially Arabists. To them we are indebted for the presentation of the most important chronicles and, above all, the rich oeuvre of classical Arab geographers still constituting the most valuable sources for the early Islamic history of Iran. There were also noted Western Orientalists who, for almost two centuries, concentrated their attention on narrative and descriptive sources in the Persian language. The quantitative break-through in this domain was, however, restricted to our century. Here we must mention the breath-taking increase in the output of historians and philologists of Iranian origin. Iranian scholars, some of them European trained, like Mirzā Moḥammad Qazvīnī, Mojtabā Mīnovī and Saʿīd Nafīsī, found numerous disciples and fellow-travellers in their own country. To them we thank in the first place a lot of accessible editions of narrative sources concerning not only the Saljūq and Mongol periods but also later times, up to the beginning of our century. Without neglecting the remarkable efforts of various occidental specialists, we should admit that we now share the initiative in this field with our Iranian colleagues. In tight connection with this development we have to point out the continuously increasing importance of Iranian archives and libraries during, at least, the last twenty years. The present hard restriction in the usage of these institutions and their facilities, following the revolutionary changes in Iran are, therefore, a heavy blow against international research in Iranian history.

When Minorsky claimed more scholarly and methodical independence for Iranian history, he wanted mainly to intensify activities in political and institutional history and historical geography. Half a century ago, one might have gained the impression that there were almost no original sources for research in the history of institutions. For a long time, archive material concerning mediaeval and modern Iran seemed to be preserved only exceptionally, quite in contrast to the incomparably better situation of sources dealing with Ottoman history, for instance. To enumerate every single con-

tribution of Minorsky to the study of institutions in Persian history would be something like carrying coal to Newcastle. At the latest, after the publication of the famous *Tazkerato I-molük* (1943), a manual of Safavid state administration, it became clear that he had inaugurated a new branch in Iranian historical research and set it out on a large scale. Subsequently, studies on similar sources became more frequent, and nowadays we look back on a respectable amount of works dealing with what is usually known as *inshā'*-literature. From the same time, an increasingly intensive interest in Persian diplomatics became noticeable and resulted in the discovery, publication and systematic analysis of Persian historical documents.

In this particular field, besides Minorsky and his disciples, active especially since World-War II, one has to remember the activities of French Iranologists - I think, for instance, of Jean Aubin's valuable archive studies. Major contributions to Persian diplomatics were also done by Soviet Orientalists like Papazian, Puturidze, Musavi and Olga Čekhovič to whom we owe the publication of hundreds of original Persian documents, mostly stored in Soviet archives. The Hungarian Lajos Fekete established the connection between Persian and Ottoman diplomatic studies. Research in documents became a particular point of attraction to German scholars dealing with Iranian history. Indeed, there exists at present a widespread, specific school of Persian diplomatic studies in Germany, and I should not conceal from you that its main initiator participates in our present meeting: Professor Hans Robert Roemer.

In 1954, a rather personal dialogue between Mr Roemer and the well-known Iranian scholar Īraj Afshār was the starting point of what later developed into a very deep interest of Iranian scholars in documents and archive materials. As a result of this interest our Iranian colleagues published thousands of Persian historical documents, based on original texts as well as on *inshā'*-traditions. These colleagues were almost alone in making accessible a vast amount of Qājār archival sources mostly kept in private or semi-private Iranian collections. The undisputed forerunner of this development was the journal «*Barrasihā-ye tārikhī*», the suspension of which after more than twelve fruitful years is to be regarded as a heavy blow against the future of diplomatic studies in Iran, hurting the interests of all international scholars of Iranian history as well. Furthermore, the

publication activities of Iranian historians covered a huge number of memoir texts, which now form an indispensable genre of sources for the 19th century history of Iran. This is also true of source material for local and regional historical research. Even under the present conditions, our Iranian colleagues successfully try to continue their publishing activities, as I had the opportunity to witness during a recent stay at Tehran University.

Another type of primary sources had for generations drawn the attention of mostly Western scholars: coins. Studies in numismatics and monetary history had continuously developed throughout the last hundred years.

In spite of the various categories of historical sources mentioned above, studies in the last 500 years of Iranian history must also be based on materials of European origin, particularly concerning the 19th and 20th centuries. For earlier times and throughout the Safavid period reports of European adventurers, merchants, diplomats and missionaries have to be taken into account, especially since they offer a lot of details not to be found in Persian sources. From the middle of the 18th century up to our days, public records and material from political archives as well as economic reports increasingly gain importance. They are indispensable for the study of periods during which Iran became more and more integrated politically, economically and culturally in what has come to be known as the Modern World-System. With regard to their analytical treatment, there still exists a very strong division of labour between specialists of European history and those of Oriental history. In my opinion, the later ought to intensify their methodical skills and to enlarge their scholarly dimensions following the examples given by Mme Destrée's study concerning the Belgians in Iran, or Mme Scarcia-Amoretti's studies in the diaries of Marin Sanudo. At the time being, there are too many Western specialists who deal with modern history and society of non-European regions like Iran without any knowledge of the native languages and our research traditions, thus completely neglecting the importance of native sources. To me this resembles a kind of world-wide aberration in historical studies! We Orientalist historians in the West as well as our Iranian colleagues should try to defend our terrain as strongly as possible!

III

Until now I reported at length on problems concerning mainly historical sources. Let us now turn to historical studies in the proper sense, i.e. research, analysis and historiography.

I hope to have adequately estimated and recognized the merits of Iranian historians in their dealing with all kinds of sources yet how about their contributions to research, analysis and scholarly historical writing? To speak frankly, in this field the merits of Iranian historians are by no means as significant as their contributions to the above mentioned items. Nevertheless, throughout the twenties, and up to the forties, there existed a widespread, general interest in Iranian history among the country's intelligentsia, which could have been a fertilizing precondition for the development of large-scale, scholarly historical research in Iran, in spite of the fact that this interest in history was largely inspired by nationalist thought and ideology. In other countries, and under certain conditions, similar nationalist inspirations were at the origin of very important and highly esteemed schools of historical studies. And here the historical traditions in France, Italy or Germany come to mind! This could even happen in our century: let us think of the methodically noteworthy achievements of Polish historians or - even nearer to our subject - of various schools of serious and productive Turkish historians - one could think of names like Uzunçarşılı, İnalcık up to Ömer Lütfü Barkan and his followers. The important traditions of learned historians of the Indo-Pakistani subcontinent deserve to be mentioned in this connection, too.

Since the late twenties there has started a promising wave of historical studies in Iran: methodically mature analyses in political, institutional and cultural history were then done by personalities like ʿAbbās Eqbāl, Ahmad Kasravī and Saʿīd Nafīsī. Especially Eqbāl is to be kept in mind as the Grand Old Man of historical studies in Iran. Unfortunately, his disciples and followers during the fifties and sixties retreated gradually to the rather philological aspects of history. There can scarcely be any doubt that this development must be seen in connection with the increasingly restricted political climate of Iran after 1953. Various aspects and problematizations, developed since by historians on the international level, might have easily seemed politically delicate or dangerous in the eyes of Iranian scholars. By dealing with any questions of social or

economic history, one could have easily been suspected of being something of a Marxist, a suspicion that could rapidly threaten one's existence, during the Pahlavī period as well as under post-revolutionary conditions. In this context it might be useful to point out the limited number of Persian translations of international historical studies concerning Iran. Therefore, in the case of many Iranian historians, one must not be surprised to encounter a lack of interest in questions of historical methodology and theory, as well as in problems of historical dynamics and comparative universal history.

This statement only concerns a number of historians living and working within the country. Many Iranian scholars abroad prove their readiness and ability in dealing with international standards of historical studies and social sciences. This can be corroborated by an insight into the recent volumes of the valuable «Journal of Iranian Studies».

Anyway, in spite of all the limitations and restrictions mentioned above, the Pahlavī-regime conducted an offensive policy in cultural public relations, which allowed for good contacts between Iranian historians and the international scholarly community. These contacts were rapidly intensified throughout the last twenty-five years and had an important effect on the exchange of information and enhanced productivity on both sides. It is well known that this situation was dramatically changed by the Islamic revolution. Nevertheless, recent indications have caused some optimism about a certain revitalization of relations and contacts between specialists in Iranian history inside and outside the country.

Taking all these considerations into account, it goes without saying that thematic and methodical developments of Iranian historical research are largely derivative of the activities of occidental historians. Comparing, for instance, the field of Iranian history with their neighbouring one of Ottoman studies, one sometimes might get the impression that in the latter field the native contributions are more striking than those made by Iranians in the history of Islamic Iran.

IV

In comparison with other branches of history, the study of Islamic Iranian history is a rather young discipline, the main developments of which took place mostly in our own century. It is clear that most endeavours in this field were for a long time dedicated mainly to problems of political and institutional history. It was natural that the systematic recording of political facts and events in the earlier stages has been - and remains to a limited extent - a major task for the specialists. Thanks to the efforts of a respectable number of eminent scholars, our knowledge of the political *histoire des événements* of Iran developed sufficiently. This concerns in particular the description of the rise, culmination, and decline of various states and political entities. The various volumes of *The Cambridge History of Iran*, published already or in progress, testify to the respectable achievements and the present niveau of our art.

There is a certain change of general interest regarding various periods of Iranian history to be registered throughout the last hundred years. For a while, the enthusiasm for problems of early Islamic history had largely prevailed. Then, from the thirties onward, post-Mongol Iran up to the 18th century gradually attracted scholarly attention, simultaneously with the development of our knowledge of sources regarding this period. Yet coincidentally perhaps, some periods turned out to be almost stubbornly resistant to Western research activities. For a long time, Occidental scholars seemed to avoid the study of the Great Saljūqs and the Khōrazmshāhī reigns. Sometimes, the denomination "Saljūqs" was associated much more easily with the Sultans of Konya than with the Great Saljūqs in Iran! Until the publication of the 5th volume of *The Cambridge History of Iran*, scholarly general descriptions of the Saljūq period existed only due to the merits of the Turkish historians - such as Kafesoğlu, Turan and Köymen.

As late as in the early sixties, the historical study of the Qājār period, the 19th and early 20th centuries, gradually gained common acceptance. Anyway, the relative delay in Qājār studies has been well compensated until now! In the meantime, this dramatic period, covering the transformation of Iran from a traditional, pre-modern state and society to a marginal component of our Modern World-System, has attracted the interests of many European and American scholars as well as of Iranian historians! In addition, one must

admit that we do not know any other period of Persian history so abundantly documented by such a huge amount of native and foreign sources of all kinds as the 19th and 20th centuries. Special problematizations and manifold methodical aspects may be, therefore, applied to Qājār history more successfully than to any other period of Iranian history, quite in contrast to the traditionally rather negative image of this dynasty. Thanks to the activities of Iranian scholars, lots of sources of different kinds have been made available until now, a development that still goes on in Iran even in the most recent time: as an excellent example one may mention the series of Qājār historical texts published during the last years, by Mrs Ettehadiyeh from Teheran. This series is already at its 11th volume.

V

As I have tried to point out, research in Iranian political history witnessed a remarkable increase within only a few decades. As an important problem there arises the question of historical periodization concerning Islamic Iran. With regard to this question, I am personally convinced that, at the time being, thorough periodization in accordance with social developments and other important historical dynamics could be achieved only after further intensive research based on case-studies as well as on comparative analysis. For example, the study of what Fernand Braudel and his followers call the *longue durée* is still extremely underdeveloped in the case of Iranian history. Only very scarcely do we find examples for comparative analysis of long-term changes in social structures and dynamics, as well as bureaucratic conditions, of the political dynamics between local state structures and those of large territorial states, or examples for the long-term history of certain regions, but also of items like Iranian trade, landholding and various aspects of religious life throughout centuries etc. Having no sufficient number of such studies we are in no position to describe adequately the numerous aspects and dialectics of continuities, changes and major breaks in Iranian history and, without this, any definite periodization along the lines of immanent dynamics of history remains premature. Nevertheless, we need preliminary and operable periodizations that help the historian concentrate more thoroughly on certain temporal

sections of Iranian history. How can such preliminary periods be defined? At the moment not so much by criteria immanent to the dynamics of history, but, rather on the basis of more practical considerations concerning the special character of the methods, sources, auxiliary sciences, and neighbouring disciplines of each period. As an example: it is very difficult to separate methodically the early Islamic history of Iran - perhaps up to the Buyids - from general, early Islamic history and Sasanian studies. Even in order to isolate a special Iranian element within this early period, the historian of Iran needs more or less the same sources and methodical instruments of interpretation as any historian specialized in early Islam. On the other hand, the later political development and the special changing character of sources, it seems to be plausible to conceive a large period including Samanid, Ghaznavid, Saljūq and Khōrazmshāhī rules.

The fall of the °Abbāsīd caliphate marks a very serious break in the history of Islamic Iran: it was the Mongol and the succeeding periods that witnessed the development of many of what we think of, today, as the modern historical and cultural "personality" of Iran. To me, the changes caused during the Mongol rule over Iran are in some respects much more significant for the later political and social history of Iran than what had survived from earlier times. The Timurid together with the Turcoman rules form an other period; the Safavid development of a central state, the destabilized 18th century, the Qājār rule down to the Constitutional Revolution and, last not least, modern Iran - all of these form further historical sections possessing their own internal peculiarities as well as specially characterized types of sources; the study of each one needs special methods and auxiliary branches of knowledge. It is true that this preliminary periodization is clearly based on political events, but it has another criterion: namely, that of methodical functionality. There is an increasing tendency among specialists in Iranian history to concentrate on a limited number of these periods, mostly those tightly connected to each other. In this connection one should not forget to mention post-Timurid Central Asia and Afghanistan as highly interesting fields of Iranian history, as well as the amazing quality and quantity of research in the history of Islamic India.

VI

The manifold efforts to apply to studies in Iranian history the accepted standards of history in general has by no means been limited to the refinement of methods and the use of auxiliary sciences. Following the models of general historians all over the world, an increase of new forms of questioning and problematization is to be observed in Iranian historical research. Historians of Iran are more and more inclined to shift their interests from purely political and institutional research to other topics.

The most significant thematic change was the development of economic and social research in Iranian history. A decisive factor in this development was the publication of Miss Lambton's not to say almost legendary study, *Landlord and Peasant in Persia*. The study of agricultural production as the socio-economic precondition of pre-modern Iranian societies has not been interrupted since. Even non-historians are nowadays dealing intensively with this subject. As an example I may mention the valuable contributions of geographers, sociologists or comparative social historians. The critical relations and co-operation between representatives of these disciplines and orientalists turned out to be extremely fruitful. In this special field the very important though less-known contributions of Soviet specialists in Iranian history deserve special mention. Therefore, we ought to cite not only Miss Lambton's famous book as an illustration but, equally, Petrushevskiy's classical study of the agricultural conditions of 13th and 14th centuries Iran. In order to have an idea about the resulting quality of socio-economic historical research concerning Iran on the level of micro- and case-studies, some of the outstanding studies of Jean Aubin may serve as excellent examples, for instance, his rather recent article on landed property in mediaeval Ardabil.

Problems of social history not only paved the way to the history of Iranian agriculture, they were also helped by interdisciplinary co-operation to make some specific topics particularly attractive: thus, the Islamic-Iranian city has become an important subject not only for historians, but also for geographers, archaeologists, art historians, and sociologists. Recent research activities include the interdisciplinary aspect - I should like to mention the studies of Heinz Gaube - as well as proper socio-historical studies on guilds, factions and urban production. At the same time, lots of specific

sources concerning the history of Iranian cities have been discovered and published. They are now at our disposal.

For a long time, socio-economic research in the history of the tribes and their eminent role in history was largely neglected. Nowadays, historians, together with geographers and especially social anthropologists, are increasingly engaged in this subject. A considerable amount of detailed case-studies and publications of sources could make it possible to intensify comparative and interdisciplinary studies in various aspects of the pious foundations (ouqāf) and their functions throughout Iranian history - a research topic ready to be reaped!

The tight connection between many historians of Iran and Islamic studies has produced a remarkable aspect throughout the last thirty years: together with the increasing interest in 19th and 20th centuries affairs, a number of scholars concentrated on the political importance of the 'olamā, the representatives of religious life. I restrict myself to the mention of studies like those of Nikki Keddie or Hamid Algar, but especially the researches of our Italian and French colleagues! The actuality of this type of topics has been corroborated in a breath-taking manner by the revolutionary events of the last five years. But I shall not deal anymore with questions concerning religious history - in the frame of our meeting I consider these questions as a *chasse gardée* of Professor Bausani.

VII

I have tried to illustrate some of the main interests and problems that have been dealt with by only few generations of historians of Islamic Iran. If we take into account the rather small number of specialists in this field, even when seen on an international level, the results of their activities deserve our esteem. Allow me therefore, to sum up the main fields of activities they are engaged at the time being: first of all, the philological treatment of mostly narrative sources / diplomatics and archive studies / epigraphy, paleography and numismatics as basic and preconditional effort to proper historical research / political and institutional history according to various periods / socio-economic history of agriculture, urban and tribal life / historical geography and anthropology / comparative history. There may be not too much branches of Iranology to be found

that have developed such a deep sensibility for the necessity of interdisciplinary methodology and co-operation, as the historians did. If we try to sketch an outline of an imaginary research plan covering the forthcoming ten or fifteen years, some further major topics of research would easily come to mind. Allow me, please, to mention a few of them as a list of personal wishes, a kind of letter to Santa Claus!

1) Research in concern of the history of family life throughout various periods, also questions like childhood, youth and sexuality;

2) more intensive, large-scaled studies in the history of Iranian material culture;

3) more thorough and comparative studies on tribes in Iranian history and the relationship between tribal structure, state and military power;

4) more systematic, long-term studies in the history of settlements and historical geography in general;

5) as far as possible, studies in historical demography;

6) history of nutrition and food in Iran;

7) interdisciplinary co-operation with representatives of Ottoman studies in favour of comparative research concerning Ottoman-Safavid and Ottoman-Qājār relations. The recently developed methodology of Ottoman history, deserves in my view to be given serious attention by historians dealing with Iran;

8) further socio-economic, historical studies concerning the dramatical and very uneven process of the incorporation of pre-modern Iran into the Modern World-System, in other words, tracing back various characteristic features of modern Iranian state, society and culture, to their immediate pre-conditions in the 19th and 20th centuries;

9) further studies in the connections between various historical events or processes, and the transformation of theological theories and religious institutions, particularly since the Safavid period;

10) detailed studies concerning the development of the Western influence on Iranian every-day life, beginning with the Russian and French elements during the 19th and early 20th century.

These are ten coincidentally chosen, among a large number of topics which could be treated in the coming future, not to speak about the necessity of continuing what has been studied until now.

But at the moment, this future seems to be endangered.

The revolutionary developments of the last five or six years led to a certain degree of isolation of Iran from the world of learning. Our intensive contacts with our colleagues at Iranian universities, with scholarly institutions, libraries and book-publishers were widely interrupted, if not totally cut. An additional blow to Iranian studies in general and historical research in particular was the Soviet invasion to Afghanistan, by which the may be next-important persophone country became virtually inaccessible.

The public interest in actual Iranian affairs might have stimulated the one or the other study in any Iranian historical problems. But, on the whole, I am rather apprehensive of a decline in the willingness of young students to deal with Iranian subjects at the time being. Neither do such topics attract their enthusiasm, nor is there much substantial hope for their professional future in this field. The decline of interest may be even more dramatic in history than in other branches of Iranian studies.

On the occasion of a visit to Iranian cultural and learned institutions in 1983 I noticed a general interest of the Iranian side in revitalizing international scholarly contacts. In favour of our disciplines and, above all, of our Iranian colleagues, we ought to make use of such possibilities whenever they arise. The establishment of our *Societas Iranologica Europaea* can be an important step in favour of the improvement of the present situation. Therefore, I have good hopes for the aims of this meeting, and I am sure to be in agreement with other fellow-historians. May be, after twenty or thirty years our present meeting and its records will also be an important topic of research to future historians. In this case, in addition to history of Iran, we then should also have a discipline called history of Iranology!